



REVIEW

Regarding the competition for "professor" in the scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Agriculture)", announced in the State Gazette No. 99 of 21.11. 20 25 with candidate Assoc. Prof. Dr. Boryana Lyubcheva Ivanova from the Department of Economics at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv, appointed according to Order No. RD-16-133/ 26.02.2026 of the Rector of the Agricultural University - Plovdiv as a member of the scientific jury

Reviewer: Prof. Dr. Ivan Yochev Boevsky, New Bulgarian University, Sofia, 3.0. "Social, Economic and Legal Sciences", 3.8. "Economics", appointed as a member of the scientific jury by order No. RD-16-133/ 26.02.2026 of the Rector of the Agricultural University.

My opinion was developed in compliance with the requirements of the Law on the Administration of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation, the Academic Regulations at the Agricultural University, Plovdiv and in compliance with the scientific-metric criteria 3.8 "Economics" for holding the academic position of "PROFESSOR".

1. General data on the candidate's career and thematic development.

Ms. Boryana Lyubcheva Ivanova graduated from secondary education with a major in Business Management, after which she received a professional qualification in business and finance from The College of North West London. He successively acquired the OSS "bachelor" and the OSS "master" in Agricultural Economics at the University of National and World Economy - Sofia, and in 2007, she defended her dissertation on the topic "Agricultural Cooperatives in Bulgaria during the accession to the European Union (development, adaptation and transformation)" and acquired the ONS "doctor" in Economics and Management (agriculture).

Her academic career began in 2001, when she won a competition for an assistant professor at the Department of Economics of the Agrarian University. In 2004, she was appointed as a senior assistant professor, and in 2007, she became a chief assistant professor. She obtained the academic position of associate professor in 2012. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Boryana Ivanova participates in various national and international projects, publishes articles, monographs and reports, and participates in summer schools, qualification courses and scientific conferences.

In parallel with her academic development, Assoc. Prof. Ivanova holds various administrative and management positions - she was the director of the University's Educational and Information Center, for 2 terms, she was the vice-rector with the department of "Academic Activities and Accreditation", and since 2024 she has been the rector of the Agrarian University.

Brief summary and assessment:

Assoc. Prof. Ivanova has demonstrated consistent and sustainable upward development in her academic, scientific research and administrative-management activities. The achieved results are convincing and testify to high professional competence, commitment and strategic vision. I highly appreciate her overall activity and support the continuation and even intensification of her academic, scientific and managerial activities.

2. General description of the materials presented .

In the competition for "professor" Assoc. Prof., Dr. Boryana Ivanova participated with a **total output of 55 papers** , grouped as follows:

❖ *Scientific publications in the nomenclature specialty – 54, of which:*

- Publications related to **the doctoral dissertation – 4 issues** , which are not subject to review.

- Publications related to the acquisition of the academic **position of "associate professor" - 17 issues** , which are not subject to review.

- Publications **not included in the scientometric indicators** , other than those for the acquisition of the ONS "doctor" and AD "associate professor" - **2 issues** .

- Publications subject to analysis for the preparation of the opinion **31 items** .

❖ *Textbooks – none presented.*

❖ *Study guides – 1 issue.*

31 items are subject to analysis for the preparation of the opinion.

- Publications with impact factor – **10 issues**;

- Publications in peer-reviewed and refereed scientific journals – **14 issues**;

- Publications in non-refereed journals with scientific review – **2 issues**;

- Publications in conference proceedings – **none presented**;

- Publications in books (chapters) – **4 issues (2 of them in WoS Core Collection)**;

- Monographs – **1 issue**.

The personal participation of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Boryana Ivanova in the mentioned 31 works is illustrated by the fact that 4 are independent, in 5 she is the first, in 7 she is the second, and in the remaining 15 she is the third and subsequent author.

I consider it particularly necessary to emphasize that **83.87% of the publications are in English**, and 38.71% of the presented works are published in editions indexed in the Web. of Science (Core) Collection) and/or Scopus , which is indicative of both the presence of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ivanova in the international scientific space and the quality of the scientific output.

The report on compliance with the minimum national requirements for area 3. "Social, economic and legal sciences", professional direction 3.8. Economics, in accordance with the Law on the State Educational Service of the Republic of Bulgaria (Art. 2b) and the Regulations for its implementation (Art. 1a, para. 1), shows that the results of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ivanova are a **total of 1164.65 points with a required minimum of 550 points, which represents an overachievement of 211.76%**. The distribution of points by category and % **overachievement** is as follows:



Group of indicators	Contents	Minimum required points for a professor	Boryana Ivanova accumulated points	% overachievement by Boryana Ivanova points
A	Indicator 1	50	50	100 %
B	Indicator 2	-	-	-
In	Indicator 3	100	100	100 %
G	Sum of indicators from 4 to 10	200	309.65	154.8 %
D	Sum of indicators from 11 to 13	100	450	450%
E	Sum of indicators from 14 to the end	100	255	255%
Total		550	1164.65	211.76 %

PPZRAS at AU-Plovdiv, Appendix 1, items 13 and 14, sets additional criteria for awarding the academic position of "professor", namely a minimum of 5 citations in publications with an impact factor or impact rank and a minimum of two defended doctoral candidates, of which at least one at the Agricultural University. In accordance with this, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ivanova has submitted a reference for 27 citations in publications with an impact factor or impact rank and a reference for two defended doctoral candidates, both at the Agricultural University.

Brief summary and assessment:

All of the above as factual material in this point gives me reason to make the following assessment: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Boryana Ivanova meets all scientometric requirements, both national and intra-university. The candidate presents scientific production and materials exceeding the minimum national and additional requirements of the AU-Plovdiv, some of the indicators even by 450%.

3. Main areas of the candidate's research work. Demonstrated skills or aptitude for leading scientific research (project management, external funding attracted, etc.).

The candidate's research activity is characterized by a clearly outlined thematic sequence and interdisciplinarity within the framework of agrarian economics and sustainable development. Based on the three groups of works presented, several main directions can be distinguished.

*The first direction is related to the **New Institutional Economy and the development of the cooperative model in the agricultural sector.** The research covers economic efficiency, ownership structure, governance mechanisms and the role of cooperatives in the conditions of market transformation and European*



integration. Particular attention is paid to the interaction between the regulatory environment, public support and the sustainability of cooperative structures, including in the context of the energy transition and the development of renewable energy sources.

The second direction covers the bioeconomy and the circular transformation of the agricultural sector. This group of works analyzes the theoretical foundations of the bioeconomy, the sectoral and regional development potential in Bulgaria, the opportunities for production and utilization of biomass, as well as the links between the bioeconomy, green and circular economy. Methods for assessing the potential have been developed and strategic recommendations for the development of bioeconomy sectors at the national and local levels have been formulated.

The third strand focuses on sustainable rural development and agricultural policy, including analysis of public instruments, direct payments, the development of small and semi-subsistence farms and the functioning of advisory and knowledge transfer systems (AKIS). The research contributes to a better understanding of the relationship between the institutional environment, innovation and competitiveness of the agricultural sector.

The fourth area is related to climate risks, adaptation and resilience of rural ecosystems. Here the candidate participates in interdisciplinary research based on scenario and multi-model analyses, assessing the impact of climate change on agriculture, ecosystem services and regional development, as well as the opportunities for adaptation policies and investments.

The identified areas of scientific interest are complemented by the candidate's project activities. The competition documents present information about participation in 7 international and 1 national scientific and educational projects, with the candidate being the leader of one of the international projects.

Brief summary and assessment:

At this point in my review, my assessment of the main directions in the candidate's research work is extremely high, because in their entirety, the directions outline a broad interdisciplinary, sustainable, logically structured, upgraded and scientifically recognizable profile of the candidate. In this profile, the focus falls on the economic and institutional components of the agrarian transformation in the conditions of green and climate reorientation of business and the adaptation of its structures.

4. Assessment of the candidate's pedagogical training and activities. His role in the training of young scientists.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Boryana Lyubcheva Ivanova has been a lecturer at the Department of Economics of the Agricultural University - Plovdiv since 03.09.2001, and as of 01.01.2026, her teaching experience amounts to 24 years, 3 months and 28 days.

The submitted reference for educational employment shows that despite holding administrative positions, the candidate has achieved significant educational employment.

During the period 2021/2022 – 2025/2026, the total employment of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Boryana Ivanova amounts to 3584.2 hours, which means an average annual employment of 756.84 hours. This employment includes classroom and extracurricular employment, both in the Bachelor's and Master's degree programs and with students in the Master's degree programs.

Assoc. Prof. Ivanova works systematically and in the direction of training more highly qualified personnel, as evidenced by the work with the two successfully defended doctoral students. In terms of thematic aspects, the doctoral students' dissertations gravitate towards economic growth and sustainable development, which corresponds to the scientific interests and professional competence of Assoc. Prof. Ivanova.

Brief summary and assessment:

The facts and circumstances identified by me in point 4 undoubtedly show and prove that Assoc. Prof. Dr. Boryana Ivanova has significant and sustainable teaching experience, combined with a continuous high academic workload. Her active work with students and doctoral candidates reflects not only profound professional competence, but also a clearly realized vision and operationally implemented mission for the formation of a rising generation of scientific personnel and the development of the academic community at the University of Plovdiv. I assess her activity as one that has a lasting institutional effect and significant importance for the development of science and practice. In addition, I believe that the presented results fully cover and build on the regulatory requirements for teaching and teaching activities when occupying the academic position of "professor".

5. Significance of the results obtained, proven by citations, publications in prestigious journals, awards, membership in international and national scientific bodies, etc.

The significance of the presented scientific production can be judged by the fact that out of a total of 31 publications, 26 or 83.87% were published in journals referenced in the prestigious databases Scopus and Web of Science (Core Collection). 32.26% of the publications are in journals with an impact factor and/or impact rank, with 12.9% of the publications being in journals that fall into the first quartile (Q 1).

The assessment of the scientific community for the presented scientific production is illustrated by the interest of the community in the presented results. Indicative in this regard is the presented reference of the citations. In connection with the proof of the fulfillment of the minimum national scientometric requirements, information is presented for 31 noted citations, of which 28 in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information and 3 in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review. Thus, the presented citations generate 450 points in group D with a required minimum of 100 points.

Additional evidence of the quality and significance of the scientific output is the information from the Impact Factor Report of journals referenced and indexed in SCOPUS and Web of Science, which contains citations of articles by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Boryana Lyubcheva Ivanova. It shows that 18 of the presented citations (58.06%) are

in journals with an impact factor and/or impact rank that fall in the first quartile (Q 1), and another 6.5% are in the second quartile (Q 2).

Brief summary and assessment:

The publication profile of Assoc. Prof. Dr. Boryana Lyubcheva Ivanova identified by me is characterized by the presence of articles in first quartile (Q1) journals and a significant share of publications in editions indexed in Scopus and Web of Science. Citations in journals with an impact factor and a high quartile rank confirm the scientific recognizability of the results. I assess the significance of the scientific production as high and fully consistent with the requirements for holding the academic position of "professor".

6. Significance of contributions to science and practice. A motivated answer to the question of the extent to which the candidate has a clearly outlined profile of scientific research work;

Based on the overall analysis of the presented scientific production - articles in refereed and indexed international publications, monographs and book chapters, studies, scientific reports and habilitation thesis - a categorical conclusion can be drawn that the candidate has a clearly outlined, consistently developed and scientifically substantiated profile of his research activity.

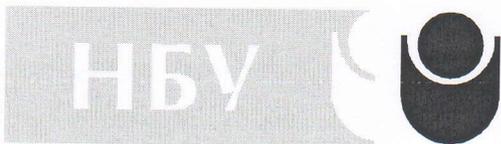
The research profile is concentrated in the field of agrarian economics, institutional analysis and the cooperative model, bioeconomy and circular transformation of the agrarian sector, sustainable rural development and adaptation to climate change. The thematic sequence shows a logical evolution – from in-depth institutional and economic analysis of cooperative structures and agrarian policy, through conceptual and empirical research on the bioeconomy, to interdisciplinary developments related to climate risk, sustainability and knowledge management in agrarian systems.

I. ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS

original contributions stand out most clearly in the development and adaptation of the bioeconomy concept to the Bulgarian context, including an assessment of the sectoral and regional potential for biomass production, an analysis of the prerequisites and constraints to the development of bioeconomy sectors and the formulation of strategic guidelines for their development. In the field of the cooperative model and energy cooperatives, specific institutional and economic characteristics of the Bulgarian environment have been highlighted in a comparative international context. In research related to climate vulnerability and adaptation of rural areas, the candidate participates in the adaptation of global scenario models to the national and regional level and in the economic interpretation of the results obtained.

II. METHODOLOGICAL CONTRIBUTIONS

The methodological contributions are expressed in the application and combination of institutional analysis, econometric methods, spatial mapping, scenario and multi-model assessments, as well as integrated approaches to measuring sustainability and ecosystem services. Methodologies have been developed and applied to assess the potential of the bioeconomy, to analyze the resource base of rural areas and to study knowledge and advisory flows within the AKIS framework.



The interdisciplinary nature of the tools used testifies to a high methodological culture and ability to integrate economic, environmental and institutional dimensions.

III. SCIENTIFIC CONTRIBUTIONS

The **scientific (theoretical) contributions** are related to enriching the institutional analysis in the agrarian economy; conceptualizing the connections between bioeconomy, circular economy and sustainable development, as well as further developing the understanding of the role of public policies and cooperative structures in the context of green transformation and climate pressure.

IV. APPLIED CONTRIBUTIONS

The **applied contributions** are significant and have direct relevance for the formation of agricultural, regional and climate policies. The developments contain reasoned recommendations on the distribution of public support, the development of rural areas, adaptation strategies to climate change, the stimulation of the bioeconomy and the improvement of consulting and knowledge transfer systems. Some of the results have been integrated into strategic documents, expert reports and international partnerships, which indicates real public and practical significance.

Brief summary and assessment:

Based on the identified facts and circumstances, I believe that the candidate demonstrates a high degree of scientific maturity, a clearly structured research line, a sustainable presence in the international scientific community and the ability to generate original, methodologically sound and practically applicable results. The body of work justifies my categorical conclusion that the candidate's contributions are significant both for the development of agrarian economic science and for the improvement of management and political instruments, mechanisms, structures and policies in the sector. Therefore, they fully meet the requirements for holding the academic position of "professor".

7. Critical notes and recommendations

I have no critical remarks. I would like to suggest to the candidate not to stop, but even to accelerate the pace of work and obtaining results and soon invite us to participate in the jury for DOCTOR OF SCIENCES.

8. Personal impressions and opinion of the reviewer

For more than a quarter of a century, I have had the opportunity to directly observe the consistent and sustainable academic growth of Ms. Ivanova. This long-term perspective gives me reason to confidently state that her professional path is the result of purposefulness, thoroughness and perseverance. Even in her student years, she showed an abiding interest in the New Institutional Economics and the issues of collective action (Collective Action). These are areas that are also significant for my own academic pursuits. They require a high degree of analytical maturity. Even then, she was distinguished by her striving for in-depth understanding, rather than formal acquisition of knowledge, which clearly outlined her future scientific and academic trajectory.

In the following years, I could confidently state that she has established herself as a lecturer with a clear conceptual framework, analytical precision and a distinct



practical orientation. For me, she is an organized, cooperative and reliable colleague who approaches both scientific work and the academic community with respect. I highly value not only her professional qualities, but also her personal integrity, responsibility and willingness to take on commitments and implement them precisely. I am convinced that she fully deserves the academic growth she strives for.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the candidate's pedagogical, scientific and applied scientific activities, I believe that Assoc. Prof. Dr. Boryana Lyubcheva Ivanova meets the requirements of the ZRASRB, PPZRASRB and the Regulations of the Agrarian University for its application, significantly exceeding the mandatory minimum scientometric indicators, and the presented production in terms of quality and thematic scope corresponds to the necessary professional level for holding the academic position of Professor of Economics and Management of Agriculture.

All this gives me reason to evaluate her overall activity **POSITIVELY**.

I am pleased to propose to the esteemed Scientific Jury to also vote positively, and the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Economics at the Agricultural University - Plovdiv to elect **Assoc. Prof. Dr. Boryana Lyubcheva Ivanova** as "**PROFESSOR**" in the scientific specialty **Economics and Management (Agriculture)**.

Date: 23.02.2026

Plovdiv

REVIEWER :

(Prof. Dr. Ivan Boevsky)