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Article

Impact of Knowledge Intensive Business Services on Economic Performance of Sectors and Regions

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IMPACT OF KNOWLEDGE INTENSIVE BUSINESS SERVICES ON ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE OF SECTORS AND REGIONS

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The role of knowledge intensive services in today's economy are among the topics most frequently addressed in recent years by researchers. The major interest is targeting in particular services provided to enterprises, known internationally as knowledge intensive business services or, by abbreviation, KIBS. As a sector of the economy, KIBS consists of enterprises specializing in providing to other businesses services that require intensive use of advanced knowledge, thus characterized by the fact that intellectual input has a decisive share in the value added. Usually are considered part of this sector undertakings which have as object of activity the provision of services in the fields of research and development, design and technical assistance in implementing of new technologies including information and communication, training, management consulting, marketing and advertising, quality assurance and certification, accounting and auditing, legal consulting and assistance, architecture and construction engineering. According to the statistical classification NACE rev2, much of KIBS can be found in divisions 62, 63, 69, 71-74.

Currently available literature provide convincing evidence about the KIBS potential to induce - for their customers - accelerated innovation and increased competitiveness. Many authors find, however, that the results are not the same everywhere. KIBS work in close connection with their customers' specificities in term of needs, capacity and economic context. The way KIBS interact with conditions specific to certain sectors, and the role they play in the economic and social tissue at regional level are not yet studied comprehensively. It is necessary to continue investigating these issues in order to provide policymakers and business an opportunity to better harness the catalyst potential of KIBS.

That is why the editors of *Amfiteatru Economic Journal* invited researchers involved in the field to share their findings on KIBS influence on certain economic sectors or on regional economic development.

Most of the articles selected for the present issue of the journal address KIBS from a regional perspective. So, Bujdosó et al., Ciumara and Lupu, Strat et al., Cătoi, Tudor and Bisa, separately and by somewhat different approach, are analyzing the territorial distribution of KIBS in Romania in connection with a series of other indicators of regional development. The four papers arrive at a common conclusion, very strong and unequivocal: in Romania KIBS are heavily concentrated in the capital and in several highly developed regions. Strat and his colleagues highlights the growing concentration of KIBS in other more developed regions of the country, both on the reduction of concentration in the capital and on the backwardness of the least developed regions. They put this on account of regional differences in the intensity of entrepreneurial activities and bring into question the

widening gap between so-called growth poles and so-called poles of quiet. They also argue that the presence of KIBS in a certain region is an indicator rather than a factor of development. The work of Bujdosó and his colleagues support the conclusion that KIBS presence accompany economic development through factor and cluster analysis methods. In their work, one may find interesting the discussion about the tourism attractiveness of more developed zones and the positive relationship between the intensity of business tourism activities and the development of KIBS. Ciumara and Lupu analyze regional disparities in terms of business consulting services development and performance. Their research, highlights that the financial return tend to be lower, in average, where the concentration of these activities is higher, probably as a result of greater competition. Cătoi, Tudor and Bisa also focus their research on advisory services, based on the current need for change management professional services. In line with the other mentioned authors, they show that the demand for consultancy services appears where the economy is more prosperous, but also that, subsequently, performance of different industries tend to grow in regions where KIBS have a more pronounced presence.

The article of Iosif and Tăchiciu proposes a different perspective on the relationship between the region and KIBS. Starting from the favorable effect of service innovation on the competitiveness of the regional economy, the authors use the methods and tools derived from the European Service Innovation Centre project to analyze the service innovation system in the Bucharest-Ilfov region and how services innovation is integrated into regional development policies. Through this, the article highlights the innovation system imbalances caused by the lack of a systemic policy to stimulate innovation in services regionally. The authors support the adoption of coherent policies focused on smart specialization of the regional economy and promote activities that interact synergistically.

The only article in this selection that provide a rather sectorial insight is the article by Weber et al. The authors analyze KIBS prospects in the energy sector in Germany. The changes imposed by new legislation on energy and the environment creates important opportunities for growth in KIBS, but, as is clear from the research, the momentum will be short-lived. Therefore, the authors consider that providers of energy services should develop a business model that combines the ability to meet short-term rise in demand for certain services with that for responding to needs of a more permanent nature of potential customers.

An article that might indicate a new direction for the research on KIBS is authored by Máté, Kun and Fenyves. Although the role of KIBS in obtaining, protecting and managing intellectual property rights (IPR) is obvious to everyone, the authors adopt here an original and challenging approach showing that productivity in KIBS is negatively correlated with the number of patents and trademarks registered by KIBS. As the authors also admit, further investigation is required, including other forms of IPR, in order to provide a full explanation of the phenomenon.

Overall, we consider that the papers grouped under the theme of this journal issue contribute at enhancing our knowledge about the role of KIBS in the economy, especially from a regional perspective.

**Laurențiu Tăchiciu,
Editor**