STATEMENT

on the materials submitted for participation in a competition for the academic position of "associate professor" in professional field 6. Agrarian Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, professional field 6.5. Forestry, scientific specialty "Forest Reclamation, Forest Protection and Special Uses in Forests", announced by Forest Research Institute (FRI) – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences (BAS) in the State Gazette No. 18 of 17.02.2026.

Candidate for participation in the competition: Chief Asst. Dr. Todor Nikolov Stoyanov
Prepared the opinion: Prof. Dr. Miglena Zhivanski

Brief biographical data.

Chief Asst. Dr. Todor Nikolov Stoyanov was born on 13.12.1977 in the city of Sofia. In 2020, he was appointed as an assistant professor in the scientific specialty "Soil Science" at the "Forest Ecology" section at the FRI-BAS, and since 2021 he has held the position of chief assistant professor. He holds an educational and scientific degree "Doctor" from the University of Forestry (2020) after defending a dissertation on the topic: "Study of the Opportunities and Prospects for the Development of Credit Cooperatives in Bulgaria" in the professional field 6.5. Forestry and a scientific specialty "Organization and Management of Forestry and the Forest Industry". The candidate has a master's degree in business administration from the University of National and World Economy (2010) and a master's degree in "Engineer-Geoecologist" from the University of Mining and Geology "St. Ivan Rilski" (2004), specialty "Ecology and Environmental Protection". His professional experience includes positions in the public sector, including chief expert in the Ministry of Environment and Water (2008 - 2014), internal auditor in the State Fund "Agriculture" (2007 - 2008), as well as expert positions in the Sofia Inspectorate and Sofia Municipality (1998 - 2007). His scientific interests are focused on the impact of forest fires on ecosystem components, risk and degradation processes in forest ecosystems and ecosystem services.

Compliance of the submitted documents and materials of the candidate with the minimum requirements, according to the Regulations for the acquisition of scientific degrees and holding academic positions at the FRI - BAS.

The submitted documents and materials establish that the candidate meets the minimum national requirements, according to the Law on Development of Academic Staff in Republic of Bulgaria and the Regulations for its implementation, as well as the Regulations for the acquisition of scientific degrees and holding academic positions at the Forest Research Institute at BAS. The presented scientific production, scientometric indicators, participation in scientific research projects and attached evidentiary materials (on paper and electronically) meet the requirements for occupying the academic position of "associate professor" in the professional field under the announced competition. The administrative compliance of the submitted documents and evidentiary materials was also established by a meeting of the CDAS (Commission for development of academic staff) at FRI-BAS.

General description of the submitted materials.

The candidate, chief asst. Dr. Todor Nikolov Stoyanov, has submitted a set of documents for participation in a competition for occupying the academic position of "associate professor" in the field of higher education 6. "Agrarian Sciences and Veterinary Medicine", professional field 6.5. "Forestry", scientific specialty "Forest Reclamation, Forest Protection and Special Uses in Forests". The submitted materials include a diploma for the acquired degree "PhD", a CV, a service note for work experience, a reference to the scientometric indicators, a list of scientific production, summaries and copies of scientific works, a list of citations, a habilitation extended

reference for scientific contributions, a reference for scientific and scientific-applied contributions, a list of participation in research projects, an information card for holding an academic position and a declaration of the reliability of the information submitted.
According to Appendix No. 1 to the Regulations of the FRI - BAS, for the academic position "associate professor" in area 6. "Agrarian Sciences and Veterinary Medicine", professional direction 6.5. "Forestry", the minimum requirements are: as follows: **50 points for group A, 100 points for group B, 200 points for group G, 100 points for group D and 50 points for group E.**
The submitted self-assessment report establishes that the candidate declares: **50.00 points for group A; 233.74 points for group B, formed by 10 scientific publications, presented as a habilitation thesis; 206.88 points for group G; 580.00 points for group D; 215.00 points for group E,** as well as **5.00 points** for the additional indicators required by the Forest Research Institute - BAS. The total number of points indicated in the self-assessment report is **1290.62 points**.
With regard to the presented scientific production, it can be noted that the candidate quantitatively fulfills the minimum requirements for groups B and G. In group G, he presents a monographic work (in Bulgarian) and accompanying publications in peer-reviewed and non-refereed publications. The structure of the production in group G shows that a significant share of the points in this group is formed through a monograph, which is permissible according to the regulatory framework. The materials submitted for the competition do not present publications in print, as all t ores have available and traceable bibliographic data. The candidate's total scientific output, as well as the reported results in groups B and D, including publications in indexed publications and citations, testify to good scientific activity and recognition.

The candidate is the first or sole author of 12 works.

Category	Total publications	Q1	Q4	Without Q / nonreferred	First or single author
Group B	10	3	5	2	4
Group G.4	1				1 (monography)
Group G.7	1	0	0	1	1
Group G.8	7	0	0	7	6
TOTAL	19	3	5	10	12

Based on the submitted materials, I assume that the candidate has submitted the necessary documentation and the declared scientometric indicators are supported by evidence, and in individual groups they cover or exceed the minimum requirements for holding the academic position of "associate professor" in the professional field 6.5. "Forestry".

Main areas of the candidate's research work and the most important scientific and applied scientific contributions.
In the presented habilitation report, the candidate's scientific research is structured in several main thematic areas: *the impact of fires and forestry activities on soils, restoration of forest ecosystems and their sustainability*, as well as *economic aspects of forestry - circular economy, European and national forest policy, forest cooperatives and management of forest resources*. The area related to *forest fire risk management and assessment* is presented through a limited

number of publications (two issues - one independent and one collective), which is why I do not consider it to be leading, but consider it as complementary to the main two thematic areas.
A significant contribution of the candidate's work is the research related to the impact of forest fires on soil properties and subsequent restoration processes in forest ecosystems. In the publication related to the impact of afforestation after a fire (B 4.5), changes in the mechanical composition, acidity, carbon and nitrogen balance of soils, as well as the factors determining restoration dynamics, are analyzed. Additionally, in the research related to the assessment and spatial representation of forest fire risk, the candidate presents an independent work (B 4.1), aimed at analyzing the communication, coordination and implementation of integrated risk management approaches. In this context, it should be noted his participation in the development and implementation of approaches for assessing and mapping fire risk, as part of a research team contributing to the upgrading of existing methodological solutions (B 4.6).
Part of the scientific output is aimed at studying the impact of silvicultural practices on soil characteristics and carbon balance. In the publications related to the effect of thinnings (B 4.2; B 4.4), through field studies and comparative analysis, it has been reported that different management regimes have an impact on the dynamics of organic carbon and nitrogen in soils, emphasizing the importance of moderate silvicultural interventions for maintaining ecosystem sustainability.
In a broader scientific research sense, the candidate's research also includes socio-economic aspects of forestry. Publications such as B 4.3 and B 4.7 analyze the challenges and opportunities for the development of the circular economy in Bulgaria, the role of forestry cooperatives and the importance of socio-economic mechanisms for sustainable development of mountain and forest areas. The candidate's participation in international collective research (B 4.8; B 4.9) complements his profile with contributions to analyses of forest biomass and forest resource management policies in a European context.
The scientific output presented in group G can also be considered in several main directions. The first direction is complemented by research related to the assessment and management of forest fire risk, including the development of approaches for determining risk at the local level, as well as participation in broader analytical and policy developments in this area (G.7.1; G.10.1; G.11.1). The second direction includes research of a managerial and political-economic nature, focused on the forest sector, including analyses of forest legislation, cooperative forms and sustainable resource management (G.8.2; G.8.4; G.8.7). Here I also consider the presented monographic work in Bulgarian, included in group G (G.4.1), which focuses on the issues related to the analysis of fires in forest areas in our country, examined through legislation, management and prevention. The work systematizes existing regulatory and management practices (in a historical aspect) and contributes to a better understanding of the modern institutional framework and the challenges facing forest fire risk management on a national scale. The third direction covers publications related to the circular bioeconomy and socio-economic aspects of development, including the role of the cial enterprises and non-timber forest products (G.8.3; G.8.5). Participation in collective developments of a methodological and applied nature is also presented, including the development of a methodology for assessing the risk of natural fires, in which the candidate's contribution should be considered within the framework of teamwork (G.10.2).
The scientific results presented in the candidate's developments are up-to-date and aimed at solving contemporary problems related to the impact of natural disturbances and the sustainable management of forest ecosystems, having both a scientific and applied nature and can be attributed to the scientific specialty "Forest reclamation, forest protection and special uses in forests".

Reflection of the candidate's scientific publications in the literature.

The citations presented in group D show the recognition of the candidate's scientific results in the international scientific literature. A significant part of them is related to publications in the field of forest fire risk assessment and modeling, which are applied in research using risk mapping and analysis approaches. Most of the citations presented refer to collective publications with the participation of the candidate, which is typical of modern interdisciplinary research. In addition, there are also citations of publications of a more general nature, used as complementary sources.
In general, the citations presented are sufficient in volume, meet regulatory requirements and confirm the usability of the scientific results in the relevant field.

Participation in scientific projects.
The candidate's participation in scientific research projects for the period 2020-2025 shows good activity both nationally and internationally. The candidate has participated in projects funded by the Bulgarian National Research Fund, as well as in projects implemented with European funding (OP Environment, EIT Climate-KIC, EACEA), related to problems of forest ecosystems, soil characteristics, circular economy and sustainable management of natural resources. It should be noted that the candidate has also participated in international projects, which contributes to his inclusion in wider research networks and interdisciplinary developments. A positive fact is the leadership of two national scientific projects funded by the Bulgarian National Research Fund, related to the assessment of environmental risks and the consequences of forest fires, which shows the ability to independently organize and manage scientific research activities.
Overall, participation in projects complements the scientific profile of the candidate, Chief Asst. Dr. Todor Stoyanov, and shows commitment to current research topics related to the management and sustainability of forest ecosystems.

Educational and teaching activities (supervisor/consultant of doctoral students, training of students, etc.)
Chief. Asst. Dr. Todor Stoyanov is a part-time lecturer at the University of Forestry, where he teaches the subject "Economics of Animal Husbandry" in English for Masters, full-time study in the specialty "Veterinary Medicine". The total number of hours is 45 hours of lectures and 2.6 hours of extracurricular work (information received upon request).
The candidate indicates that he is a member of the editorial board of the Bozok Journal of Agriculture and Natural Sciences (BOJANS), published by Yozgat Bozok Üniversitesi, Turkey (a reference on the Internet is difficult and AI does not confirm this fact).

Assessment of the candidate's personal contribution.
The candidate's personal contribution is most clearly expressed in the field of applied and empirical research related to the characteristics of ecosystem components, the impact of negative phenomena in forests (including fires) and the assessment of environmental risks. In these works, participation in the collection and analysis of field data, as well as in the interpretation of the results, is highlighted, which contributes to a better understanding of the processes in forest ecosystems. In collective works (including those of an interdisciplinary nature), the individual contribution cannot always be clearly traced, which is why I consider it correct to reflect it as equal between the co-authors, especially in the absence of presented distribution protocols.
Within the framework of scientific research projects, the individual contribution of the candidate is more clearly highlighted, especially regarding participation in the development of topics, concepts, implementation of research tasks and leadership of teams, which shows the ability for independent scientific and organizational activity.

Critical remarks and recommendations.

To the chief assistant Dr. Todor Stoyanov I have two critical remarks and corresponding recommendations, which, however, do not reduce my overall positive assessment of his scientific and academic activity in the unit:

- The analysis of the scientific production submitted for the competition shows that a significant part of the citations are of publications realized in co-authorship, including within the framework of collective works with a wide authorship. In these cases, the leading role of the candidate cannot always be unambiguously established and is assumed to be equal, which makes it difficult to accurately assess his individual contribution, o especially in works with higher international visibility.

Given the high number of points in group D, exceeding the minimum required threshold, a more balanced approach when presenting information about the competition would be a more appropriate approach. I recommend that the candidate in his future work direct his efforts towards a clearer highlighting of his own research role by increasing the share of independent publications and/or publications with leading authorship, especially in refereed and indexed scientific publications. Such an approach would contribute to a clearer identification of the individual scientific contribution, more visibility and citation of the works and to further establishing the candidate as a prominent researcher.

- Some of the scientific publications are mainly of an applied and overview-analytical nature, with works with a clearly expressed original theoretical contribution being highlighted to a more limited extent.

I would like to recommend that the candidate's future scientific activity should focus on research with a higher degree of scientific novelty, original research and innovative approaches.

Personal impressions.

My personal impressions of the candidate are formed by his work in the Forest Ecology section. The colleague, Chief Assistant Dr. Todor Stoyanov, is a responsible researcher who works well in a team and demonstrates commitment. He actively participates in joint research activities and is actively involved in working with representatives of interested parties, contributing to the implementation of scientific results in practice. The candidate shows initiative when working with young scientists, students and doctoral candidates, encouraging their participation in scientific research and assisting in the building of scientific capacity. His active participation in international initiatives, including COST actions, scientific programs and projects, contributes to the expansion of professional contacts and his integration into scientific networks.

It should be noted that in recent years the candidate has been directing his research efforts towards a defined thematic area related to the topic of forest fires and forest protection, which contributes to better focus and development of his scientific profile.

Conclusion.

In connection with the above, I propose that Chief Asst. Dr. Todor Nikolov Stoyanov be elected as an "Associate Professor" in professional field 6. Agrarian Sciences and Veterinary Medicine, professional field 6.5. Forestry, scientific specialty "Forest Reclamation, Forest Protection and Special Uses in Forests".

Date 26.05.2026 Member of the Scientific Committe