



НОВ БЪЛГАРСКИ УНИВЕРСИТЕТ

ДЕПАРТАМЕНТ
"ИКОНОМИКА"

1618 София, ул. Монтенвидео 21; стая 603; тел.: 810603

REVIEW

for

**evaluation of a candidate in a competition for the occupation of the academic position
"PROFESSOR" in a professional direction 3.8. "Economy"**

Candidate: Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. **DARINA GEOGIEVA ZAIMOVA**, University of Thrace, Faculty of Economics, Department of "Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship", (*the only candidate under the announced competition*).

Topic of monographic work: "Bioeconomy and sustainable development", Ed. Rainbow +, ISBN 978-619-7251-44-9, 248 pages, 2023.

Member of the Scientific Jury: Prof. Dr. **Ivan Yochev Boevsky** - New Bulgarian University, Sofia, 3.0. "Social, economic and legal sciences", 3.8. "Economy".

Reason for presenting the review: Participation in the composition of the scientific jury for the competition for the academic position "PROFESSOR", according to Order No. 3133 of 19.09.2023.

The review was developed in compliance with the requirements of the RASRB, the Regulations for its implementation, the Regulations for the development of the academic staff at Trakii University - Stara Zagora and in compliance with the scientometric criteria for PN 3.8 "Economics" for occupying the academic position "PROFESSOR".

BRIEF BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS OF THE APPLICANT

Darina Georgieva Zaimova graduated with a bachelor's degree in "Business Administration" (in 2002) and a master's degree in "Business Administration" (in 2004) at the University of Economics - Varna. In 2008, she obtained an educational and scientific degree "doctor" in scientific direction 3.8 Economics, in scientific specialty 05.02.18 "Economics and management (agriculture)" at Thrace University. During her doctoral studies, she was a specialist at the Institute of Agricultural Economics of the Christian-Albrecht University, Department of Farm Management and Production Economics, Kiel, Germany.

In 2009, she was appointed as an "Assistant" to the "Management" department of the Faculty of Economics of Thrace University. For the academic year 2010-2011, Dr. Zaimova is a postdoctoral fellow at the European Research Institute on Cooperative and Social Enterprises – EURICSE, Trento, Italy, working on a Cooperative project models in the agricultural sector: Development perspectives and solutions across Europe (Italy and Bulgaria). Since 2012, he holds the academic position of "Associate Professor" in the Department of "Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship" of the Faculty of Economics of Thrace University. The courses he leads are in the field of planning and forecasting, entrepreneurship, social entrepreneurship, sustainable development, innovation, bioeconomy, etc. in the bachelor's and master's programs at the Department of Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship. The courses are in Bulgarian, English and Russian.

In her professional career, Assoc. Prof. PhD. Darina Zaimova worked and specialized in leading universities in Germany, Italy, Spain, Belgium, Hungary, Serbia, Estonia, Kazakhstan, Poland, etc. He is a member of the Council for Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy at the



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BAS, and the Commission for the Development and Implementation of Innovations and the Circular and Bio-Based Economy at the Ministry of Economy and Growth. He has considerable experience as a coordinator and participant in national and international projects. He has administrative experience as deputy rector for project activities at Thrace University, and deputy Rector for International Activities at Pavlodar State Pedagogical University, Kazakhstan. Darina Zaimova is the Chairperson of the Management Board of GO-UP business incubator. Participates in the editorial boards of three international journals.

1. Assessment of compliance with the minimum national requirements and the requirements of Thrace University

Upon a thorough review of the documents submitted by Mrs. Zaimova for participation in a competition for the academic position of professor of "Economics and Management (Economics and Business, Entrepreneurship)", field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional direction 3.8. Economics for the needs of the "Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship" department at the Faculty of Economics of Thrace University, DV. No. 52/16.06.23, the results by indicators are as follows:

A group of metrics	Minimal requirements	Execution
A	50	50
IN	100	100
D	200	251.60
D	100	435
Well	100	525
Z	100	155
Total	650	1516.6

Darina Zaimova has a total of 1516.6 points, with a required 650 points (more than 130% above the minimum national and additional requirements of Thrace University). Therefore, the candidate presents scientific production and materials exceeding the minimum national and additional requirements of Thrace University.

2. Research activity and results

To participate in the announced competition for the academic position "Professor", Assoc. Professor PhD. Darina Zaimova submits 37 publications that do not repeat the scientific works for acquiring the title of "Doctor".

Scientific works submitted for participation in the competition are divided into the following categories:

- 1) Habilitation thesis/ monograph - Topic: "Bioeconomy and sustainable development", Ed. Rainbow +, ISBN 978-619-7251-44-9, 248 pages. Year of publication: 2023. - 1 piece;
- 2) Articles and reports published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases with scientific information – 14 items;



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- 3) Articles and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes - 14 issues;
- 4) Published chapter of a collective monograph - 7 issues;
- 5) Published university textbook or textbook - 1 copy.

The relative share of each of the specified categories in the total number of scientific works submitted for review is as follows: 22% are monographs and chapters of monographs; 3% - textbook; 76% - articles.

Of the total number of scientific works, 81% are published in a foreign language (English and Russian), and the remaining 19% are in Bulgarian.

From the analysis of the presented works, I come to the conclusion that Assoc. Dr. Darina Zaimova has enough publications that fully correspond to the requirements of the announced competition for the academic position of "professor" in PN 3.8 "Economics".

2.1. Evaluation of the monographic work or other publications corresponding in volume and completeness to a monographic work, including an evaluation of the author's scientific and scientific-applied contributions.

The monograph of Associate Professor PhD. Darina Zaimova covers current and significant issues related to the bioeconomy, the sectoral, financial and institutional development of the related terminology, conceptual apparatus and actual application in Europe. This is an interdisciplinary and wide-ranging research with a theoretical and scientific -applied character. It is based on a significant number of Bulgarian, English, German and Russian sources. The study presents and synthesizes the leading ideas and concepts in the field of bioeconomy, the concept of sustainable development and transformation processes in the sectoral economy, the methodology and approaches for ecological assessment of bioeconomy products and services, the application of stakeholder and social network theories to opportunities for a comprehensive study of the sustainability and transition to sustainability of the regions.

The monograph presents a combined focus on the transformation of traditional sectors and the evolution of traditional terms such as corporate social responsibility, management standards and sector certification standards. The trends in the labor market, the application of new technologies and digitalization, financial instruments and financial markets have been examined successively.

I summarize the assessment of the contributions of the author of the monographic work in the following three directions:

- 1) **Theoretical contributions** related to defining, systematizing and developing the ideas and theories of "sustainable development", " bioeconomy ", "circular economy", "ecological entrepreneurship" and "eco-innovations".
- 2) **Methodological contributions** – selected theoretical models that change the understanding of the essence and problems of sustainability and the related conceptual apparatus are analyzed. The studies address the wide range of heterogeneous elements



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ranging from economic parameters, social relations, technological progress and ecosystem patterns, which in turn enrich the cause-effect model.

- 3) **Practical-applied contributions** related to the study of the basic principles, analysis and evaluation of the concept of bioeconomy ; market and consumer behavior in the context of the bioeconomy / biobased industries: eco-entrepreneurship and the possibilities for modifying production systems; innovation management and innovation processes; the relationship between technology, environment and society; the possibilities of managing renewable energy sources; and a synergistic effect along the lines of economic, social and environmental effects.

In summary, the monograph of Assoc. Professor PhD. Darina Zaimova is a habilitation work, developed at a high scientific level and with original contributions in theoretical and practical aspects .

2.2. Assessment of the contributions in the other attached publications made after the appointment of the academic position "Professor". It also includes an assessment of the requirement for peer review of publications .

Assoc. Professor PhD. Darina Zaimova presented a reference for original scientific contributions to the publications, outside of the habilitation thesis . In them, I can highlight the following contributing moments:

- *Theoretical and scientific-applied contributions in the field of social economy and social entrepreneurship, ecological entrepreneurship and business practices, digitalization and new technologies.*

The overview and empirical research conducted, the published results, their popularization at scientific forums, the creation of new curricula and the development of study courses are a contribution to the consolidation and development of the scientific field of "social economy" and "social entrepreneurship".

An integrated approach to the analysis and evaluation of cooperative organizations and their development has been formulated and applied.

The possibilities for modifying the production systems, for diversifying production types, and the sources of additional investments have been investigated. Focus is placed on the potential for developing markets for bio-based services and products, and organizing the commercialization process – market differentiation, revenue generation, alternative services, and ecosystem sustainability.

Socio-economic knowledge is adapted to the digitization of agriculture and rural areas, including the impact on existing and future challenges.

- *Theoretical and methodological contributions in the field of social economy and social entrepreneurship, environmental entrepreneurship and business practices, digitalization and new technologies.*



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Econometric models are integrated in analyzing and evaluating the impact of social enterprises, assessing not only the economic efficiency, but also the sources and amounts of the components of inefficiency in the analyzed data sample.

Economic and production activities, institutional and social factors, and more generally the characteristics and constraints of the environment that contribute to social, economic and environmental sustainability and support good initiatives and practices in the cooperative movement are explored. Both parametric and non-parametric models (DEA, SFA, LCA) and analytical methodologies such as Institutional Analysis and Development (IAD).

In the context of biodiversity and the multifunctionality of agriculture, the following are explored: analysis methods and market trends; analysis of social and behavioral characteristics, techniques for monitoring consumer behavior; data collection and analysis techniques, simulation methods, prototype development and questionnaire application; consumer behavior research.

Scenarios for the development of digitalization in rural areas have been developed.

- *Theoretical contributions to the field of sustainable development and the bioeconomy*

The long-term transformations and changes in socio-economic systems, agriculture, the extraction of natural resources, the efficient use of renewable energy sources, production and consumption models, etc. have been analyzed. is based on the interconnections to which the identified problems relate. Theoretical models have been used that change the understanding of the nature and problems of sustainability .

The mentioned contributions are in accordance with the professional direction of the competition and with the teaching activity of Assoc. Dr. Darina Zaimova. They represent valuable and significant research for science and practice. All this gives me grounds for a high assessment of her research work and works with which she participated in the competition for the academic position of "professor".

2.3. Citation by other authors

The candidate has submitted a "Reference from the Central Library of the State University of Applied Sciences for citations included in the Web databases of Science and/or Scopus ". Citations submitted for review are as follows:

- Citations or reviews in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-famous databases with scientific information or in monographs and collective volumes - 26 items;
- Citations in monographs and collective volumes with scientific review - 2 issues;
- Citations or reviews in non-refereed journals with scientific review – 5 items.

The publications of Assoc. Professor PhD. Darina Zaimova are cited as a priority by foreign authors. As a result, the candidate received 435 points, with a required 100 of the minimum national requirements and those of Thrace University .



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The above gives me reason to conclude that Associate Professor PhD. Darina Zaimova is an established author-researcher on the national and especially international scientific scene.

3. Learning and teaching activity

The total teaching experience (in Bulgaria and abroad) of the candidate is more than 15 years at the time of preparation of the review. My personal observations on the teaching activity of Assoc. Professor PhD. Darina Zaimova date back to 2008, and for this period will also be my assessment, using the provided reference for long-term certification.

3.1. Academic work of the candidate and developed curricula

Assoc. Dr. Darina Zaimova gives lectures in courses at OCS "Bachelor" and OCS "Master" in the disciplines: Innovations and innovation policy; Intellectual Property; Organization of social enterprises; Planning and Forecasting; Planning of sustainable regional development; Sustainable development planning; Entrepreneurship; Social dynamics of entrepreneurship; Management of the entrepreneurial environment; Leadership and Corporate Social Responsibility; Social entrepreneurship; Business models in the social sphere; Business planning; Quality management. In addition to these activities, she was the supervisor of 6 successfully defended graduate students and 1 successfully defended doctoral student. He participates as a guest speaker in prestigious international forums, is a member of international editorial boards, and has international expert and consulting activities.

3.2. Published study materials

Assoc. Professor PhD. Darina Zaimova is the head of the MP "Corporate Entrepreneurship", which was developed in Bulgarian, English and Russian together with Pavlodar State Pedagogical University. Within the curricula developed by the candidate, the topics related to management processes and activities related to strategic planning and marketing, information technologies, planning and management of human resources and specific ethical problems in the field of social economy and bioeconomy are integrated. In practice, Assoc. Dr. Darina Zaimova stimulates collective learning with an emphasis on the key factors for generating positive change and development in rural areas through an established network of business and academic organizations.

4. Administrative and public activity

Assoc. Professor PhD. Darina Zaimova is the head of 4 international projects (financed under Erasmus + KA2 Strategic Partnerships, Marie Curie IAPP, FP7-PEOPLE-2013-IAPP, Horizon Booster Results) and of 1 national project (Program "Policies for youth in the sphere of the environment"), coordinator of 1 national scientific program, participant in 9 international projects (Erasmus + KA2 Strategic Partnerships, Interreg Balkans Mediterranean Programme, BBI-JTI-2020, Horizon Europe), and participant in 4 national projects.

Co-founder and Chairman of the Board of Directors of GO-UP business incubator. Participates in the team of the Council for Resource Efficiency and Circular Economy at the BAS, and the Commission for the Development and Implementation of Innovations and the Circular and Bio-based Economy at the Ministry of Economy and Growth.



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In her professional career, Assoc. Professor PhD. Darina Zaimova was Head of the "Projects" Department of Thrace University, Deputy, Rector for the Project Activity of Thrace University, Deputy, Rector for International Activities of Pavlodar State Pedagogical University. Currently, Assoc. Dr. Darina Zaimova is Deputy, Rector for Research and International Activities of Thrace University.

The above facts give me full reason to conclude that Associate Professor PhD. Darina Zaimova, with her administrative and social activities, fits in completely successfully and contributes adequately to the development and improvement of the academic process at Thrace University.

5. Personal impressions of the candidate

I have known the candidate for over 15 years and have direct observations of both her administrative and scientific and academic work. My initial belief that she is a very well theoretically and practically prepared teacher was strengthened and positively supplemented in all the following years. My impression is that she is a patient, cooperative, organized person who can be relied upon and trusted.

6. Opinions, recommendations and notes on the activity and achievements of the candidate

As I already mentioned, having known Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. Zaimova for many years and following with joy and satisfaction her academic and scientific-applied development, I would allow myself to recommend that she maintain or even accelerate the pace of this development

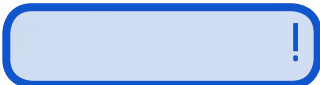
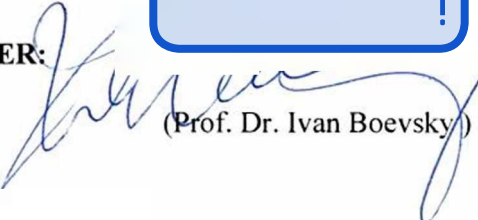
7. Conclusion

positively evaluate with complete conviction the teaching, scientific and scientific-applied activities of **DARINA GEOGIEVA ZAIMOVA** . **This assessment is my reason to unconditionally consider and declare that she is extremely suitable** for the academic position of " **PROFESSOR** ".

Therefore, I would like to absolutely categorically and without any doubt propose to the respected scientific jury *to vote positively* , and to the academic bodies of THRACIAN UNIVERSITY - Stara Zagora to elect Assoc. Prof. Ph.D. **DARINA GEOGIEVA ZAIMOVA** to the academic position of "**PROFESSOR**" in professional direction 3.8 "Economics" at THRACIAN UNIVERSITY - Stara Zagora, Faculty of Economics, Department of "Industrial Business and Entrepreneurship".

Date: 26/10/2023

JURY MEMBER:



(Prof. Dr. Ivan Boevsky)