

## REVIEW

**under the procedure for obtaining the educational and scientific degree of Doctor of Philosophy under the doctoral program „Economics and Management (Industry)“ in Academy of Economics „D. A. Tsenov“ - Svishtov**

**Reviewer:** Assoc. Prof. Teodora Georgieva Filipova PhD, Department of „Commercial Business“ of „D. A. Tsenov“ Academy of Economics - Svishtov

**Author of the dissertation:** Ayten Bayryam Sabri, d020419180, PhD student at the Department of Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship

**Dissertation topic:** „Sustainable development of industrial enterprises“

**Reason for writing the opinion:** Order No. 463/26.05.2023 of the Rector of the „D. A. Tsenov“ Academy of Economics for inclusion in the composition of the scientific jury and Regulations for the development of the academic staff at the Academy of Economics

### I. Information about the PhD student

Ayten Bayryam Sabri is a part-time PhD student at the Department of Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship, as of 2019. He graduated from the Master's degree program at the Academy of Economics - Svishtov, and earned a bachelor's degree at the "Paisiy Hilendarski" Plovdiv University. He specializes in foreign trade at Anadolu University - Plovdiv branch. In her professional life, she went through various administrative positions related to accounting, banking, pension insurance and life insurance, but in recent years she has been involved in the activities of "Gold Oil" Ltd. - Harmanli (currently Commercial Director), an enterprise for the production of sunflower oil and other sunflower products. He speaks Bulgarian, Turkish, English, German and Russian languages. Ayten Sabri's rich practical experience explains her high expertise, familiarity and ability to analyze current market trends.

### II. General presentation of the dissertation work

- **Subject, object, goal, thesis, tasks:** The introduction of the doctoral thesis outlines the framework of the research and introduces the reader to the set goal, the defended thesis, the tasks to be realized, the object and the subject of research. All components of the introduction are clearly defined and delineated, fully subordinated to the title.

- **Volume:** The dissertation is spread over 178 standard pages, of which - introduction - 6 pages, exposition - 142 pages, conclusion - 1 page, references - 9 pages, appendices - 20 pages.

- **Structure:** In the dissertation, three logically connected and volume-balanced chapters are dedicated to the theoretical, methodical and applied side of the researched problem. The introductory and concluding parts are designed in unison with their main purpose – familiarizing the reader with the topic and forming the main conclusions as a result of the conducted scientific and empirical research.

- **Literature used:** The dissertation research is based on a significant number of literary sources, namely: 71 Cyrillic and Latin titles and 39 specialized websites. Bulgarian and foreign-language literary sources are used that are sufficient in terms of volume and thematic focus.



- **Appendices:** the exposition in the dissertation work is adequately illustrated by means of 4 appendices. All of them contribute to the enrichment of the text with additional resources.

### III. Assessment of the form and content of the dissertation

The presented dissertation in form meets the requirements for a similar type of research, namely: it has a title page, table of contents, introduction, statement, conclusion - summary of the obtained results, bibliography. The topic of the dissertation work can be defined as topical in nature, dissertationable in terms of issues, necessary as research. The proposed manuscript is designed at a high scientific, stylistic, grammatical and technical level. Real data from NSI, analytical reports of the Ministry of Economy, materials of the Association of producers of vegetable oils and butter products in Bulgaria, websites of investigated producers, results of the author's survey, annual financial reports of oil producers and others were used. Citation is in APA style as required. The opinions of other authors are duly and correctly cited. Admirations deserve the presentation of their own view on the main highlights of the study. The summaries and conclusions faithfully reflect what was achieved in the dissertation.

*1. Relevance of the topic:* The concept of sustainable development arose as a result of the awareness of the need for constructive ideas to overcome the negative phenomena in modern society, threatening humanity with ecological catastrophe and social discomfort. In this sense, it is a kind of response to the norms existing in society, the samples and models of behavior contained in them. The idea embodies new values and new principles of regulation of processes in the field of the economy, the social sphere and the environment. Sustainable development is a complex concept that consolidates traditional understandings of the relationship between man and nature, giving them a new meaning corresponding to modern social theory and practice. Scientific research oriented to such a topic is timely, relevant and significant. The issue is wide-ranging and offers the interested parties many directions for analysis. Concentrating on a specific aspect and a specific sector contributes to a more in-depth presentation of the situation.

*The introduction* of the doctoral thesis outlines the framework of the research and introduces the reader to the set goal, the defended thesis, the tasks to be implemented, the object and the subject of research. Authors who worked on the topic are highlighted; limitations have been formulated due to the scope of the problem; basic research methods are presented.

*The first chapter* of the dissertation is dedicated to the essential characteristics of the sustainable development policy. The in-depth study of the scientific literature, the discussion with the opinions of other researchers, the author's position on the main aspects of the study are impressive. The theoretical statements are traced from the emergence of the concept through indicators to sustainable development approaches.

*The second chapter* of the dissertation is methodologically oriented. Its scope includes issues related to delineating the normative framework, analyzing the main guidelines and existing approaches, concluding with the contributing point in it – the adaptation of a methodology for assessing the sustainable development of industrial enterprises, applicable to enterprises from the vegetable-oil industry. A business card of the base enterprises is presented.

*The third chapter* of the dissertation has a practical and applied orientation. On the basis of current data, a situational review of the production of raw materials and vegetable oil was carried out in recent years, as well as a SWOT analysis of the state and development of the vegetable oil industry in Bulgaria. Of interest to the scientific community and business practice are the results of the conducted survey among the leading companies in the industry. By means



of a well-structured questionnaire, a valuable empirical resource has been accumulated for the initiatives, programs, strategies, problems and perspectives facing the industrial enterprises of the vegetable-oil sector.

*The summaries* and conclusions after each chapter neatly summarize the main points of the overall research work.

*The conclusion* finalizes and gives completeness to the dissertation.

2. *Degree of development of the topic by other authors:* In recent years, more and more researchers and practitioners have focused their scientific and applied interest on sustainable development. There is no shortage of publications in this area. It should be noted, however, that they all emphasize specific directions from the overall complex and multifaceted nature of the concept: from an economic, social, and ecological point of view. However, the dynamic market environment leads to the emergence of niches that require solving a number of other questions and problems. It should be noted that the work of PhD student Ayten Sabri is focused on enterprises from a specific industry, which distinguishes it from other studies. In this way, entering in detail into the specifics of their activity, she purposefully comments, analyzes and derives recommendations for a specific sector of the KID. On the basis of existing opinions and opinions, the doctoral student adapts his own toolkit, through which he builds on the existing scientific knowledge for sustainable development.

3. *The total volume of the dissertation* allows us to conclude that the author presents his own and other people's views and studies to a sufficiently extensive extent. There is a balance between the content of the individual chapters, as well as between the paragraphs within them. For all the basic concepts from the title, enough space is allocated for their clarification. It does not contain texts that lead to ambiguity, ambiguity and irrelevance.

4. *Illustrative material* - the main text is illustrated by 2 tables and 17 figures. Appendices cover material related to major reports; indicators; state of basic raw materials; questionnaire. All of them are logically and meaningfully developed, help to visualize the main ideas, contribute to flexibility in presenting theoretical ideas and empirical data.

5. *The manuscript* is distinguished by a scientific style, a concise statement, without excessive descriptiveness. Logical doctoral student Ayten Sabri arrives at relevant theoretical summaries, methodological solutions and reasoned propositions. The scientific apparatus used, the demonstrated ability for constructive analysis, scientific synthesis and reasoned recommendations lead to the presentation of the content without unnecessary deviations, contradictions and inaccuracies.

6. *The statistical data used and the data accumulated through the survey, the financial statements analyzed*, were processed by means of adequate calculation procedures. The interpretation of the obtained results is correct, the conclusions are accurate, the generalizations are precise.

7. I believe that *the literary sources used are correctly cited*. References to other people's opinions are made in the style adopted for this. I can't say with absolute certainty, but I think the PhD student did not copy-paste. Apart from the verbatim texts, the rest has been scientifically interpreted by Ayten Sabri.



8. *The abstract*, in terms of format and content, meets the requirements for its development. In a synthesized form, it accurately, clearly and precisely reflects the presentation of the dissertation work. It can be defined as an adequate summary of what was achieved in theoretical and practical-applied terms in the doctoral development.

#### **IV. Scientific and scientific-applied contributions**

In the abstract, the doctoral student brings out 4 scientific and scientific-applied contributions from the dissertation work. I accept all of them and consider them to be my own work. My view of the main contributions, as a different wording, is:

1. Theoretical interpretation and enrichment of scientific knowledge related to sustainable development, skillfully reduced to industrial enterprises.
2. Adapting a methodology for assessing the level of sustainable development of industrial enterprises.
3. Empirical research, systematization and analysis of an information database on the level of sustainability, strategies and programs for sustainable development of enterprises from the vegetable-oil industry.
4. Derivation of summaries, recommendations and guidelines for optimization of programs and initiatives to improve the sustainable development of industrial enterprises.

Dissertation-related publications include: co-authorship in 1 studio; 1 independent article; 3 independent reports. All of them have a thematic focus, oriented to individual aspects of the sustainable development of the industry. In terms of volume and content, they contribute to ensuring publicity of the main ideas and results of the dissertation work among scientific circles. As a point assessment, they meet the minimum national requirements for acquiring the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

#### **V. Critical notes, questions and recommendations on the dissertation work**

I would like to make the following critical remarks and recommendations:

- The numbering of the last pages of the dissertation is broken due to having a page that is Landscape, but this is a minor technical issue.
- Within the framework of a dissertation research, it is not possible to comprehensively cover the three aspects of sustainable development - economic, social and ecological, but I recommend the doctoral student to continue his scientific path and carry out a similar practical study of the unexplored issues.
- The results of the survey could be interpreted in more detail, but given that this is a doctoral student's research, they can be accepted in their current form.
- The set is missing some documents that are intended to be provided to the reviewers and members of the scientific jury, according to Art. 72 of the Regulations for the development of the academic staff in the Academy of Economics. The points of contribution in the dissertation work, the list of publications on the subject, the reference for the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements for the award of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy are implemented as part of the Abstract, but should be presented in separate documents. List of participation in scientific forums - not available.

The mentioned notes and recommendations do not belittle the work of the doctoral student and have a critical-constructive character.

A **specific question** for the PhD student is: "Does she intend to deal with the broad topic of sustainable development - academically or in a practical-applied way?"

## VI. Summary conclusion and opinion

The dissertation is a completed scientific-applied product that meets the requirements for a similar type of research. It contains the necessary theoretical, methodical and practical-applied summaries, analyzes and conclusions. The accompanying documents presented complement the possibility of preparing a review on the occasion of the application for an educational and scientific degree. Considering that the PhD student:

- shows the ability to research, systematize and critically analyze theoretical and empirical information resources;
- presents the author's position on the researched problems;
- successfully handles the methodological tools necessary for scientific research;
- demonstrates a creative ambition to investigate current, complex and significant problems for modern science and practice;
- highlighted notes are minor,

I can conclude that my overall assessment is **positive** and I support with "YES" the acquisition of **degree "PhD"** by **Aiten Bayryam Sabri** in professional field 3.8 Economics, PhD program "Economics and Management (Industry)".

July 21, 2023

Reviewer: .....  
(Assoc. Prof. Teodora Filipova PhD)