

Call for papers for the Workshop

'Economic Crisis and ICT in the Public and Private Sector'

Economic crises have not only short term effects on the society and economy, but also significant medium and long term ones as well, through their negative impacts on the investments of both private sector firms and public sector organizations. This is one of the most important, and at the same time least researched, negative effects of economic crises on the society and economy. Previous economic sciences research has concluded that economic crises usually lead to reduction of firms' investments (pro-cyclical behavior), and this has negative medium and long term effects on their innovation activity, efficiency, competitiveness and performance. In periods of economic recession the general investment propensity of firms decreases. Firms are confronted with decrease of demand for their products and services, and this makes investment more risky than in 'normal' or booming periods. Also, decreasing demand limits the capabilities for internal financing of investment through past revenues. Uncertain economic perspectives reduce also the willingness of banks and other financial intermediaries to finance firms' investment projects. Similarly, public sector organizations usually reduce most of their investments as part of government spending reduction (austerity) programs, and also due to reduced tax revenues. However, sometimes the economic crises can have the opposite effect, leading to increase of some kinds of firms' investments (anti-cyclical behavior). In a booming economy it is expected that costs of various assets (e.g. production equipment, ICT hardware and software) as well as human labor and other input factors will be high, while in recessions these costs will be clearly lower; these sometimes motivate firms to take advantage of these lower costs, in order to make investments that would be much more costly in normal or booming periods. Furthermore, economic crises put pressure on firms to address long standing inefficiencies and problems, and in general to increase their productivity and efficiency, and this usually necessitates both 'hard' investments (e.g. in production equipment, and ICT hardware and software) as well as 'soft' investments (e.g. in human resources skills' enrichment through training, and organizational structures and processes redesign). Furthermore, the public sector sometimes increases some types of public investment, in order to reduce the negative recession effects of economic crises, and address existing inefficiencies of government organizations.

Our country faces a long and severe economic crisis (since 2009), which has resulted in big losses of country's GDP, employment and consumption. This has caused big problems in the private sector, as most firms have experienced significant reduction of the demand for their products and services, and therefore decrease of their sales revenue and financial resources. This economic crisis has caused big problems in the public sector as well: several austerity programs have significantly reduced the available financial resources for government organizations of all levels (both central government, as well as regional and municipal government ones). At the same time the social problems and needs that government organizations have to address increased significantly due to the economic crisis. This long and severe economic crisis has led to a lot of changes and problems in the Greek economy and society, making their 'traditional' problems and needs more acute, and at the same time giving rise to new problems and needs, which all have to be addressed by a public administration experiencing drastic reductions of its budgets. So it is highly important to investigate the effects of the economic crisis on the investments of both the public and the private sector of our country. This workshop focuses on one of the most important types of investments, the ICT investment (both 'hard' and 'soft' ones), and aims to contribute towards a deeper investigation of some critical relevant questions:

- To what extent the economic crisis has affected the ‘quantity’ and the ‘quality’ of ICT usage in the Greek public and private sector ?
- To what extent the economic crisis had a negative impact on the ‘hard’ and ‘soft’ ICT investment as well as the corresponding operating expenses in the Greek public and private sector ?
- Which are the effects of ICT investment reductions on innovation, productivity, efficiency and performance of private sector firms and public sector organizations, as well as on the society ?
- And on the contrary, to what extent we had not only ‘pro-cyclical’ behaviors of firms and public sector organizations with respect to ICT investment, but also ‘anti-cyclical’ behaviors as well ?
- To what extent the economic crisis has been the driver of new ICT projects and investments, for the development of new information systems, aiming to take advantage of the ICT goods, services and human resources cost reductions caused by the economic crisis/recession, or address chronic problems and inefficiencies, and in general improve productivity and efficiency, or even in order to support new products and services (products’ and services’ innovations) ?
- Especially, we are interested in new ICT projects and investments, aiming to address chronic problems and inefficiencies of the Greek public sector, or reduce government expenses (as a response to the austerity programs’ requirements), or support offering new government services (possibly necessitated by the economic crisis) ?
- Which are the main determinants of firms’ and government organizations’ behavior (i.e. degree of ‘pro-cyclical’ or ‘anti-cyclical’ behavior) with respect to ICT usage and investment in this economic crisis ? (e.g. firms’ and government organizations’ characteristics, human resources and culture, history, as well as contextual characteristics)

For this highly innovative and challenging workshop we would like to invite papers presenting research (quantitative, qualitative, case studies, etc.) on the above questions, and in general on the topic of this workshop: ‘Economic Crisis and ICT in the Public and Private sector’. The papers to be submitted for this workshop will be reviewed, following the same procedures/criteria as with all the other papers submitted for the e-Democracy Conference, and the ones accepted will be published in the Springer Verlag Proceedings of this Conference.

Paper submission deadline: 16 June 2017

For more details see ‘e-Democracy 2017’ Conference website : <http://www.edemocracy2017.eu/>

The Conference Proceedings will be published by Springer

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