

## REVIEW

**on the competition for the academic position "Associate Professor"**

**announced by D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov**

*Reviewer:* **Prof. Marina Angelova Nikolova, PhD** professional field 3.8 "Economics", scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Agricultural Economics)", Department of Agricultural Economics at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov, included in the register of the academic staff of the Republic of Bulgaria in the National Centre for Information and Documentation (NACID).

**Regarding:** participation of Head Assist. Prof. Elena Yordanova Shopova, PhD in the announced competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education: 3. "Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences", professional field: 3.8 "Economics," scientific specialty: "Economics and Management (Agricultural Economics)", announced in the State Gazette, issue 92 dated November 3, 2023, for the needs of the Department of Agricultural Economics at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov.

### 1. Presentation of the candidate

In the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the field of higher education: 3. "Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences", professional field: 3.8 "Economics", scientific specialty: "Economics and Management (Agricultural Economics)", announced in the State Gazette, issue 92 dated November 3, 2023, for the needs of the Department of Agricultural Economics at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov, the only candidate participating is Head Assist. Prof. Elena Yordanova Shopova, PhD, who has submitted the necessary documents.

### 2. Reason for writing the review

The present review is written on the basis of the Decision of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Industry and Commerce at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov (Protocol No. 4/13.12.2023), Order No. 1189/15.12.2023 of the Rector of D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov, determining the composition of the scientific jury in accordance with the requirements of Art. 5, para. 1, and Art. 121, para. 1 and para. 2 of the Regulation on the Development of the Academic Staff at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov (2023) and the Decision of the first meeting of the scientific jury (Protocol No. 1/10.01.2024).

### 3. Personal characteristics of the candidate

The candidate, Head Assist. Prof. Elena Yordanova Shopova, PhD has been a lecturer under a permanent employment contract at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov since 2008. In 2014, Elena Yordanova obtained a doctoral degree (according to diploma No. 2014001/13.01.2014) in the scientific specialty 05.02.20 Social Management. Elena Yordanova's professional development can be divided into *two main periods* – as a teacher in the field of secondary education and as a lecturer in higher education.

In 1991, she completed her secondary education at Secondary school "Aleko Konstantinov" – Svishtov (diploma Series A-91, registration No. 4811 dated July 1, 1991).

In 1996, she completed her first higher education, acquiring the Master's Degree in Bulgarian Philology from VTU "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" – Veliko Tarnovo (diploma Series B 96 / VTU, No. 01517, registration No. 23020 / 1996), and in 1993, as a mobility, the training was conducted in Bratislava, Slovakia. Immediately after completing her degree, Elena Yordanova began her professional experience in the field of education as a teacher of Bulgarian language and literature at the first Bulgarian secular school "Filip Sakelariievich" in Svishtov. Soon after, she continued her teaching career in Bulgarian language and literature at the elite parallel classes with a foreign language profile at Nikolay Katranov Secondary School until 2008. As part of her professional development and improvement, in 1997, Elena Yordanova obtained a certificate for specialisation and qualification in the field of "Methodology of Literary Education" at VTU "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" - Veliko Tarnovo (registration No. 2974/1997). In 2002, she acquired a certificate for a professional-qualification degree at Shumen University "Ep. Konstantin Preslavski", Department for Improving the Qualification of Teachers – Varna, attaining the FIFTH professional-qualification degree (Series PK No. 1759, registration No. 3587/08.11.2002).

The second period of Head Assist. Prof. Yordanova's professional development is associated with the completion of her second higher education in 2001, earning a Master's Degree in the specialty of "Financial Management" at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov (diploma Series SA – 2001, No. 024010, registration No. 39880/2001). The professional experience of Elena Yordanova Shopova as a lecturer continues since 2008 in the field of higher education with the appointment as an assistant in the Department of Management at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics, following a conducted competition. She later became successively Senior Assistant (in 2010) and Head Assistant (in



2011). Since 2022, she has been a lecturer in the Department of Agricultural Economics at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics. The candidate has been serving as the Departmental Alumni Coordinator since 2017 to date for both the Department of Management in the Faculty of Management and Marketing and the Department of Agricultural Economics in the Faculty of Industry and Commerce. After successfully defending her doctoral thesis, Elena Yordanova Shopova has participated in three research projects at the Research Institute of D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov. These projects were financed through state subsidies for scientific activities, and she has served as the project leader for one and as a team member for two others. She has also participated in the project "Economic Education in Bulgaria 2030", funded by the Operational Programme "Science and Education for Smart Growth", serving as an expert/digital educational content joint programmes in 2023. As part of the national project "Student Practices" Elena Yordanova Shopova has been involved at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics as an academic mentor, serving in this capacity in 2014 and between 2016 and 2023. According to a certificate from the governing body of D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics as of November 2023, the candidate's total work experience is 27 years and 2 months, including 15 years and 8 months at the Academy as an assistant/senior assistant/head assistant. This satisfies the minimum requirement of at least 5 academic years of experience as an "assistant" according to the Regulation on the Development of the Academic Staff at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics from 2023. Since 2016, Elena Yordanova Shopova has been a member of the Union of Scientists in Bulgaria.

In addition to her teaching and research activities, Elena Shopova is also involved in public service. She serves as a municipal councilor in the municipality of Svishtov, with a mandate from 2023 to 2027. She holds the position of Chairperson of the Permanent Commission on "The Law on Combating Corruption and Forfeiture of Illegally Acquired Property" and Deputy Chairperson of the Permanent Commission on "Normative Regulation, Civil Rights, Public Order, and Security".

According to the provided reference on academic employment as of December 6, 2023, Head Assist. Prof. Elena Yordanova Shopova, PhD has an average annual workload as a head assistant for the last 5 academic years of 540.03 contact hours (with a required minimum workload of 400 academic hours according to the Regulation on the Development of the Academic Staff at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov, 2023). The workload for each academic year is as follows: 2019/2020 – 458 hours, 2020/2021 – 591.20 hours, 2021/2022 – 561.5 hours, 2022/2023 – 566.55 hours, 2023/2024 – 522.9 hours.

Since 2008, Elena Yordanova has enriched her professional skills by successfully completing training programmes in "Creativity and Heuristics in



Scientific Research and Teaching", "Application of the Case Method in Teaching Economics to Students", "Methodology of Empirical Research", "Creating Interactive Educational Content for Moodle with H5P" and others.

The documents submitted by the candidate correspond in terms of quantity and content to the requirements of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, Regulations on the Implementation of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and the the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics for participation in the competition for the academic position of associate professor in the field of higher education: 3. Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences, professional field: 3.8 Economics, scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Agricultural Economics)", announced in the State Gazette No. 92/03.11.2023:

1. Statement to the Rector for Participation in the Competition.
2. Curriculum vitae (Europass).
3. Copy of the diploma for the obtained educational and scientific degree of "Doctor".
4. List of publications submitted for the competition for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor".
5. Reference of academic employment as head assistant for the last 5 (five) academic years.
6. Certificate of professional experience in the field.
7. List of submitted monographic work for review.
8. List of submitted publications for review, demonstrating compliance with the minimum national requirements for field 3. "Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences," indicators 4 to 10.
9. Reference for the candidate's citations and reviews in scientific publications, demonstrating compliance with the minimum national requirements for field 3. "Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences," indicators 11 to 13.
10. List of research projects in which the candidate has participated since the defense of the doctoral dissertation.
11. Declaration, signed by the candidate, stating that there is no proven plagiarism in the scientific works according to the established legal procedures.
12. List of submitted academic textbooks for review.
13. Reference for developed and taught lecture courses.
14. List of submitted educational materials for review.
15. Reference for the scientific and scientific-applied contributions in the submitted publications and materials for review.

16. References and supporting evidence for activities related to additional indicators according to Article 124, paragraph 2 of the Regulation on the Development of the Academic Staff at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics.
17. Abstracts of the works submitted for review under the competition, which do not repeat those submitted for the acquisition of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor", in paper form and in electronic format (PDF).
18. Original and/or copies of the publications and materials submitted for review in the competition.

***In summary, there is a candidate for the academic position of "Associate Professor" with sufficient professional, research, and practical experience in their professional field, meeting the requirements in accordance with Article 2b, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria in the scientific field 3. "Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences", Regulations on the Implementation of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, and Article 116 of the Regulations for the development of the academic staff at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics.***

#### **4. Quantitative and qualitative assessment (analysis) based on the criteria and indicators for teaching activities**

Head Assist. Prof. Elena Yordanova Shopova, PhD has been engaged in teaching activities at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics since 2008, serving as a lecturer under a permanent employment contract. The submitted autobiography reveals active involvement in teaching throughout all the years at the higher education institution.

The provided official reference on the academic employment of Head Assist. Prof. Elena Yordanova Shopova, PhD for the education of students in the Bachelor's degree programme over the last five academic years indicates that she exceeds the established norm for the higher education institution. According to the provided reference, Head Assist. Prof. Elena Yordanova Shopova, PhD is involved in teaching the following lecture courses (and in developing some of them): 13 disciplines in the Bachelor's degree programme: Agricultural Management, Agricultural Ecology, Rural and Agricultural Tourism, Rural Development, Ecological and Sustainable Development of the Agro-Firm, Agricultural Entrepreneurship, Regulations and Standardization of Agricultural Production, Ecological and Sustainable Business Development, Ecotourism, Introduction to Agribusiness, Strategic Decisions in Agribusiness, Small and Family Agribusiness, Conflict Management (Department of Management); and 4 disciplines in the Master's degree programme: Alternative



Sources of Income in Rural Areas, Small and Family Agribusiness, Rural Development, Managerial Communication and Corporate Behaviour (Department of Management).

A mandatory element of the general assessment of the educational and teaching work of the candidate for the academic position of "associate professor" is her participation in providing the educational process with lecture courses, teaching aids and academic textbooks. In this aspect, the educational disciplines taught by Head Assist. Prof. Elena Yordanova Shopova, PhD have been provided during her teaching activities with up-to-date content, including both authored and co-authored texts. The competition materials include a standalone textbook "Ecological Policy and Social Responsibility," 200 pages, ISBN: 978-954-543-058-9, a standalone teaching aid for seminar sessions "Ecological Policy and Social Responsibility," 100 pages, ISBN: 978-954-543-059-6, and three co-authored textbooks with clearly defined authorship participation by the candidate (Administration in Management and Public Administration; Quality Management; Managerial Aspects of Organisation).

According to a note prepared by the Center for Professional Training, a licensed trainer of Center for Professional Training at the National Agency for Professional Education and Training, Head Assist. Prof. Elena Yordanova, PhD has conducted qualification training and courses in "Classroom Behaviour Management", studied in a qualification course for awarding qualification credits to pedagogical specialists under Ordinance No. 15/2019 of the Ministry of Education and Science on "Classroom Behaviour Management" from November 2, 2018, to November 15, 2018; "Attestation of the Activity of Pedagogical Specialists", studied in a qualification course for awarding qualification credits to pedagogical specialists under Ordinance No. 15/2019 of the Ministry of Education and Science on "Attestation of the Activity of Pedagogical Specialists" from October 31, 2019, to November 2, 2018; "Organisation of Business Meetings and Events", studied in qualification training as part of the profession "Office Secretary", specialty "Administrative Service" from June 17, 2022, to August 11, 2022, Project "Successful Together" from the National Employment Action Plan, under a contract between the University of Economics – Varna and AIKB Sofia; "Increasing Personal Responsibility and Discipline through Time Management," studied in qualification training "Increasing Personal Responsibility and Discipline through Time Management" from June 13, 2022, to June 16, 2022, Project "Successful Together" from the National Employment Action Plan, under a contract between D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics and BICA Sofia; "Communication in Bulgarian", studied in training on Key Competence: Communication in the Native Language, course "Communication in Bulgarian" under a contract between D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics and the Municipality of Svishtov, Project No. BG05M9OP001-2.056.0015-C01 "Socio-Economic Integration of Vulnerable Groups. Integrated



measures to improve access to education in the municipality of Svishtov", funded by the Operational Programme "Human Resources Development" 2014-2020 and the Operational Programme "Science and Education for Smart Growth" 2014-2020, co-financed by the EU through the European Social Fund (ESF). For each of the disciplines taught at the the Center for Professional Training, Head Assist. Prof. Elena Yordanova, PhD independently developed the educational content and curricula. This demonstrates significant activity and serves as a testament to her experience as a lecturer with interests in current issues in the field of economics and management.

According to the certificate issued by the management of D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics, as of November 20, 2023, Head Assist. Prof. Elena Yordanova, PhD has a total work experience of 27 years, 2 months, and 14 days, including 15 years, 8 months, and 16 days at the University. Additionally, the University's management certifies that Head Assist. Prof. Elena Yordanova, PhD has worked under an additional labour contract based on Article 110 of the Labour Code for two projects implemented by the University.

The specified quantitative and qualitative parameters of the educational and teaching work of the candidate for the academic position "Associate Professor" give reason to express a very good assessment of her professional level within the framework of both classroom and extracurricular activities.

***In summary, the educational and teaching activities of the candidate are in full compliance with the requirements of Art. 116, paragraph 5 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics.***

#### **5. Quantitative and qualitative assessment (analysis) based on the criteria and indicators for research activity**

The quantitative characteristics of the scientific studies and research activity of Head Assist. Prof. Elena Yordanova, PhD are prepared based on the data from the lists of publications submitted by the candidate for the academic position of "Associate Professor." In structural and numerical terms, they are as follows: monographs – 1, studies – 5, articles – 10, reports – 12. The total number of publications is 28 scientific works, of which independent publications are 23. One co-authored article has been published in a scientific journal, refereed and indexed in a globally renowned database of scientific information.

For the publications presented in the contest, the candidate has certified with the relevant reference that they do not repeat the ones presented for the acquisition of the Educational and Scientific Degree "Doctor".

The papers of Head Assist. Prof. Elena Yordanova, PhD have not been proven to involve plagiarism according to the established legal procedures. A Declaration of Originality has been submitted, fulfilling the requirements of Article 24, Paragraph 1, Item 5 of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, Article 53, Paragraph 1, Item 5 of the Regulations on the Implementation of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as Article 116, Paragraph 2, Item 2 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics.

**R e c a p i t u l a t i o n**  
**of publications submitted for review for compliance with**  
**the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b, para. 2 and 3 of**  
**the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria**  
**in scientific field 3. "Social, economic and legal sciences" by indicator groups**  
**of Head Assist. Prof. Elena Yordanova Shopova, PhD**

Group of indicators	Indicator number	Minimum requirements for associate professor (points)	Actual performance by Dr. Yordanova (points)
A	1	50	50
B	2	-	-
C	3	100	100
D	from 4 to 10	200	264.00
E	from 11 to 13	50	85
F	from 14 to 21	-	-
Total:	-	400	499.00

From the presented data, it is evident that, in a quantitative aspect, the candidate's scientific publications exceed the minimum legal requirements in this regard. However, equally important are the qualitative characteristics of the conducted research. The author thoroughly investigates and analyses a wide-ranging thematic scope, demonstrating skills in adept handling of scientific concepts, a commitment to critical analysis of scientific propositions, and adherence to a scholarly style in exposition.

Among the presented works, the most significant is the habilitation thesis on the topic "Management Aspects in Contemporary Agriculture", with a total volume of 200 pages. The work has been reviewed by two habilitated specialists in the field of agricultural economics. The relevance of the analysed issues and



the primary contributory focus of the work are related to the examination of management aspects in contemporary agriculture in connection with adapting to dynamic changes in the organisational and environmental context. The work emphasises ensuring efficiency and sustainability in management activities and the sustainability of agricultural practices. The valuable direction of the research unifies management and ecological perspectives in the research goal and is driven by the desire for further exploration of management aspects and the role of the human factor in the sustainability of modern agro-organisations. Its significance lies in its contribution to the overall development of the agricultural sector. In the monographic work, problems and trends in the development of modern agriculture at the national and regional levels have been investigated through the analysis of ecological-ethical management aspects in agricultural farms in the Veliko Tarnovo region. The thesis of the monographic work, asserting that the effectiveness of the management process contributes to the sustainability and development of modern agriculture, has been successfully defended. Through a systematic review of the literature, authorial commentary, and summarisations, research trends related to issues in the development of contemporary society, particularly in organisations within the agricultural sector, have been derived. The study has examined the aggregated factors for the sustainability of the management process as an integral part of sustainable development in contemporary society, specifically focusing on the social and ecological aspects of organisational development. The study is structured into two main aspects. The first, a managerial aspect of discussion, encompasses identified and analysed managerial skills. Additionally, the study proposes the author's ecological-ethical value-based *approach* for achieving managerial sustainability, a *model* for environmentally friendly management processes in agricultural farms, a *methodology* for integrating and applying managerial skills, and a *methodology* for the sustainable development of modern agriculture. The second, environmentally sustainable aspect, examines the essence, principles, and significance of social responsibility and environmental responsibility as fundamental prerequisites for the ethics and effectiveness of the management process in modern agriculture. An empirical study has been conducted through a developed and distributed survey questionnaire to a specified number of respondents. The main conclusions drawn from the results of the survey indicate the objective state of attitudes towards ecological and ethical issues in agricultural farms. After the empirical testing of the methodological algorithm, along with the formulated summaries representing management and relationships in agricultural farms, conclusions and recommendations for achieving environmental sustainability and resilience have been identified. These are formed from the theoretical reasoning and practical investigations conducted. In conclusion, it has



been established that the innovative approach in the management of agro-organisations, proposed and examined in the monographic work, combines traditional management approaches, styles, and practices, focusing primarily on the human factor in agricultural farms under the conditions of an economy transforming towards sustainability.

The presented 21 articles and reports, along with 5 studies, published in non-peer-reviewed publications with scientific review and in edited collective volumes, comply with the minimum national requirements according to Article 2b, Paragraph 2 and 3 of the the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria in scientific field 3, "Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences" (in accordance with performance indicators D 7 and D 9).

Based on the submitted scientific publications for review regarding compliance with the minimum national requirements for scientific field 3, "Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences," indicators 4 to 10, *two main areas of research interest* for Head Assist. Prof. Elena Yordanova, PhD can be outlined. These correspond to the two periods in her professional development at the Academy of Economics, namely: *in the field of human factor management and in the field of modern agriculture*. The combination of knowledge from two scientific directions in economics allows for the expansion and enrichment of the field of scientific research, presenting various authorial positions and perspectives, introducing new aspects in the interpretation of issues in the agricultural sector, focusing on the behaviour and role of the human factor in achieving sustainability and environmental compatibility in the management process of modern agricultural farms. In this context, we can identify the following directions that highlight the candidate's scientific interests:

***First, concerning issues related to the management and sustainable development of agricultural organisations:***

The theory of management aspects in modern agriculture has been systematised and further developed, and the author's point of view and analysis of the role of the human factor in the sustainability of modern agricultural organisations and its significance for the overall development of the agrarian sector have been proposed. The author's definitions, characteristics, leading modern trends in the management of the human factor, new directions, approaches and opportunities related to the management and development of modern agriculture are proposed, summarised and systematised. [Monograph, Group D publications 6.1., 7.1., 7.2., 7.4., 7.5., 7.6., 7.7.]; Management and ecological perspectives have been integrated into the research goal, exploring concepts related to behavioural change in the human factor within the management process. Through a systematic review of the literature and author's commentary and summaries, research trends related to the problems in the



development of modern society and more specifically in the organisations of the agricultural sector, have been derived. The generalised factors for the sustainability of the management process have been examined as an integral part of sustainable development in contemporary society, specifically focusing on the social and ecological aspects of organisational development. The conclusions have been established, further deepening and expanding the field of knowledge in the researched area. [Monograph, Group D Publications 7.1, 7.2, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7, 7.8, 7.9, 7.13, 7.15, 9.1]; The theory of agricultural management is analysed and further developed from the point of view of the factors training, as a leading priority, performance management for sustainability and environmentalisation of the management process and achieving rational behavior of the human factor, as a result of the improvement of the organisational long-term and effective strategy of the management team. [Monograph, Group D publications 6.1., 7.9., 7.10., 7.11., 7.15., 9.2.]

*Second, concerning issues related to the development of modern agriculture:*

The managerial and eco-friendly aspects of modern agriculture have been identified and analysed in the context of an economy transitioning towards sustainability, exploring opportunities for influence and interaction between them, with a focus on the importance of ethics and the necessity for the ecological management of agricultural holdings. The conclusion is affirmed that the effectiveness of the management process contributes to the sustainability and development of modern agriculture. [Monograph, Group D Publications 7.1, 7.2, 7.4, 7.5, 7.6, 7.7, 7.8, 7.9, 7.13, 7.15, 9.1]; Trends and guidelines for the development of the agrarian sector have been selected and highlighted in key strategic documents, emphasising their ecological-ethical orientation, which directs attention to less researched topics and enriches the scientific theory in the field of modern agricultural management. [Monograph, Group D publications 6.1., 7.1., 7.2., 7.5., 7.6., 9.1.]; The author's definitions and classifications are proposed for improving the management of agricultural holdings, and the essence and significance of the proposed author's ecological-ethical value approach in modern agriculture is clarified. [Monograph, Group D publications 7.7., 7.14., 7.17., 9.1.]; Scientific knowledge has been further developed through the proposed and explored eco-friendly aspects in the management of agricultural farms, related to the effective management of people for the sake of environmentally friendly production. This involves striking a balance between economic, social, and environmental issues, with their intersection represented through the analysis of studies related to social and environmental responsibility. [Monograph, Group D publications 7.3., 7.14.].

The presented publications are oriented towards current issues in the



economy, developed with scientific depth in the respective themes, and organised based on the author's perspectives.

During the period 2008-2023, according to a certificate of the Institute for Scientific Research at the Academy of Economics, Head Assist. Prof. Elena Yordanova, PhD actively participated in 3 (three) scientific research projects (with a requirement of at least two according to the Regulations for the development of the academic staff at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics), of which she was the head of one of them. The projects are oriented towards current issues in the economy. The candidate has been involved in the implementation of 2 (two) national educational projects carried out by the Economic Academy.

***In summary, it can be stated that the scientific production, both quantitatively and qualitatively, complies with the minimum national requirements in scientific field 3, "Social, Economic, and Legal Sciences", according to Article 2b, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, as well as the Regulations on the Implementation of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics, fully meeting the conditions for appointment to the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the scientific specialty of "Economics and Management (Agricultural Economics)".***

#### **6. Correspondence of the contributions in the scientific requirements with those announced by the candidate**

The scientific and scientific-applied contributions outlined in the the Reference for scientific and scientific-applied contributions in the publications and materials submitted for review from Head Assist. Prof. Elena Yordanova, PhD, according to the requirements of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics, ***correspond with the achievements contained in the publications*** presented for review, being distinguished in the following guidelines:

***First, a group of publications with scientific contributions of a theoretical nature:***

1. The chronology of the evolution in social and organisational development has been reviewed and, with the main emphasis, the theory of the role of the human factor and its leading importance in achieving a sustainable management process has been systematised and further developed, from the point of view of its nature, characteristics, main theories, approaches. Historically, the development of human relations within the management process in the conditions of national specificity,



European social environment and globalising world economy has been studied. [Monograph, Group D publications 7.8., 7.9., 7.10., 7.13., 7.15., 7.17., 7.20., 7.21., 9.3., 9.5.].

2. The need to improve the management of the human factor has been established and substantiated, by highlighting leading management skills, ethical management practices and competence, analysing the impact on behaviour when ethical dilemmas arise and solving ethical problems, as factors for the sustainability of the management process. [Monograph, Group D publications 6.1., 7.4., 7.11., 7.17., 7.18., 7.19., 7.20.].

3. Leading priorities in the common agricultural policy (CAP) are outlined and the main problems, trends and characteristics in the development of agriculture in Bulgaria, such as the structure of agricultural holdings, the importance of age and education of the human factor in modern agriculture, basic management skills and competencies of the agrarian entrepreneur are summarised. [Monograph, Group D publications 6.1., 7.1., 7.4., 7.5., 7.8.].

**Second, a group of publications *with scientific-applied contributions of a methodological nature*:**

1. The research is structured in two main aspects – the first, *management aspect* of reasoning, includes highlighted and analysed management skills, a methodology for building and applying management skills suitable for the new social and natural conditions, and a proposed new innovative approach that affirms the principles of sustainable development. The second, *ecological aspect*, examines the essence, principles and meaning of social and environmental responsibility. As a result of the research and reasoning, analysis and summarisation of theoretical propositions, the need for further development, enrichment and improvement of management in modern agriculture has been substantiated and proven, through the author's proposed: ecological-ethical structure (EES) of management in modern agriculture, including ecological and ethical value *approach* to achieve management sustainability (components of management through an ecological-ethical value approach (EECP) in agriculture), *a model* for an ecological management process in agricultural holdings, *a methodology* for reconciling and applying managerial skills, *a methodology* for the sustainable development of modern agriculture. [Monograph, Group D publications 6.1., 7.1., 7.2., 7.4., 7.5., 7.6., 7.7., 7.8, 7.9, 7.13, 7.15, 7.17, 7.18., 7.21., 9.1., 9.5].

2. A sector-oriented *methodological toolkit* has been developed, *reflecting the peculiarities of agricultural holdings from the Veliko Tarnovo region*, which proves the need to adopt environmentally friendly practices, tailored to the particularities of the specific agricultural holding and actually functioning ethical solutions when ethical dilemmas arise related to environmental protection, through which the ecological and ethical values and goals laid down in the strategy of the agricultural



organisation are realised in practice. [Monograph].

*Third, a group of publications with scientific-applied contributions of an empirical nature*

1. The degree of spread, the possibilities and the importance of the author's holistic management approach and an innovative sustainable management model, the necessity of which has been proven through personal surveys and direct observations in agricultural holdings from the Veliko Tarnovo region, have been evaluated. For their adoption and implementation, the main conclusions are summarised, recommendations and decisions are defined. Entrepreneurial attitudes and behaviour have been identified, and opportunities to influence human factor behaviour in an ecological-ethical direction have been researched and analysed. This is achieved by emphasising education, the level of investment in the education of agricultural producers and workers, and the approach to social responsibility, contributing to the effectiveness and sustainability of the management process. [Monograph, 6.1., 7.1., 7.2., 7.3., 7.4., 7.5., 7.6., 7.7., 7.8., 7.9., 7.10., 7.11., 7.12., 7.13., 7.14., 7.15., 7.16., 7.17., 7.18., 7.19., 7.20., 7.21., 9.1., 9.2., 9.3., 9.4., 9.5.].

2. A sector-specific methodology for implementing Environmental and Ethical Consumer Practices and the functioning of the Single European Code has been proposed, utilised, and tested in the studied agricultural enterprises. The environmental-ethical value orientation of management and the associated environmental-ethical responsibility of human factor behaviour have been evaluated, identifying strengths and weaknesses in this area. The main conclusions obtained on the basis of the greater percentage of the results in the survey show the real state of the attitude towards environmental problems in agricultural holdings. After the empirical testing of the methodological algorithm, along with the formulated summaries representing the management and relations in agricultural holdings, conclusions and recommendations formed by the theoretical reasoning and practical research are highlighted. [Monograph, 7.19.].

## **7. Characterisation of the candidate's academic reputation**

According to a reference for citations of publications with author Head Assist. Prof. Elena Yordanova, PhD, in scientific publications of other researchers, it is found that they are identified: one citation in a monograph – 10 points and citations in non-refereed journals with scientific review: in 11 publications – 15 citations of 5 points each – 75 points. *The total of 85 points, with which the candidate fully meets the minimum requirement of 50 points under indicator E (50 points), according to Appendix 1 of the Regulations on the Implementation of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.*



## 8. Critical notes and suggestions

I do not have any substantive criticism. My recommendation to Head Assist. Prof. Elena Yordanova, PhD is to maintain her publication activity in refereed scientific publications with Impact Factor and Impact Rank, such as Scopus and Web of Science.

## 9. Summary conclusion and opinion

Head Assist. Prof. Elena Yordanova, PhD participated in the competition for the academic position of "Associate Professor" with a sufficient volume of quality scientific works. In her research, she demonstrates thoroughness, innovation and analytical thinking, including scientific and scientific-applied contributions. In addition, Head Assist. Prof. Elena Yordanova, PhD, has many years of experience in research and teaching activities. The documents presented by her cover the necessary scientometric indicators and the indicators that reflect the measurable academic results in the teaching activity, laid down in the minimum requirements under Art. 2b, subparagraphs 2 and 3, and Art. 2b, subparagraph 5 of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria. The candidate fully meets the conditions for occupying the academic position "Associate Professor" in the scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Agricultural Economics)", specified in Art. 29 of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, in Art. 60 of the Regulations on the Implementation of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria and in Art. 129 of the Regulations for the Development of the Academic Staff at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics.

The above gives me the reason with full conviction to propose to the members of the scientific jury that Head Assist. Prof. Elena Yordanova, PhD be awarded the academic position "ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional direction 3.8. Economics, scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Agricultural Economics)", for which I will vote "YES".

Date: 16. 01.2024.  
Svishtov

Reviewed .....  
(Prof. M. .... PhD)

