



REVIEW

Regarding: Competition for the academic position of “Associate Professor” in Higher Education Area 3.0 Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, Professional Field 3.8 Economics, Scientific Speciality “Economics and Management (Agriculture)”, announced in the State Gazette, Issue 99 of 21 November 2025, for the needs of the Department of Economics

Candidate: Chief Assistant Professor Dobri Mateev Dunchev, PhD, Agricultural University – Plovdiv

Reviewer: Associate Professor Nadezhda Georgieva Blagoeva, PhD, Agricultural University - Plovdiv, Higher Education Area 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, Professional Field 3.8 Economics, Scientific Speciality Finance, Monetary Circulation, Credit and Insurance, appointed as a member of the Scientific Jury pursuant to Order No. RD 16-132/26.01.2026 of the Rector of the Agricultural University - Plovdiv.

1. General Information on the Candidate’s Career Development and Thematic Research Profile

Chief Assistant Professor Dobri Mateev Dunchev, PhD, is the sole applicant in the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor announced for the needs of the Department of Economics at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv. All documents submitted for participation in the competition have been prepared in full compliance with the requirements of the Act for the Development of Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and its Regulations.

PhD Dunchev was born on 3 March 1983. He graduated from the Technical School of Mechanical Engineering “Eng. Nikola Belopitov,” with a secondary specialisation in Management (1997–2001). He subsequently completed a Bachelor’s degree at the Agricultural University – Plovdiv in the speciality “Ecology and Environmental Protection” (2001–2005). Shortly thereafter, he pursued Master’s studies in two distinct fields: “Ecology of Settlement Systems” and “Accounting and Control.” During his university education, he also obtained a certificate for an additional professional qualification as a teacher. In addition, he holds a UK-issued certificate for a further qualification in Business Process Optimisation. In 2007, he commenced professional employment with Haygrove (United Kingdom), where he subsequently

held various managerial positions, gaining substantial practical experience in the agricultural sector.

PhD Dunchev's interest in academic research began in 2017, when he was enrolled as a PhD candidate in the Department of Economics at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv. In 2020, he successfully defended his doctoral dissertation entitled "Evaluation of Innovative Technologies in Precision Agriculture." In the same year, he was appointed Assistant Professor in the department, where he gradually assumed responsibility for teaching courses such as "Ecoeconomics," "Environmental Economics," "Innovation and Innovation Policy," "Economics of Precision Agriculture," "Business Administration," "Public Administration," and "Business Communications." Since 2022, he has held the position of Chief Assistant Professor.

Overall, the educational background, professional experience, and academic qualifications of Chief Assistant Professor Dobri Dunchev demonstrate consistent and purposeful development of competencies, forming a solid foundation for his advancement as a university lecturer and researcher. His profile is characterised by interdisciplinarity, practical applicability, and clear research orientation - key prerequisites for a successful academic career in the contemporary university environment.

2. General Description of the Submitted Materials

In the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor, Chief Assistant Professor Dobri Dunchev, PhD, participates with a total of 11 scholarly works, structured as follows:

- Habilitation monograph entitled "*The Impact of Climate Change on Agriculture and the Potential of Precision Technologies for Adaptation and Sustainability*" – 1 volume;
- Published book based on a defended doctoral dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor," entitled "*Evaluation of Innovative Technologies in Precision Agriculture*" – 1 volume;
- Scientific publications in journals indexed and abstracted in internationally recognised scientific databases - 7 publications, of which 5 possess an impact factor;
- Scientific publications in non-indexed peer-reviewed journals or edited collective volumes - 2 publications.

The candidate's personal contribution to the aforementioned 11 works is reflected in the following distribution: 4 publications (36.36%) are single-authored; in 3 publications (27.27%), he is the first author; in 3 publications (27.27%), he is the second author; and in 1 publication (9.1%), he is the third author.

All 11 works are subject to evaluation within the present review.

The fact that a significant proportion of Chief Assistant Dunchev's scientific output has been produced within research teams demonstrates a high level of collaborative competence, effective academic communication, and the ability to integrate into an interdisciplinary scholarly environment. At the same time, he exhibits clear scientific autonomy, evidenced by his single-authored publications, which confirm his capacity to formulate research problems independently, apply appropriate methodological frameworks, and provide well-argued interpretations of empirical findings.

It is also noteworthy that, aside from the monograph and the book, his entire publication activity has been conducted in English. This substantially enhances the accessibility of his research outputs, increases their international visibility, and creates favourable conditions for citation and integration into the global academic discourse.

In accordance with the scientometric requirements for the respective indicator groups, Chief Assistant Professor Dobri Dunchev reports the following results:

- **Group A** – 50 points (required: 50 points);
- **Group B** – 100 points (required: 100 points);
- **Group C** – 201 points (required: 200 points);
- **Group D** – 240 points (required: 50 points);
- **Group E** – 90 points (required: 0 points).

The total score amounts to 681 points, which significantly exceeds the minimum required threshold of 400 points.

3. Main Research Areas of the Candidate. Demonstrated Abilities and Potential for Leading Research (Project Coordination, External Funding, etc.)

The scientific publications submitted by Chief Assistant Professor Dobri Dunchev, PhD, together with their abstracts, outline four principal thematic research areas characterising his scholarly interests. These are focused on:

- **Precision agriculture:** Group G.6 publications No. 4 and 7; Group G.9 publication No. 2
- **Innovation in agriculture:** Group G.6 publications No. 2, 3, 5, and 6

- **Climate change:** Group G.6 publication No. 1
- **The impact of Brexit on the agricultural labour market:** Group G.9 publication No. 1.

A central position in the candidate's research activity for the Associate Professor position is occupied by his habilitation monograph, which logically integrates several of the aforementioned thematic strands under the title "*The Impact of Climate Change on Agriculture and the Potential of Precision Technologies for Adaptation and Sustainability.*" The monograph constitutes a comprehensive interdisciplinary study of the interrelations among climate change, food security, and the technological transformation of agriculture. The author aims to assess the impact of climate change on Bulgarian agriculture by analysing trends in temperature and precipitation. Particular emphasis is placed on the role of precision technologies in optimising resource use, reducing greenhouse gas emissions, and enhancing sectoral resilience, thereby supporting adaptation to climate change. Climate change is examined as a systemic risk with economic, environmental, and social dimensions, highlighting the vulnerability of agriculture, which both contributes to greenhouse gas emissions and is significantly affected by their consequences.

Based on an analysis of global trends and national climate data, the study evaluates the effects of changes in temperature, precipitation patterns, and extreme weather events on crop productivity, livestock production, water resources, and biodiversity in Bulgaria. Considerable attention is devoted to the role of precision technologies, such as remote sensing, the Internet of Things, big data analysis, artificial intelligence, robotics, and blockchain, as instruments for resource optimisation, emission reduction, improved water efficiency, and the mitigation of production risks. The monograph includes an empirical survey of 60 Bulgarian farmers on their attitudes toward adopting smart technologies, thereby enhancing the practical orientation and applied relevance of the findings.

A significant milestone in the evolution of PhD Dunchev's research interests is the book, based on his defended doctoral dissertation and further developed into a monographic study entitled "*Evaluation of Innovative Technologies in Precision Agriculture*". This work presents an in-depth scientific analysis of innovative technologies in precision agriculture, examined through the lens of sustainable development, economic efficiency, and the digital transformation of the agricultural sector. The study is grounded in the understanding that contemporary agriculture

faces complex challenges, including food security, resource constraints, climate change, environmental pressure, and the need to enhance competitiveness. Within this context, precision agriculture is conceptualised as both a technological and managerial solution that enables spatially and temporally differentiated management of production processes to optimise resources and improve production efficiency. The research aims to analyse the technical and economic efficiency of innovative technologies in agriculture and to assess their feasibility for implementation in Bulgaria, taking into account sector-specific production and institutional conditions. The study further examines the prospects for the digitalisation of Bulgarian agriculture within the framework of European policies and strategic documents. It formulates recommendations to improve coordination among institutions, research organisations, and business entities to accelerate the uptake of innovation. The work demonstrates in-depth knowledge, analytical rigour, and the ability to evaluate the economic performance of innovative technologies critically, thus meeting the standards expected of a scholarly contribution in a habilitation procedure.

Part of Chief Assistant Dunchev's research achievements is also the result of his active participation in scientific projects. According to the submitted documentation, he has been involved in:

- **Three international scientific or educational projects:**
 - *U-Green – University Cooperation for Promoting the Green Transition and Sustainable Practices in Education and Training;*
 - *NICOPA – New and Innovative Courses for Precision Agriculture;*
 - *CUPAGIS – New Curricula in Precision Agriculture Using GIS Technologies and Sensing Data;*
- **One national scientific or educational project:**
 - *Innovative Models for Enhancing the Competitiveness of Agricultural Holdings in Bulgaria;*
- **One institutional (internal) research project:**
 - *Impact of Structural Changes in the Agricultural Sector on the Development of Rural Areas in Bulgaria.*

The candidate's participation in international and national research initiatives demonstrates his integration into collaborative research networks and indicates his potential to lead and coordinate research activities in the future.

4. Evaluation of the Candidate's Pedagogical Preparation and Teaching Activity. Contribution to the Training of Young Researchers

Chief Assistant Professor Dobri Dunchev's teaching activity began during his doctoral studies, which reflects an early commitment to the academic profession and the gradual development of pedagogical expertise. A significant advantage in his professional growth is his additional pedagogical qualification, which contributes to a systematic and methodologically grounded approach to teaching.

At present, he is an established lecturer at the Faculty of Economics, delivering lecture courses and seminar classes at both Bachelor's and Master's levels across various academic programs. His total official teaching experience amounts to 5 years and 10 months, during which he has demonstrated consistent professional development and steadily increasing teaching responsibilities.

Over the past five years, the candidate's teaching workload has reached 3,745.2 academic hours, averaging 749 hours per year, which significantly exceeds the established normative requirements for the respective academic position. Of these, 1,666 hours are lecture-based instruction, indicating a high level of trust from the department and faculty in assigning him responsibility for core academic courses. The substantial number of seminar hours (1,097) and extracurricular academic workload (872.7) reflect active engagement with students, including consultations, supervision of course and project work, preparation for state examinations, and participation in scientific forums. The delivery of 109.5 hours of instruction in a foreign language, as documented in the submitted records, demonstrates his capacity to operate within an international academic environment.

The candidate successfully integrates his research experience into his teaching, enriching instruction with up-to-date empirical data, contemporary analytical methods, and examples drawn from his own scholarly work. This approach effectively bridges theory and practice and stimulates research-oriented thinking among students.

His contribution to the training of young specialists and future researchers is particularly noteworthy. Under his academic supervision, 25 students have successfully prepared and defended their graduation theses, 14 at the Bachelor's level and 11 at the Master's level. The topics of these theses address current issues in economic theory and practice, reflecting his ability to guide students toward research-relevant and socially significant themes. Supervising graduation theses involves

individualised mentoring, methodological support, and the development of analytical competencies that are essential for shaping future academic professionals.

Overall, the candidate's teaching activity is characterised by a high workload, consistency, commitment, and a clearly articulated orientation toward research-informed instruction. He demonstrates sustained presence within the academic community and actively contributes to developing students' professional competencies.

5. Significance of the Achieved Results as Evidenced by Citations, Publications in Prestigious Journals, Awards, Membership in International and National Scientific Bodies, etc.

The significance of the scientific results achieved by Chief Assistant Professor Dobri Dunchev, PhD, is objectively reflected in the 16 citations recorded to date in journals indexed in Scopus, ranked in the Q1-Q3 quartiles. This external validation of his scholarly contribution attests to the recognition of his research within the academic community. Citations in indexed journals indicate that the findings of his studies are being utilised as theoretical and methodological foundations in subsequent research, thereby confirming their relevance and applicability.

The impact of his research output should be assessed not only quantitatively but also qualitatively. The thematic scope of his publications addresses contemporary issues in innovation, digitalisation, and sustainable development in the agricultural sector - topics closely aligned with European and national strategic priorities. In this respect, his research demonstrates both scientific merit and clear applied value.

In summary, the accumulated citations, publications in indexed journals, and active engagement within the academic community reflect the steady development of the candidate's scholarly profile and the tangible significance of his research results. They demonstrate that his work is recognised, utilised, and integrated into the broader academic discourse, which constitutes a substantial criterion in the evaluation for the academic position of Associate Professor.

6. Significance of the Contributions to Science and Practice. Motivated Assessment of the Candidate's Research Profile

The scientific works submitted by Chief Assistant Professor Dobri Dunchev, PhD, outline a clearly structured and consistently developed research profile,

concentrated in four interrelated thematic areas: precision agriculture, innovation in the agricultural sector, climate change, and the impact of Brexit on the agricultural labour market. His research is logically interconnected and unified around the broader issues of sustainable development, digital transformation, and the economic efficiency of agricultural production.

Based on the candidate's submitted statement of scientific contributions, they may be categorised as follows:

I. ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS

- Development of a multidimensional approach for assessing climate risks in urbanised environments under the influence of climate change and land-use transformations;
- Formulation of an integrated model for analysing the economic, environmental, and social effects of implementing precision technologies in soft fruit production;
- Conduct of an empirical study examining the combined impact of Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic on the agricultural labour market in the United Kingdom;
- Identification of specific barriers to digitalisation and the adoption of precision technologies in small agricultural holdings in Bulgaria.

These contributions constitute independent scientific solutions that expand and advance existing research in the respective fields.

II. METHODOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

- Adaptation and application of a methodology for the economic evaluation of precision technologies, incorporating economic, environmental, and social dimensions;
- Development of a methodological framework for assessing farmers' attitudes and awareness in Bulgaria regarding climate change and precision technologies;
- Systematisation of conceptual models for innovation diffusion in the agricultural sector and clarification of the stages of the innovation process;
- Comprehensive assessment of the labour market through the integration of macroeconomic and sectoral indicators.

These methodological developments demonstrate the candidate's ability to integrate quantitative and qualitative approaches and to adapt analytical models to specific national conditions.

III. SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS

- Systematisation and further development of definitions and conceptual frameworks related to precision agriculture within the context of Agriculture 4.0 and digital transformation;
- Enrichment of the theoretical understanding of innovation as a key driver of sustainable development in the agricultural sector;
- Analysis of the interrelationships among climate policies, technological modernisation, and economic efficiency;
- Elucidation of the economic mechanisms through which migration restrictions affect the agricultural labour market.

These contributions broaden scientific knowledge across agricultural economics, innovation theory, and sustainable development.

IV. APPLIED CONTRIBUTIONS

- Formulation of specific recommendations to accelerate the digitalisation of Bulgarian agriculture;
- Development of guidelines for transforming the institutional environment in order to stimulate investment in precision technologies;
- Proposal of measures to promote renewable energy development as a factor for sustainable economic growth;
- Recommendations for national policies aimed at supporting innovation in agriculture;
- Analysis of managerial solutions to address labour shortages in agriculture following Brexit.

The applied nature of part of the research enhances the practical relevance of the scientific results and makes them directly applicable to the formulation of sectoral and national policies.

Overall, the candidate demonstrates a clearly defined research profile focused on the economic dimensions of technological transformation in agriculture, sustainable resource management, and adaptation to structural economic and climate-related changes. His research is thematically coherent, methodologically sound, and oriented both toward the advancement of scientific theory and its practical application.

7. Critical Remarks and Recommendations

In my assessment, the documentation and scientific output submitted for participation in the competition for the academic position of Associate Professor fully

comply with the legal requirements and established academic standards. Therefore, I have no critical remarks regarding the scientific production of Chief Assistant Professor Dobri Dunchev, PhD. The recommendation I would make to the candidate concerns further enriching his teaching through the development of teaching materials, academic manuals, and textbooks that would support and enhance the educational process. Such an initiative would further strengthen his pedagogical contribution and expand the long-term impact of his academic work.

8. Personal Impressions and Opinion of the Reviewer

I have known Chief Assistant Professor Dobri Dunchev since his period as a doctoral candidate in the department. During the preparation, discussions, and subsequent defence of his doctoral dissertation, he made a strong impression as a consistent and focused young researcher, demonstrating clarity and precision in analysing specific scientific problems. He has shown sustained interest in contemporary and socially significant issues related to the technological transformation of agriculture, sustainable development, and the economic efficiency of the agricultural sector. His scientific work demonstrates continuity and progressive development, which are important indicators of an already established research profile.

In his subsequent teaching career, I have observed the high level of student approval he has achieved, owing to his sense of responsibility, intense engagement, and continuous efforts to modernise course content, including the incorporation of findings from his own research. His work with students and thesis candidates demonstrates his mentoring skills and his ability to stimulate analytical and critical thinking.

I have also been impressed by his professionalism in academic communication, collegiality, and his willingness to actively participate in various initiatives at the faculty and university levels. He demonstrates professional maturity, perseverance in research activity, and a clear understanding of the societal role of scientific inquiry.

Based on my overall evaluation, Chief Assistant Professor Dobri Dunchev is an established and promising scholar and colleague with a clearly defined research direction, possessing the necessary professional, scientific, pedagogical, and collegial qualities required for the academic position of Associate Professor.

CONCLUSION

Following a thorough analysis of the submitted scholarly works, the statement of scientific contributions, the documented publication activity, the registered citations in indexed journals, as well as the candidate's teaching and research-organisational activities, it can be unequivocally concluded that Chief Assistant Professor Dobri Dunchev, PhD, is an independent and well-established scholar with a clearly defined and sustainable research profile.

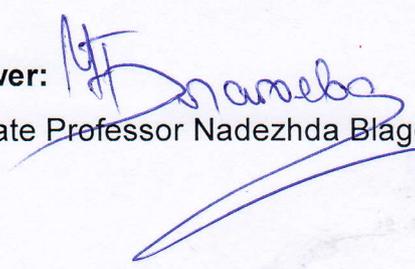
Based on the conducted evaluation, I conclude that the candidate fully meets the requirements of the Act for Academic Staff Development in the Republic of Bulgaria, its Implementing Regulations, and the internal regulations of the Agricultural University - Plovdiv.

All of the above provide sufficient grounds for me to give a **POSITIVE** evaluation of his overall academic performance.

I respectfully propose that the esteemed Scientific Jury also vote in favor of the candidate and that the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Economics at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv elect **Chief Assistant Professor Dobri Mateev Dunchev, PhD**, to the academic position of **Associate Professor** in Higher Education Area 3.0 Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, Professional Field 3.8 Economics, Scientific Specialty "Economics and Management (Agriculture)."

Date: 21 February 2026

Plovdiv

Reviewer: 

Associate Professor Nadezhda Blagoeva,
PhD