



## REVIEW

**From:** *Prof. Dr. Tsvetana Aleksandrova Stoyanova - Department of Management, UNWE - Sofia, scientific specialty "Social Management", professional field 3.7. Administration and Management*

**Subject:** dissertation for the award of the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, in the professional field 3.7. Administration and management (Business administration)

**Reason for submitting the review:** participation in the scientific jury for the defense of the dissertation work according to Order No. 224/05.11.2024 of the Rector of the IBS.

**Author of the dissertation :** *Bozhidar Georgiev Babadzhanov*

**Topic of the dissertation :** Development of functional strategies in public sector organizations (based on the example of the Municipality of Burgas)

### **I. Summary data on the candidate's scientific production and activities**

#### **1. Information about the doctoral student**

Bozhidar Babadzhanov is a doctoral student in an independent form of study at the International Higher Business School, according to Order No. 263/13.12.2023 of the Rector of the International Business School. The doctoral student has a bachelor's degree in "Business Management" from the "D. A. Tsenov" University of Applied Sciences - Svishtov and a master's degree in "Firm Management and Controlling" from the same university. He has numerous certificates of participation in training and qualifications.

## **2. General characteristics of the presented dissertation work**

The dissertation work contains an introduction, an exposition in three chapters, a conclusion, and literature and applications. The total volume of the scientific work is 228 standard pages. 70 literary sources were used, as well as 67 laws and regulations. The text includes 18 figures and 10 tables. There are 2 Appendices to the dissertation work in a volume of 15 pages.

The presented dissertation is dedicated to a significant and current problem for the development of public sector organizations, namely their functional strategies.

From the point of view of the qualities of the work, one can highlight the good theoretical basis for the problems considered, the correctly formulated object, subject of the study, doctoral thesis and hypotheses. The developed methodology successfully combines approaches and tools and supports its approbation.

In terms of structure. The introduction justifies the relevance of the topic. The purpose of the study is formulated, which is specified in 6 research tasks. The limitations are indicated and the author's thesis and hypotheses are justified.

**The first chapter** of the dissertation is theoretical in nature and consists of 4 paragraphs. The first paragraph outlines the terminological features and defines the main concepts, including through author's definitions. The dissertation indicates the specifics of planning in public sector organizations and in particular in municipal administrations, first defining the basic essence of planning, and then its features applied in the management of public organizations. It traces the historical development of planning science and practice. It graphically presents the relationship between the documents developed for the formation and implementation of policies. It also outlines the goals of a municipal strategy.

The second paragraph classifies strategies according to various characteristics. The emphasis is placed on the fact that in many public

organizations there are no clearly expressed functional strategies, but the requirements and steps for their development allow a concept for their development to be developed .

In the third paragraph, the doctoral student systematizes the areas of authority of the head of the municipal administration - the mayor. He also traces the logical connection between the powers, units, functions and strategies of the municipal administration bodies. He emphasizes the functions of budgetary organizations.

The fourth paragraph states that there is methodological guidelines for monitoring and evaluation of public policies, programs and strategies, but not for their development. Famous authors on the subject are quoted, according to whom the lack of methodologies for developing strategic documents in public sector organizations is the reason why many of these documents are not of good quality.

The chapter ends with conclusions and summaries based on the review of strategic documents and methodologies for developing functional strategies.

**The second chapter** consists of 3 paragraphs and has a methodological focus. It reviews the practice of the municipal administration in Burgas in developing functional strategies. An analysis of 3 strategic documents of a complex nature and 15 sectoral strategic documents was made. The quality of these documents was assessed according to various criteria. The chapter ends with the proposal of the author's model for developing functional strategies in municipal administrations. It consists of 7 stages and in it the content of each of the stages is analyzed in depth.

**The third chapter** presents a survey conducted in the period December 2021-January 2022 among employees of the Municipality of Burgas. Three stages of implementation are indicated, namely:

1. First stage – specifying the object of study and its structural elements. Familiarization with the regulatory framework governing the functioning of

municipal administrations in Bulgaria with a focus on the regulation and peculiarities of the planning practice of the Burgas municipal administration;

2. Second stage – development of a reference model for developing and implementing functional strategies in municipalities and preparation of a questionnaire to assess the degree of compliance of the practice of the Burgas municipal administration with the proposed model;

3. Third stage – conducting the actual part of the study, processing the data and formulating conclusions.

Its purpose is to establish the compliance of the administration's practice in terms of developing functional strategies with the reference model proposed in the second chapter. Based on the answers to the questions, the following are indicated: the most common reasons for developing functional strategies in the administration; an assessment of the necessary competencies that employees with responsibilities for the development, implementation and monitoring of strategic documents must possess; the most frequently used methods for monitoring the implementation of strategic documents are systematized; a competitive profile of the Burgas municipal administration is made.

Good practices in developing functional strategies in other municipalities are presented, which can be used as an example of good strategic planning at the municipal level .

The chapter ends with substantiated conclusions about the level of development of functional strategies in the Municipality of Burgas. I believe that the thesis and working hypotheses are defended in the dissertation research.

**The conclusion** summarizes the main points of the dissertation work.

## **II. Scientific and applied scientific achievements in the dissertation work**

Based on what is presented in the dissertation, I accept the stated scientific and scientific-applied achievements in the dissertation and consider them to be

the personal work of the doctoral student. In my opinion, they could be distinguished into those of a theoretical (the first) and applied nature (the remaining 4 contributions). I believe that the sixth contribution can be added to the fifth.

### **III. Critical remarks, recommendations and questions**

As a member of the scientific Jury for the competition for the educational and scientific degree "Doctor" I believe that the dissertation research meets the content and requirements for developing such a work. I have no critical remarks, but I have one question: Is there currently any improvement in the functional strategies being developed by the Burgas Municipality administration?

### **IV. Other issues**

A 54-page abstract is submitted, which presents in a synthesized form the theoretical analysis and the scientific research carried out by the doctoral student and the results achieved from it. The abstract meets the requirements and is in accordance with the rules for its structure and content.

A list of 10 independent publications is presented for the dissertation. They reflect aspects of the problems investigated in the dissertation, both in theoretical and applied aspects. In terms of the quantity and quality of the publications, the doctoral student exceeds the requirements many times over.

I do not know the doctoral student and have no personal impressions of his work, but based on what I read in the dissertation and the publications submitted to him, I am satisfied with the demonstrated skills in analysis, synthesis, and interpretation of the theoretical sources and the practical research conducted.

### **V. CONCLUSION:**

In conclusion, it can be said that the dissertation is a comprehensive, scientific study on a current topic and contains scientific contributions . The doctoral student knows and analyzes the literature on the topic, can formulate

research problems, systematize classical and new theories and concepts, construct a research apparatus, conduct empirical research and substantiate proposals for improving existing practice. The above gives me grounds for a **positive** conclusion that the dissertation work entitled "Development of functional strategies in public sector organizations (based on the example of the Burgas municipality)" complies with the requirements of the Law on the Public Sector Organizations of the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for its implementation and the Regulations for conducting competitions for acquiring scientific degrees and for occupying academic positions at the IBS, therefore I propose to the esteemed members of the scientific jury to vote for awarding the educational and scientific degree "doctor" to ***Bozhidar Georgiev Babadzhanov*** in the field of higher education 3. Social, economic and legal sciences, professional direction 3.7. Administration and management (Business administration).

15.12.2024

Prof. Dr. Tsvetana Stoyanova:

Sofia

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