

## SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR'S REFERENCE

<b>Program:</b>	Master in Management (MIM)
<b>Student:</b>	Soslan Dzgoev
<b>Title of thesis:</b>	Export promotion activities as a factor of export expansion: case of Colombian agricultural companies

<p><b>Justification of the topic choice. Accuracy in defining the aim and objectives of the thesis.</b> Justification of the topic choice; accuracy in defining the aim and tasks of the thesis; originality of the topic and the extent to which it was covered; alignment of the thesis' topic, aim and objectives.</p> <p>The thesis is devoted to a relevant problem in international business, which is especially significant for agricultural exporters from emerging economies interested in international market expansion. Thesis results demonstrate that companies' export performance is positively affected by export promotion activities (in particular through participation in international fairs), and that the positive impacts tend to be stronger for small companies.</p> <p>The country choice for the case study was justified by the data availability.</p> <p>The research objectives are well defined and correspond to the thesis goal.</p>
<p><b>Structure and logic of the text flow.</b> Logic of research; full scope of the thesis; alignment of thesis' structural parts, i.e. theoretical and empirical parts.</p> <p>The thesis has a classical structure: it contains literature review; overview of existing export agencies; research methodology; discussion of findings and implications. All structural parts of the thesis are well aligned.</p>
<p><b>Quality of analytical approach and quality of offered solution to the research objectives.</b> Adequacy of objectives coverage; ability to formulate and convey the research problem; ability to offer options for its solution; application of the latest trends in relevant research are for the set objectives.</p> <p>The thesis objectives are adequately covered. The thesis uses "difference in differences" research method. The research design allows to achieve the research objectives.</p>
<p><b>Quality of data gathering and description.</b> Quality of selecting research tools and methods; data validity adequacy; adequacy of used data for chosen research tools and methods; completeness and relevance of the list of references.</p> <p>Data gathering at company level (survey) was the most challenging part of the project. It is also the most valuable contribution of the thesis as it brings new empirical evidence on the relationship between export promotion and export performance.</p>
<p><b>Scientific aspect of the thesis.</b> Independent scientific thinking in solving the set problem/objectives; the extent to which the student contributed to selecting and justifying the research model (conceptual and/or quantitative), developing methodology/approach to set objectives.</p> <p>S. Dzgoev demonstrated very high level of personal interest and implication to the topic. A survey was launched by the student to gather the company-level data to assess the role of export promotion activities. The student demonstrated qualities of independent researcher while setting the research design and implementing the research project.</p>
<p><b>Practical/applied nature of research.</b> Extent to which the theoretical background is related to the international or Russian managerial practice; development of applied recommendations; justification and interpretation of the empirical/applied results.</p> <p>The thesis has strong practical relevance as it considers the impacts of export promotion activities on the performance of Colombian agricultural companies. However, its applicability to the Russian agricultural industry and the role of export agencies requires supplementary analysis.</p>
<p><b>Quality of thesis layout.</b> Layout fulfils the requirements of the Regulations for master thesis preparation and defence, correct layout of tables, figures, references.</p> <p>Minor remarks on thesis layout can be made.</p>

**Originality of the text.** All sources of match identified by the Safe Assign system follow the allowed cases, the paper does not contain any elements of plagiarism.

The thesis text is original and does not contain elements of plagiarism.

The Master thesis of Soslan Dzgoev meets the requirements for master thesis of Master in Management program thus the author of the thesis can be awarded the required degree.

Date: May 31, 2018

Scientific Advisor: PhD, Asc. prof. Olga L. Garanina

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'O. Garanina', is centered below the text of the scientific advisor.