

Вх. № 220-553/27.03.2026

By competition for the academic position of "associate professor" at the University of Economics - Varna, field of higher education 3. *Social, economic, and legal sciences*, professional field 3.8. *Economics*, scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Business Diagnostics and Project Management)"

1. General information

- The review was prepared by Prof. Dr. Ilian Ivanov Minkov, University of Economics - Varna, *professional field 3.8. Economics*, scientific specialty: *Economics and Management (Business Planning and Corporate Culture)*

- Grounds for preparing the review - decision of the meeting on February 12, 2026, of the Scientific Jury, appointed by Order of the Rector of UE-Varna No. RD 06-20/ January 26, 2026.

2. Competition information

The competition for the academic position of "associate professor" at the University of Economics – Varna, was announced in the State Gazette, issue 104/05.12.2025, on the basis of Art. 3, par. 1 of the Law on the State Academic Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria in the field of higher education 3. *Social, Economic and Legal Sciences*, professional field 3.8. *Economics*, scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Business Diagnostics and Project Management)", for the needs of the Department of Industrial Business and Logistics, with a term of 2 months from its publication.

3. Competition candidate

Chief Assist. Prof. Vladi Hristov Kurshumov, PhD from the University of Economics – Varna is participating in the announced competition for the academic position of "associate professor." He is the only candidate in this competition.

3.1. Fulfillment of minimum national requirements

The candidate for the academic position of "associate professor" exceeds the minimum national requirements set out in Art. 2b, par. 2 and 3 of the Law on the State Academic Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria, within the field of higher education 3. "Social, economic, and legal sciences," professional field 3.8. Economics.

Indicator	Points scored	Minimum requirements	Difference
Group A	50	50	0
Group B	100	100	0
Group C	305	200	+105
Group D	200	50	+150
Total (national)	655	400	+255

3.2 Fulfilment of additional quantitative requirements of UE-Varna

The candidate fully meets and significantly exceeds the additional quantitative requirements of UE-Varna, established in accordance with Art. 2b, par. 5 of the Law on the State Academic Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria.

Indicator	Points scored	Minimum requirements	Difference
Scientific reports	140	30	+110
Scientific articles and studies	90	80	+10
Total (additional)	230	110	+120

It can be summarized that the candidate in the competition, Chief Assist. Prof. Vladi Hristov Kurshumov, PhD, meets the minimum national requirements and the additional institutional requirements of UE-Varna for the academic position of "associate professor" in the professional field in which the competition is announced. The data show that the candidate meets the requirements of Art. 101 of the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at UE-Varna.

4. Candidate details

The candidate in the competition for the academic position of "associate professor" announced by the University of Economics – Varna, Chief Assist. Prof. Vladi Kurshumov, PhD, holds a doctoral degree from the doctoral program "Industrial Business" from 2015, with diploma No. 067/06.10.2015, issued by the University of Economics – Varna, based on a defended dissertation on the topic "Problems of Outsourcing in Bulgarian Industry".

The candidate in the competition obtained a Bachelor's degree in Industrial Economics in 2008 and a Master's degree in Corporate Business and Management in 2009 at the UE-Varna. He also holds a professional qualification in Hotel and Restaurant Business from the Center for Continuing Education at the UE-Varna.

Vladi Kurshumov's professional career as a lecturer began in 2011 as a part-time assistant professor in the Department of Industrial Business and Logistics at the University of Economics – Varna. In 2012, he won a competition for the academic position of "assistant" and was appointed to a fixed-term employment contract at the university, and in 2016, he won a competition and took up the academic position of "chief assistant". He teaches numerous courses in the Bachelor's and Master's degree programs, including: "Economic Analysis of the Enterprise", "Business Diagnostics", "European and National Programs and Projects", "European Funds and Projects", "Urban Logistics", "Sustainable Development and Green Logistics", "Fundamentals of Project Management", "Management of Competitiveness and Growth", etc.

The scientific interests of Chief Assist. Prof. Vladi Kurshumov, PhD, are in the areas of: business diagnostics; project management; urban logistics; outsourcing and

sustainable development. Studies in these research fields are expressed in a total of 32 publications, including: 3 monographs; 2 studies; 9 scientific articles and 18 scientific reports.

In summary, the candidate in the competition possesses professional and scientific qualifications, has acquired scientific and academic experience and fully complies with the requirements in Article 101 of the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at UE-Varna for holding the academic position of "associate professor".

5. Description of scientific works

The submitted report on the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b, para 2 and 3 of the Law on the Administration of Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Bulgaria for holding the academic position of "associate professor" in the professional field 3.8. Economics, shows an excess of the cumulative quantitative requirements formed by the components under Section I. National minimum requirements according to the Law on the Administration of Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Bulgaria (Art. 2b) and the Regulations for its implementation (Art. 1a, par. 1). The required number of points for fulfilling the national minimum requirements are accumulated as follows:

- Group A: Defended dissertation for the award of the academic degree of PhD - "Problems of Outsourcing in Bulgarian Industry" (50 points);

- Group B: Habilitation thesis on the topic: "Financing of enterprises in Bulgaria through European funds" (100 points);

- Group C (200 points required, candidate collects 305 points): Published book based on a defended dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree PhD (75 points); articles and reports published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-renowned scientific information databases (15 points); articles and reports published in non-referenced peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes (175 points); studies published in scientific journals, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information (15 points); studies published in non-referenced peer-reviewed journals or published in edited collective volumes (5 points); published chapter of a collective monograph (20 points).

- Group D (50 points required, candidate collects 200 points): Citations in scientific publications, monographs, collective volumes, referenced and indexed in world-renowned scientific information databases (75 points); citations in monographs and peer-reviewed collective volumes (30 points); citations in non-referenced peer-reviewed journals (95 points).

The competition documents include the necessary references proving the above-declared points for fulfilling the minimum national requirements under Art. 2b, par. 2 and 3 of the Law on the Administration of Higher Education and Research of the Republic of Bulgaria for occupying the academic position of "associate professor".

The scientific works submitted for participation in the competition for "associate professor" comprise 28 publications with a total volume of 804 pages of independent participation. The structure of the publications is as follows:

Total number of publications: 28, with a total volume of 804 pages.

Of these:

- monograph for the competition – 1, with a volume of 227 pages
- published book based on a defended dissertation – 1, with a volume of 188 pages
- participation in a collective monograph – 1, with a volume of 55 pages
- scientific studies – 2, with a total volume of 30 pages
- scientific articles – 8, with a total volume of 117 pages
- scientific reports – 15, with a total volume of 187 pages

19 of the publications are independent and 9 are co-authored. Two of the publications are indexed in Scopus, with the share of indexed publications being 7.1%.

I accept all publications submitted for review and evaluation in the competition.

The main part of the publications in the competition are focused on the following thematic areas:

- project management – publications 5.1, 15.6, 16.7, 26.9, 27.10, 28.11, 29.12;
- urban logistics – publications 11.2, 12.3, 21.4, 22.5, 23.6;
- sustainable development – publications 10.1, 13.4, 18.1, 19.2, 21.4, 23.6, 24.7;
- outsourcing - publications 8.3, 9.4, 17.8, 30.13, 31.14, 32.15.

It can be stated that Dr. Kurshumov's scientific research is in contemporary and current topics in the field of economics, and on some of them, for example urban logistics, there is a lack of scientific research and publications by other Bulgarian authors.

In this competition, the monograph "Financing of Enterprises in Bulgaria through European Funds" is presented as a habilitation work, published in the monographic library "Prof. Tsani Kalyandzhiev" of the publishing house "Science and Economics" in 2025 with ISSN 978-954-21-1194-8. The monograph was reviewed by two reviewers - habilitation persons. It is printed in a volume of 220 printed pages, 13.75 printing presses and fully meets the requirements for a monographic work.

The topic of the monographic study is extremely relevant, in view of the aspiration of Bulgarian enterprises to invest in technological innovation, development of new products and services, maintenance of high information security, sustainable development, etc., which requires significant financial resources. A serious opportunity in this direction is the grant funding under the European funds. In this regard, the author sets a research goal to assess the participation of enterprises in grant projects and their overall level of project activity, as well as to derive guidelines for improving project management by balancing the interests of stakeholders.

The first chapter of the work examines the theoretical foundations of European programs and projects and their role in the development of business organizations. Particular attention is paid to the characteristics of European funds and programs aimed at Bulgarian business during the two programming periods 2007 - 2013 and 2014 - 2020, drawing significant conclusions about the degree of absorption of funds, the main priorities, the weaknesses encountered, etc. The second chapter develops the methodological framework of the study, which includes a system of indicators for assessing the degree of participation of enterprises in European programs at three levels: national, regional and enterprise level. On this basis, a large-scale empirical study of

the participation of Bulgarian enterprises in European programs for supporting innovation and competitiveness, and human resources development after 2007 has been carried out. Based on the revealed weaknesses and unused potential of European funding, in the third chapter of the monograph, guidelines and recommendations for optimizing the project activity of enterprises are proposed, differentiated in two directions - related to the programming process, and related to the project management process by Bulgarian enterprises. The proposals made have high practical value and reveal the significant expert potential of Dr. Kurshumov in the development and management of projects.

It can be summarized that the monographic work submitted for the competition fully meets the criteria for independent scientific research. It is dedicated to a significant problem for enterprises and the national economy as a whole, and the results obtained enable the managing authorities and project beneficiaries to implement various measures to achieve their goals.

The analysis of the scientific and applied scientific results obtained in the papers submitted for review shows that the publications of the candidate in the competition testify to serious authority in the above-mentioned research areas. The submitted papers are of a high scientific level and ensure the dissemination of the results of the conducted research among the academic community.

6. Identification of contributions

The research work of Chief Assist. Prof. Vladi Kurshumov, PhD, includes a number of scientific and applied scientific contributions in the subject areas that are the focus of his research interests. I accept the contributions presented by the candidate in Document 8 and consider that they can be categorized as follows:

6.1. Contributions of a scientific and theoretical nature:

- Defining the general characteristics of European funds and programs directly aimed at businesses in Bulgaria, and clarifying their role in the development of business organizations in the country. (Publications 5.1, 15.6, 27.10, 29.12)
- Expanding theoretical knowledge related to project management, with a focus on exploring the importance of teams in project activities within the organization. (Publication 26.9)
- Summarize the main characteristics of the implementation of the European Union's Cohesion Policy through operational programs in Bulgaria, as well as the changes occurring in its scope, structure, and objectives. Highlight the specific features of the Recovery and Resilience Facility and the National Recovery and Resilience Plans in certain European countries. (Publications 28.11, 10.1, 13.4)
- A theoretical overview and justification of the relationship between operational programs and European funds in general and the achievement of sustainable development in the country. (Publication 16.7)
- An examination of the concept of "urban logistics" and the possibilities for comprehensively optimizing the urban logistics system with the aim of achieving economic growth and economic, social, and environmental balance. (Publications 12.3, 21.4, 23.6, 22.5, 24.7, 11.2)

➤ Identifying opportunities for outsourcing processes and activities in industrial enterprises in Bulgaria as a means of achieving a high level of competitiveness and sustainable development. (Publications 8.3, 9.4, 17.8, 30.13, 31.14, 32.15)

6.2. Contributions of a scientific and methodological nature:

➤ Designing a comprehensive methodological toolkit for diagnosing the degree of participation of Bulgarian enterprises in European funding programs and the level of project activity of enterprises through an integrated system of indicators. (Publication 5.1.)

➤ Development of a system of indicators for diagnosing the project activity of Bulgarian enterprises in the field of improving working conditions through European funding and of courier companies in Bulgaria. (Publications 15.6, 29.12)

➤ Developing a methodology for identifying activities and processes in industrial enterprises that are suitable for outsourcing, as a means of ensuring its successful implementation. (Publications 8.3, 9.4, 31.14, 32.15)

6.3. Contributions of a scientific-applied and applied nature:

➤ Development of a conceptual model with specific practical steps for effective project management by companies, with the potential to optimize the level of project activity. (Publications 5.1, 27.10, 29.12, 15.6)

➤ Researching the degree of participation of Bulgarian enterprises in European programs to support innovation and competitiveness, and human resources development at national, regional and organizational levels and identifying problem areas in the absorption of project funding. (Publication 5.1)

➤ Providing recommendations to companies regarding the formation, motivation, and management of teams working on projects with varying characteristics. (Publications 5.1, 26.9)

➤ Formulation of practical recommendations for the relevant institutions based on the results of a study of the process of developing operational programs in Bulgaria and the degree of implementation of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan. (Publications 5.1, 13.4, 10.1, 15.6, 27.10)

➤ Compiling recommendations for municipalities in Bulgaria on how to optimize urban logistics processes and the transportation system in order to achieve sustainable development, economic growth, and better living conditions. (Publications 11.2, 12.3, 21.4, 22.5, 23.6)

➤ Formulating guidelines for Bulgarian companies on the effective integration of process outsourcing into their business operations, with a view to maintaining a high level of competitiveness. (Publications 8.3, 9.4, 30.13, 31.14, 32.15)

The candidate's contributions are of significant importance for the development of theoretical knowledge and practical aspects regarding project and project team management, outsourcing, urban logistics and sustainable development, offering solutions with high applicability in the modern business environment.

The presented reference for a total of 27 citations of the candidate's scientific works shows that they are distributed as follows: 5 citations in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in world-renowned databases of scientific information Scopus

and Web of Science; 3 citations in monographs and 19 citations in non-refereed journals. The significant number of citations of a total of 14 publications by Dr. Kurshumov shows unequivocally that he is known in the scientific community, his contributions are undoubtedly recognized by Bulgarian and foreign authors, which contributes to the affirmation of his scientific achievements.

7. Participation in scientific projects and scientific forums

Chief Assist. Prof. Vladi Kurshumov, PhD, reports participation in two research projects, one of which is related to the development of the empirical part of his doctoral dissertation, and the other is a collective scientific development of members of the Department of Industrial Business and Logistics. Both projects have been successfully completed, with the results of the second one being published in a collective monograph.

Dr. Kurshumov has been extremely active as a member of the organizing committee for international academic conferences organized by the Department of Industrial Business and Logistics. Between 2013 and 2025, he participated in the organization of three conferences and two roundtables dedicated to the department's anniversaries and its educational programs.

The candidate has also demonstrated active involvement in consulting and expert activities. A total of 8 consulting services provided to health, public, and business organizations have been reported, and it is noteworthy that these are directly related to the competition's topic, as they primarily concern the development of project proposals and the performance of financial and economic analyses. This demonstrates that Dr. Vladi Kurshumov possesses significant practical knowledge and expertise in the field of the announced competition.

8. Teaching work

Chief Assist. Prof. Vladi Kurshumov, PhD, has significant experience as a lecturer at the University of Economics – Varna. He has independently led or participated in the teaching team of various disciplines in the Bachelor's and Master's degree programs. The attached references show that the disciplines taught in the Bachelor's degree are 18, and in the Master's degree 7, which indicates the presence of competencies in multiple areas in the field of economics. The candidate in the competition fulfills the standard for academic employment at the University of Economics – Varna, and for the last 2 academic years has spent a total of 577 hours (including 232 hours of lectures and 345 hours of exercises) in the Bachelor's degree program, a full-time and distance learning form, in the disciplines: "Economic Analysis of the Enterprise", "Business Diagnostics", "Urban Logistics", "Project Management", "Academic Research", "European and National Programs and Projects" and "Organization of Forwarding Activities". Dr. Kurshumov is also involved in the training of students in the Master's Degree Program, part-time and distance learning, and for the same period he has conducted a total of 117 hours, including 36 lectures and 81 hours of exercises in the disciplines: "Resource Management and Project Budgeting", "Competitiveness and

Growth Management", "Sustainable Development and Green Logistics", "Fundamentals of Project Management", "Forwarding Management" and "Master's Seminar".

Chief Assist. Prof. Vladi Kurshumov, PhD, actively participates in the development of educational products of the Department of Industrial Business and Logistics, as well as other departments at the University of Economics – Varna, reporting participation in the development of 19 curricula in the Bachelor's and 12 in the Master's degree programs. The candidate in the competition has also provided educational materials for 12 disciplines in the Bachelor's and 6 in the Master's degree programs. Dr. Kurshumov has also demonstrated high activity in his work with students, and over the last 5 academic years has carried out 23 scientific supervisions and reviewed 14 diploma theses of students in both educational qualification levels.

In addition to his teaching work at the University of Economics – Varna, Vladi Kurshumov regularly participates as a lecturer in various training courses at the Center for Vocational Training of the Bulgarian Industrial Association.

The above indicates the serious experience and high level of preparation of the candidate for "associate professor" Dr. Vladi Kurshumov in the field of teaching and learning activities.

9. Others

The candidate in the competition has gained significant administrative experience. He holds key administrative positions in the structure of the University of Economics - Varna, including: Head of the "Management Analysis and Rating System" sector; member of the General Assembly of the University of Economics - Varna; member of the Academic Council of the University of Economics - Varna; member of the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Economics; member of the Council for Electronic and Distance Learning of the University of Economics - Varna; member of the Standing Accreditation Committee at the University of Economics - Varna; member of the Committee for Monitoring, Evaluation, Optimization and Risk Management at the University of Economics - Varna, etc. He actively participates in working groups related to various aspects of the work of the university, with 15 participations recorded for the period 2018 - 2025.

In fulfilling these duties, Dr. Kurshumov has made a significant contribution to the development of academic policy, the modernization of the educational process, and the strengthening of the institutional values of the University of Economics – Varna.

Vladi Kurshumov also actively participates in various educational projects as a coordinator, team member or expert, including project BG05M2OP001-2.013-0001 "Student Internships - Phase 2", project BG05M2OP001-2.009-0036 "Investments in the education of students, doctoral students, postdoctoral students and teachers - a guarantor of a better future", implemented within the framework of the OP "Science and Education for Smart Growth" 2014 - 2020, Project "99 out of 100 - academic traditions in the future" (D19000477BH/ 27.03.2019), implemented under the "Culture"

fund of the Municipality of Varna, etc. This attests to his significant expertise in the field of project management.

10. Plagiarism

In the submitted works, I do not find any plagiarism, incorrect data and/or incorrect references to other people's scientific works.

11. Personal impressions

I have known the candidate through our many years of working together as members of the Department of Industrial Business and Logistics. As a professional, he is exceptionally responsible and meticulous in his work, and as a person, he is responsive and fair. These qualities make him a highly valued and respected colleague within the structure of the University of Economics –Varna.

12. Questions, critical notes and recommendations to the candidate.

No significant omissions, contradictions, or errors were found in the academic work submitted for the competition. The submitted works are distinguished by the necessary quality and a high degree of practical applicability. I have no questions for the candidate. I have the following recommendations for Dr. Vladi Kurshumov's future research and teaching work:

1. Focus its efforts primarily on publications in journals indexed in the Scopus and Web of Science databases, as their current share in the overall publication mix is too low.

2. To develop and publish textbooks and teaching aids for some of the courses taught.

3. To increase its participation in research projects, specifically as an initiator and leader of project proposals.

Conclusion

The findings related to the research, publication, and teaching activities of Chief Assist. Prof. Vladi Hristov Kurshumov, PhD, clearly show compliance with the requirements of the Law on the State Academic Affairs of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation, and the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at the University of Economics - Varna for the academic position of "associate professor". This gives me reason to express my unequivocally positive opinion on the competition and to propose to the esteemed members of the scientific jury to support the candidacy of Chief Assist. Prof. Vladi Hristov Kurshumov, PhD, 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 (Business Diagnostics and Project Management)".

27/03/2026

Reviewer:

Заличена информация съгласно
ЗЗЛД и регламент (ЕС) 2016/ 679

(ПРОФ. ДР. ПЛАН МИНКОВ)



REVIEW

on a competition for the academic position "Associate Professor",
announced by the University of Economics – Varna

1. General information

Review prepared by: Prof. PhD Svetlana Raicheva Dimitrakieva, TU-Varna, Department of Industrial Management

Reason for writing the review: the opinion was prepared based on Order № ПД 06-20/26.01.2026 of the Rector of the University of Economics - Varna on the composition of the Scientific Jury for the competition for the academic position of "associate professor" and the decision of the Scientific Jury taken at its first meeting on February 12, 2026

2. Contest details

The competition for the academic position "Associate Professor" has been announced under Area of higher education 3. "Social, economic, and legal sciences", professional field 3.8. "Economics", scientific specialty "Economics and Management" was announced in State Gazette № 104/05.12.2025 for the needs of the Department Industrial Business and Logistics, Faculty of Economics at the University of Economics - Varna.

3. Contest candidate

The only candidate in the competition is Chief Assistant Professor PhD Vladi Hristov Kurshumov, lecturer at the Department of Industrial Business and Logistics, Faculty of Economics at the University of Economics - Varna.

He has submitted documents and evidence of compliance with the requirements for the academic position of "associate professor" specified in Article 101 of the Regulations for the Development of Academic Staff at the University of Economics - Varna:

- holds a PhD degree;
- has held the academic position of "chief assistant professor" for at least two years;
- has presented a published monographic work;



- meets the minimum national requirements for the academic position of "associate professor" in accordance with Article 2b, paragraphs 2 and 3 of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria;
- meets the requirements for holding the academic position of "associate professor" at the University of Economics - Varna on the basis of Article 2b, paragraph 5 of the Act for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria;
- has submitted a declaration of originality of scientific works.

4. Candidate information

In 2008, Vladi Kurshumov earned a Bachelor's degree in Industrial Economics, and in 2009, a Master's degree in Corporate Business and Management from the University of Economics - Varna. At the same time, in 2008, he also obtained a professional qualification as a "Manager in the Hotel and Restaurant Business" from the Center for Continuing Education at the University of Economics - Varna. From 2011 to 2015, he pursued doctoral studies, and in 2015, he earned a PhD in the scientific field of "Industrial Business" (Diploma № 067 dated October 1, 2015) after defending a dissertation on the topic "Problems of Outsourcing in Bulgarian Industry."

Vladi Kurshumov's professional career began in 2011 as an adjunct lecturer in the Department of Industrial Business and Logistics. In 2012, after successfully passing a competitive selection process, he joined the same department as an assistant professor. Since 2016, he has held the academic position of "chief assistant professor." From July 2015 to May 2019, he served as an expert "Programs and Projects," in the "Project Management" sector at the University of Economics - Varna, and from June 2023 to the present, he has been the Head of the "Management Analysis and Rating System" sector at the University of Economics - Varna.

The candidate's research interests lie in the fields of business diagnostics, economic analysis, project management, outsourcing, urban logistics, and corporate competitiveness.

5. Description of scientific works

In the competition for the academic position of "associate professor," Chief Assistant Professor PhD Vladi Kurshumov participated with 28 works:

№	Type of publication	Independent	Co-authored	Total
1.	Monographs	1	1	2
2.	Book based on a doctoral dissertation	1		1
3.	Scientific studies	-	2	2
4.	Scientific articles	6	2	8
5.	Scientific reports	11	4	15
	Total:	19	9	28



In the presented Report on the fulfillment of the minimum national requirements are included:

- independent monograph - 1;
- book based on a doctoral dissertation - 1;
- articles and reports published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in global scientific information databases (Scopus and WOS) - 1;
- articles and reports published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or in edited collective volumes - 20;
- studies published in scientific publications, referenced and indexed in global scientific information databases (Scopus and WOS) -1;
- studies published in non-refereed peer-reviewed journals or in edited collective volumes - 1;
- published chapter from a collective monograph - 1.

The fulfillment of the minimum national requirements for the individual indicators is as follows:

Group of indicators	Minimum national requirements	Points declared by the applicant
A	50	50
C	100	100
D	200	305
E	50	200
Total	400	655

The fulfillment of the additional quantitative requirements of University of Economics - Varna is as follows:

Indicators	Points for the academic position "associate professor"	Points declared by the candidate
Scientific reports	30	140
Scientific articles and studies	80	90

A List of publications referenced and indexed in the world-renowned scientific information databases Scopus and/or Web of Science is presented, as well as publications in editions included in the national reference list maintained by NACID.



In quantitative terms, the publications presented by Chief Assistant Professor PhD Vladi Kurshumov not only meet but also significantly exceed the required minimum values.

As for the structure of the publications, I believe it strikes a good balance between monographs, studies, articles, and reports.

Content description

Chief Assistant Professor PhD Vladi Kurshumov meets the requirements of Article 112, paragraph 2 of the Regulations on the Development of Academic Staff at the University of Economics - Varna. For participation in the competition for the academic position of "associate professor," he has submitted an independent monograph titled: "Financing Enterprises in Bulgaria through European Funds." The work was discussed at a meeting of the primary unit (Protocol №14/28.10.2024 from a meeting of the Academic Council of the Department of Industrial Business and Logistics), reviewed by two habilitated persons, and published in the specialized academic journal Monographic Library "Prof. Tsani Kalyandzhiev." It addresses a current and significant challenge for businesses operating in an unstable and highly competitive environment, where they strive to maintain a high level of competitiveness and market presence. To achieve these goals, however, senior managers face a number of challenges, including limited financial resources and the need to prioritize capital expenditures in order to realize the strategic vision for growth. Grant funding from European funds is one of the tools for addressing these issues.

The work is logically structured and includes abstracts in Bulgarian, English, German, and Russian, an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, and a bibliography. The aim of this study is based on a theoretical review covering the general principles governing EU programs as well as the benefits and risks for businesses, to analyze and assess their participation in the process of absorbing grant funding and their level of project activity, and, on this basis, to derive guidelines for improving project management by striking a balance between national policies in the field of European funding and corporate interests.

Chapter 1, "Features of European Funding," clarifies the role of European programs and projects in the development of business organizations. It outlines the requirements that projects must meet in order to apply for European funding. The main advantages for business organizations of participating as beneficiaries in European programs are outlined. The author identifies the potential risks that could arise during participation in European projects at each stage of the project. An overview of European funds and programs targeting Bulgarian businesses is provided.

Methodological principles of the study are outlined in Chapter 2, "Project Activity of Bulgarian Enterprises." An analysis is provided of the extent of Bulgarian enterprises' participation in programs supporting innovation and competitiveness, as well as in the "Human Resources Development" program, for the two completed programming periods: 2007–2013 and 2014–2020. The main trends are presented in a comparative analysis between enterprise types and across the



periods. A methodological toolkit has been developed for analyzing and assessing the level of project activity through a system of indicators for characterizing and quantitatively measuring the extent to which companies manage European projects. The level of project activity among Bulgarian enterprises in the Varna region has been examined.

Chapter 3, "Guidelines for Optimizing Project Activities of Bulgarian Enterprises," identifies the key interests of enterprises in the field of project activities, as well as those of the program-administering bodies. To achieve coordination between them and integrate the economic and social aspects of European funding, recommendations have been formulated related, on the one hand, to the programming process and, on the other hand, to the project management process by Bulgarian enterprises. Specific guidelines have been developed to help beneficiaries optimize their project activities. The results of the monographic study show that European funds indeed provide opportunities for the development of business organizations. According to the author, to achieve maximum effectiveness, enterprises should view project activities as an opportunity of strategic importance and should appropriately and effectively model and manage the processes of initiating, planning, implementing, and reporting on their projects.

My overall impression is that this monograph is an in-depth study that makes a number of significant contributions to the field covered by the competition.

A large portion of the other publications by Chief Assistant Professor PhD V. Kurshumov also focus on the opportunities available to Bulgarian companies to enhance their competitiveness by engaging in the management of grant projects funded by European funds. (publications 10.1, 13.4, 15.6, 16.7, 19.2, 26.9, 27.10, 28.11, 29.12) I will comment on their content collectively. The level of implementation of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan has been analyzed, including key funding areas, types of beneficiaries, number of contracts, etc. The significance and role of the Operational Programs in achieving sustainable growth and fostering a green economy based on smart solutions have been examined. The trends in the development of innovation activity in EU countries, and specifically in Bulgaria, in the field of eco-innovation are analyzed. Particular attention is paid to the opportunities for financing the implementation of innovations by start-ups in Bulgaria through European funds. Highlighting the role of effective project team management in the successful and high-quality execution of project activities, in some of the aforementioned publications, Chief Assistant Professor PhD. V. Kurshumov offers guidelines for optimizing the processes of recruiting, selecting, and managing these teams.

Another area of the candidate's research focuses on enhancing the competitiveness of enterprises through the implementation of outsourcing. (Publications 8.3, 9.4, 17.8, 30.13, 31.14, 32.15).

Chief Assistant Professor PhD V. Kurshumov is the author of a chapter titled "Problems of Outsourcing in Bulgarian Industry (on the Example of Bulgarian Breweries)" from the monograph "Prospects and Opportunities for Industrial Enterprises in Bulgaria" (Publication 9.4). In the chapter he authored, an outsourcing profile of the Bulgarian industrial enterprise is presented. According to the author, the application of outsourcing can be viewed in two ways: first, the



transfer of activities from foreign companies to Bulgaria or from Bulgarian companies outside the country (offshore outsourcing); and second, onshore outsourcing between companies within the country. The methodological framework of the study encompasses a model that analyzes the level of outsourcing adoption in enterprises and the extent of its impact on their operations. The results show that companies outsource various processes and activities to external contractors, primarily related to transportation; however, there is still significant potential for companies to increase their outsourcing of activities such as the implementation of new technologies, environmental protection, and others. Companies are reluctant to use external suppliers for competition-determining processes, such as production functions and those related to managing relationships with business partners and customers.

The other articles included in this section explore the potential of outsourcing as a tool for achieving sustainable development and enhancing the competitiveness of firms.

Other publications by Chief Assistant Professor PhD Vladi Kurshumov (11.2, 12.3, 21.4, 22.5, 23.6, 24.7) are related to the development and implementation of eco-innovations and effective participation in the processes of building an adapted urban logistics system.

Chief Assistant Professor PhD Vladi Kurshumov has contributed to two studies (6.1, 7.2) focusing on the corporate culture of business organizations, which enables them to establish a unique identity in the marketplace.

The analytical review of the reviewed scientific works demonstrates Senior Assistant Professor PhD Vladi Kurshumov's ability to systematize and critically evaluate existing scientific theses. The analyses, evaluations, conclusions, and results published in the scientific works are formulated and presented in a clear, logical, and precise manner. The scientific works complement one another and demonstrate breadth and comprehensiveness. An analysis of the content reveals that it is sufficiently aligned with the competition's theme. All publications are well-written and demonstrate a high level of scientific and methodological rigor.

Overall, I can conclude that the candidate's scientific output meets the scientometric requirements and regulatory provisions regarding the type and quality of the required publications and monographs.

6. Identification of contributions to research work. Evaluation of the candidate's citations

A content-thematic analysis of the candidate's scientific output provides grounds for concluding that the research studies reflected therein are systematic in nature and, taken together, constitute a synthesis of the candidate's creative endeavors. I accept the contributions presented by Chief Assistant Professor PhD Vladi Kurshumov. They demonstrate his ability to realistically assess his own work.



The candidate's primary area of research interest focuses on enhancing the competitiveness of Bulgarian enterprises through work in the field of managing grant projects funded by European funds. The candidate's main monograph, as well as a large number of his publications, fall within this field.

I divide the contributions in this field into the following groups:

Scientific and Theoretical Contributions

- The main characteristics of the implementation of the European Union's Cohesion Policy through operational programs in Bulgaria are summarized, along with changes in its scope, structure, and objectives (Publication 28.11);
- The key features of the Resilience and Recovery Mechanism and the National Resilience and Recovery Plans in certain European countries are outlined (Publications 10.1 and 13.4);
- The general characteristics of European funds and programs targeting Bulgaria have been defined. The main advantages and risks associated with working on EU-funded projects have been identified (Publications 5.1, 15.6, 27.10, 29.12);
- With a view to effective project management, this study examines the role of teams in project activities within the organization, the factors related to proper team formation and operation, as well as the importance of the team for the ultimate success in the absorption of European funds (Publication 26.9);
- A theoretical overview has been provided of the relationship between operational programs and European funds in general and the achievement of sustainable development in the country (Publication 16.7).

Scientific and methodological contributions

- A system of indicators has been developed to diagnose the project activities of Bulgarian enterprises in the area of improving working conditions through European funding (Publications 15.6, 29.12);
- A comprehensive methodological toolkit has been developed to assess the extent of Bulgarian enterprises' participation in European funding programs and the level of their project activity through an integrated system of indicators (Publication 5.1).



Scientific and applied contributions

- A conceptual model has been developed that outlines specific practical-applied steps for effective project management by companies. The importance of conducting a preliminary business assessment prior to initiating a potential project has been highlighted (Publications 5.1, 27.10, 29.12, 15.6);
- Specific recommendations have been provided to companies on how to form, motivate, and manage teams when working on projects with different characteristics. (Publications 5.1, 26.9);
- Based on the results of a study of the process of developing operational programs in Bulgaria and the degree of implementation of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, specific practical recommendations have been formulated for the responsible institutions (Publications 5.1, 13.4, 10.1, 5.1, 15.6, 27.10).

The second area of scientific interest for Chief Assistant Professor PhD Vladi Kurshumov concerns the implementation of outsourcing in business operations. In this area, I include the following contributions:

Scientific and theoretical contribution: the possibilities for outsourcing processes and activities in Bulgarian enterprises are outlined (Publications 8.3, 9.4, 17.8, 30.13, 31.14, 32.15);

Scientific and methodological contribution: A method for identifying activities and processes suitable for outsourcing in industrial enterprises has been developed (Publications 8.3, 9.4, 31.14, 32.15);

Scientific and applied contribution: Guidelines for the effective integration of outsourcing processes into the business operations of Bulgarian enterprises have been formulated with the aim of maintaining a high level of competitiveness (Publications 8.3, 9.4, 30.13, 31.14, 32.15).

The third area of scientific interest for Chief Assistant Professor PhD Vladi Kurshumov involves the development and implementation of eco-innovations and active participation in the processes of building an adapted urban logistics system.

I consider the study of the concept of "urban logistics" and the possibilities for comprehensively optimizing the urban logistics system with the aim of achieving economic growth and economic, social, and environmental balance to be a **scientific and theoretical contribution** in this field (Publications 12.3, 21.4, and 23.6); best practices in urban logistics; the specifics of applying the zero-waste concept as a factor for sustainable development; the integration of co-modality in urban settings by aligning the interests of public and private logistics operators (Publications 22.5, 24.7, 11.2).

I consider the proposed recommendations to municipalities in Bulgaria for optimizing urban logistics processes and the transportation system - with the aim of achieving sustainable



development, economic growth, and better living conditions - to be a **scientifically applied contribution** (Publications 11.2, 12.3, 21.4, 22.5, 23.6).

Of the contributions in the other papers submitted for the competition, I consider the following to be significant:

- The role of published corporate culture in the communication policies of insurance companies in Bulgaria has been revealed (Publications 6.1 and 7.2);
- Links between eco-innovations and the implementation of the circular economy have been identified (Publication 19.2);
- Best practices in the formulation and implementation of sustainable development policies in the field of higher education have been examined (Publication 18.1).

In summary, I consider that the scientific research presented in the candidate's publications is focused on addressing current theoretical, scientific, and applied scientific issues. The contributions mentioned above contain original findings and ideas that are invaluable for business practice. They can be successfully utilized by Bulgarian companies to enhance their competitiveness. I have no reason to doubt that these contributions are the candidate's own work.

Thanks to his innovative ideas and his fruitful efforts to develop and enrich them, Chief Assistant Professor PhD Vladi Kurshumov is a frequently cited author. This is evidenced by his score of 200 points under criterion E, far exceeding the minimum requirement of 50 points. There are 27 citations, of which 5 are in referred scientific journals indexed in global scientific databases (Scopus and Web of Science), three are citations in peer-reviewed monographs and edited volumes, and nineteen are in non-peer-reviewed journals.

All of this serves as evidence that the candidate's scientific publications are well-known and widely used within the scientific community.

7. Participation in scientific projects and scientific forums

Chief Assistant Professor PhD Vladi Kurshumov has participated in seven projects, serving as coordinator for two of them. Some of these research projects are directly related to the thematic area of the announced competition. The research project SRP - 147/2015 on "Prospects and Opportunities for Industrial Enterprises in Bulgaria" was successfully completed with the publication of a monograph.

Chief Assistant Professor PhD Vladi Kurshumov has extensive experience in expert and consulting services. He has participated in the development of project proposals for various organizations under the "Competitiveness and Innovation in Enterprises 2021–2027" program and the "Human Resources Development" program 2021–2027. In 2022, he developed an investment project for a start-up business for Delta-P Accounting Ltd. He has conducted financial and socio-economic



analyses of numerous investment projects for the University Multi-profile Hospital for Active Treatment "Sveta Marina" EAD in Varna.

Chief Assistant Professor PhD Vladi Kurshumov has presented papers at numerous national and international conferences, as evidenced by the list of his scientific publications. He is an active member of the organizing committees for international conferences and roundtables organized by the University of Economics - Varna.

He is a member of the Association of Economics and Management Educators in Industry.

8. Teaching work

Chief Assistant Professor PhD Vladi Kurshumov is actively involved in the academic process and successfully combines it with his research work. His teaching experience, combined with his extensive experience as an expert, enables him to develop and teach new university courses and to improve existing ones.

Based on the materials submitted for the competition, the following conclusions can be drawn regarding the candidate's teaching work:

- Chief Assistant Professor PhD Vladi Kurshumov has fifteen years of pedagogical experience.
- Currently, Chief Assistant Professor PhD Vladi Kurshumov leads lectures and seminars in the Bachelor's degree program in a number of courses related to the competition: "Business Diagnostics," "European and National Programs and Projects," "Economic Analysis of the Enterprise," "Urban Logistics," "Organization of Freight Forwarding Activities," and others. He is also actively involved in teaching master's degree students, leading courses in "Resource Management and Project Budgeting," "Competitiveness and Growth Management," "Sustainable Development and Green Logistics," and others. Detailed information regarding the teaching load of Chief Assistant Professor Dr. Vladi Kurshumov at the bachelor's and master's levels for the past two academic years is attached.
- Chief Assistant Professor PhD Vladi Kurshumov has been a member of teams that developed curriculums for a number of courses at the bachelor's and master's levels, including "Business Diagnostics," "European and National Programs and Projects," "Project Management," "Industrial Entrepreneurship," "Business Planning of Enterprises," "Economic Analysis of Enterprises," "Urban Logistics," "Fundamentals of Project Management," "Competitiveness and Growth Management," "Outsourcing and Outsourcing Strategies," "Planning and Financing of Outsourcing Processes," "Resource Management and Project Budgeting," "Sustainable Development and Green Logistics," and others. All of the listed curriculums are in disciplines related to the subject matter of the announced competition.



- Chief Assistant Professor PhD Vladi Kurshumov was a lecturer at the Professional Training Center of the Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce.
- He was a lecturer at a practical seminar on project management held at the University of Economics - Varna.
- From 2021 to 2025, Chief Assistant Professor PhD Vladi Kurshumov was supervisor of 19 students in the Bachelor's and Master's degree programs and a reviewer of 18 diploma theses.
- Chief Assistant Professor PhD Vladi Kurshumov has an experience in organizing and conducting events for students: he assists annually with the preparation of student research papers and supports the process of developing, submitting, and reporting on student projects.
- The candidate has developed teaching materials for a number of courses in the fields covered by the competition at the bachelor's and master's degree levels.
- Chief Assistant Professor PhD Vladi Kurshumov continuously improves his professional qualifications. A list of his participation in training courses held between 2013 and 2023 has been provided.

The quantitative and qualitative analysis conducted shows that the level of teaching work performed by Chief Assistant Professor PhD Vladi Kurshumov deserves high evaluation and corresponds to the requirements of the position in question. He is an experienced university educator who works diligently on various aspects of educational activities.

9. Others

Chief Assistant Professor PhD Vladi Kurshumov actively participates in the activities of the University of Economics - Varna. He is a member of:

- The General Assembly of the University of Economics - Varna;
- The Academic Council of the University of Economics - Varna;
- The Faculty Council of the Faculty of Economics at the University of Economics - Varna;
- the Council for Digital and Distance Learning Center at the University of Economics - Varna;
- the Standing Accreditation Commission at the University of Economics - Varna;
- the Committee for Monitoring, Evaluation, Optimization, and Risk Management at the University of Economics - Varna;



- the Internal Audit Team at the University of Economics - Varna.

From 2015 to 2019, he served as a member of the Standing Committee on International Cooperation and Project Activities at the University of Economics - Varna, as well as an expert in "Programs and Projects" within the "Project Management" department at the University of Economics - Varna.

From 2018 to 2025, he participated as a leader, coordinator, and member of various working groups related to different aspects of the University of Economics - Varna's activities.

I know Chief Assistant Professor PhD Vladi Kurshumov from our joint academic work and participation in various scientific forums. My personal impression is that he is an exceptionally ethical and responsible colleague, an active and meticulous educator and researcher, with clearly defined contributions to the development of knowledge.

10. Plagiarism

Chief Assistant Professor PhD Vladi Kurshumov has signed a Declaration of Originality, in which he declares that the monograph and publications he has submitted are his own original work, that he has complied with copyright requirements regarding the sources used, and that the publications he has submitted for participation in the competition do not duplicate those submitted for participation in previous competitions for academic positions and for the acquirement of the title of "Doctor."

11. Critical notes, questions and recommendations

I have no critical comments.

Given that Chief Assistant Professor PhD Vladi Kurshumov possesses a high level of expertise and is highly committed as an expert and instructor, I recommend that he not only continue the applied focus of his research but also be more active in publishing independent textbooks, for which I believe he possesses the necessary knowledge, skills, and experience.

12. Conclusion

Chief Assistant Professor PhD Vladi Hristov Kurshumov is a university lecturer whose teaching and pedagogical activities fully meet the requirements for the academic position of "associate professor." He has produced more than the required minimum of scholarly output, which includes a significant number of contributions of importance to both science and practice.



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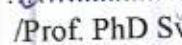
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Based on the foregoing, I strongly recommend that the members of the Honourable Scientific Jury propose to the Faculty Council of the Faculty of Economics Chief Assistant Professor PhD Vladi Hristov Kurshumov to be elected to the academic position of "Associate Professor" in professional field 3.8. Economics, scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Business Diagnostics and Project Management)."

23.03.2026 г.
Varna

Reviewer:

Заличена информация съгласно
ЗЗЛД и регламент (ЕС) 2016/ 679


/Prof. PhD Svetlana Dimitrakieva/