



EVALUATION REPORT

From: **Associate Professor Dr. Katia Emilova Kirilova**

Department of Public Administration,

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Scientific specialty: Organization and management outside the field of material production
(Electronic management, Administrative services)

Regarding: dissertation for the award of educational and scientific degree “Doctor” in the scientific specialty “Economics and Management (Agriculture)”.

Author of the dissertation: **Violetka Lyubenova Zheleva**

Topic of the dissertation: “Assessments of opportunities for development of alternative forms of tourism in Stara Zagora district”

Reason for the evaluation report: participation in the composition of the scientific jury on defense of the thesis according to Order № 3253 / 07.12.2020 of the Rector of the University of Trakia.

1. Information about the PhD student

The PhD student studied under a doctoral program at the Department of Regional Development, Faculty of Economics at the University of Trakia in the scientific specialty “Economics and Management (Agriculture)” according to the Order of the Rector of the University of Trakia № 371 / 23.02.2017 in regular form. Supervisors are Assoc. Prof. Dr. Blaga Ivanova Stoykova and Prof. Dr. Ivan Georgiev Ivanov.

2. Brief information about the dissertation

The dissertation presented for an evaluation is precisely formed in a volume of 253 pages, of which 180 pages are main text and appendices. The development is divided structurally into an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, abbreviations used and literature. The latter consists of 187 titles (paper and electronic), and the dissertation includes 41 figures and 14 tables.

In terms of content, the introduction shows the relevance of the studied issues in the context of the development of the tourism sector. It precisely and clearly defines the object, subject, purpose, and tasks of scientific research. In the dissertation the thesis of the

research is correctly defined, as in support of the analysis and development of the researched alternative forms of tourism four composite hypotheses are identified, with eight sub-hypotheses.

The first chapter gives the theoretical foundations and prerequisites of the study. A thorough review of the definitions and classifications of alternative tourism by Bulgarian and foreign authors has been performed. Based on the study of Bulgarian and foreign experience and according to the goals and objectives of the development, the author defines the types of alternative tourism.

The second chapter presents a methodology for assessing the opportunities for development of alternative tourism in the Stara Zagora region. Peculiarities of the administrative-territorial structure and resources in Stara Zagora district are presented. A description of the municipalities subject to the field research has been made. A prerequisite for these analyzes is the importance of the forms of alternative tourism and the application of a territorial approach in development.

In the third chapter an analysis of the results of the conducted research is performed. The hypotheses defined in the study were tested and the results were clearly and in detail presented. The SWOT analysis of the state of the alternative forms of tourism is the basis for the recommendations given by the author for the development of alternative forms of tourism in Stara Zagora district.

The conclusion gives a summary of the achieved results.

3. Evaluation of the obtained scientific and scientific-applied results

As a result of the development of the dissertation, the desired and necessary results have been achieved in the direction of defining specific proposals for the development of alternative forms of tourism in the district of Stara Zagora. I find the main tasks of the research to be fulfilled, and the goal of the dissertation to be achieved. In particular, because of analysis and assessment of the state and opportunities for development of various forms of alternative tourism on the territory of Stara Zagora district, a specific approach, and certain measures for tourism development in this district have been proposed.

4. Evaluation of scientific and applied contributions

I accept the following scientific and applied contributions to the dissertation, namely:

- Based on a national and global literature study, the features, nature, and forms of alternative tourism have been clarified.
- A methodology for assessing the opportunities for development of alternative tourism on the territory of Stara Zagora district is proposed.

- An author's survey for the development of alternative forms of tourism in Stara Zagora district has been developed and conducted, the results of which have been successfully analyzed in the dissertation.
- A specific approach for the development of alternative forms of tourism and measures for its implementation is defined.

5. Evaluation of the publications on the topic of the dissertation

It is evident from the documentation that a total of 4 publications are indicated in the dissertation. Three of them are articles in the Trakia Journal of Science, and one of the publications is the result of a project in the field of tourism. All publications are on the topic of the dissertation and provide the necessary publicity of the research.

6. Evaluation of the abstract

The presented abstract accurately and completely reflects the goals, objectives, and structure of the dissertation, as well as the obtained scientific and applied results.

7. Critical notes, recommendations, and questions

I recommend the author of the dissertation to continue her research in the field of alternative forms of tourism. The achieved results can be upgraded by expanding the focus and scope of the analyzed problems and exploring new relationships and dependencies.

8. Conclusion

I believe that the dissertation submitted to me for evaluation by **Violetka Lyubanova Zheleva** on "Assessments of opportunities for development of alternative forms of tourism in Stara Zagora district" for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" fully meets the regulations and requirements for such type of development. The scientific and applied results described above have been achieved in it. Therefore, I express my general positive opinion and recommend to the esteemed scientific jury to vote FOR the award of educational and scientific degree "Doctor" of Violetka Lyubanova Zheleva in the scientific specialty "Economics and Management (Agriculture)".

12.01.2021

Sofia

Signature:

(Assoc. Prof. Dr. Katia Kirilova)