

Review
about the dissertation for awarding the scientific degree "Doctor"
at D. A. Tsenov Academy of Economics – Svishtov

Reviewer: Prof. Snezhana Dineva Sulova, PhD, department of Informatics, University of Economics – Varna

Author of the dissertation: Marin Georgiev Gerganov

Title of the dissertation: Outsourcing of Information Services

I. General presentation of the dissertation

The topic of the dissertation is "Outsourcing of Information Services". The study examines the possibility for organizations, instead of maintaining internal IT structures, to assign activities related to information provision to external experts with specialized competencies in this field.

The dissertation comprises 190 pages and is logically structured, including: an introduction, three chapters, a conclusion, and a list of 154 references.

The introduction justifies the relevance of the topic in the context of digital transformation. The author correctly defines the **goal**, **object**, and **subject** of the research. **The thesis** defended is that outsourcing of information services is an effective tool for modernization and digitalization of public administration, but only if aligned with clearly defined strategic goals, supported by an adequate regulatory framework, and managed with high institutional capacity, transparency, and control.

The main objective of the study is, through the identification of potential risks and adverse consequences, to propose a conceptual model for the sustainable, transparent, and efficient management of information services outsourcing processes in public administration.

The object of the study is the process of outsourcing information services, with a focus on the regulatory environment, institutional practices, technical infrastructure, and interaction with external providers, while the **subject** concerns the contemporary trends, technological challenges, and best practices in the implementation of information services outsourcing in public sector organizations.

The first chapter is devoted to the theoretical foundations of outsourcing. The concept of outsourcing is defined, its various types are examined, with a particular

focus on the outsourcing of information services and technologies. The models, strategic rationale, motivations, and stages of the outsourcing process are presented.

The **second chapter** analyzes the nature and technological challenges related to IT service management. It examines IT service management models and frameworks, the main issues, risks, and factors for their successful implementation. A detailed practical case study on the application of IT outsourcing in the National Revenue Agency is presented.

The **third chapter** focuses on the state of the Bulgarian outsourcing industry and the specific features of public administration. An original methodology for risk assessment and a conceptual framework for improving IT infrastructure standards is proposed. The author reconsiders the principles, architecture, and management of IT services in the context of the contemporary and rapidly changing environment.

The **conclusion** outlines the results achieved in the research.

II. Assessment of the form and content of the dissertation thesis

The subject matter of the dissertation thesis is relevant and significant, especially in the context of the rapid development of information technologies and the need for continuous investment in software and hardware upgrades. The Bulgarian public administration requires modernization of its information systems in order to enhance security and optimize resource management. This makes outsourcing a strategic instrument that enables public organizations to focus on their core activities while gaining access to highly qualified expertise and innovative technologies without making large-scale investments.

The dissertation is properly structured into three chapters that are balanced in scope. The presentation demonstrates that the author has made considerable efforts and has reviewed numerous studies on the topic, showing an in-depth understanding of the theoretical and practical issues related to the outsourcing of information services. A total of 154 literature sources have been used, the majority of which are in Latin script (119 sources). This ensures the relevance of the research in relation to global trends. Overall, the sources are predominantly from the last five years, although some references could be updated. The principles of academic ethics have been observed, and the citation of literature sources has been carried out correctly.

In the dissertation, the author has systematized and summarized a number of theoretical concepts related to the nature, application models, and forms of information services outsourcing. The examination of outsourcing services in the

National Revenue Agency helps the author demonstrate their applicability as a tool for modernization and support for the effective management of public information systems.

I positively assess the review of the current state of the Bulgarian outsourcing industry and the identification of the trend toward a transition from basic services to knowledge outsourcing, including analyses, research and development activities, and cybersecurity.

The comparative tables developed in the dissertation make a positive impression. They demonstrate the author's ability to compare, summarize, and draw conclusions. However, the dissertation contains only one figure, which is highly insufficient for a doctoral study; the inclusion of more illustrative material would improve the overall quality of the work.

The dissertation is written in an academic style, and the language is clear and well-argued. The author uses the specific terminology in the fields of information technology and management with precision.

After thoroughly reviewing Marin Gerganov's dissertation thesis, I consider the work to be entirely his own, and no evidence of plagiarism has been identified.

The dissertation abstract consists of 43 pages and accurately and comprehensively reflects the content and achievements of the dissertation thesis.

III. Scientific and scientific-applied contributions of the dissertation thesis

The presented dissertation thesis develops and expands ideas of a scientific-applied nature, which can be summarized and synthesized in the following main directions:

- A theoretical study of the forms and models of information services outsourcing has been conducted, highlighting the managerial essence of the process. The technological challenges associated with the external provision of IT services, as well as the mechanisms for their effective management, have been identified and systematized.

- An original methodology for assessing risks and potential adverse consequences specific to public administration has been proposed. An analysis of the cause-and-effect relationships related to risks has been carried out, and a systematic connection between specific risk factors and undesirable outcomes has been established, supported by the analysis of real events.

- An innovative approach for the application of the well-known IT service management framework ITIL (Information Technology Infrastructure Library) has been developed. It consists of the hybrid use of versions 3 and 4 and is aimed at creating public value and flexibility within the administrative environment.

- A conceptual framework for the modernization of IT infrastructure has been presented, consisting of a technological model for improving standards in the public sector, based on contemporary concepts such as “infrastructure as code,” “dynamic architecture,” and “zero trust” security models.

I consider the candidate’s contributions to be significant and substantial.

The doctoral candidate has participated in two scientific forums, resulting in three scientific publications related to the topic of the dissertation—one article and two conference papers.). In this way, the candidate meets the minimum publication requirements for obtaining the educational and scientific degree “doctor” in the professional field: 3. Social, Economic and Legal Sciences, 3.8. Economics, and fulfils the minimum national requirements of the Law for the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria.

IV. Critical notes, questions and recommendations on the dissertation work

Notes and recommendations on the dissertation:

1. In section 1.1.1, “Definition and basic principles of outsourcing,” the principles of outsourcing are presented in an overly schematic manner.

2. The titles of sections 1.2 and 1.3 do not fully correspond to their content. Section 1.2 concerns the classification forms and models of IT outsourcing, while section 1.3 addresses the strategic rationale, motivations, and stages of the process.

3. The dissertation lacks sufficient visual illustration. Figures could be added regarding the lifecycle of the outsourcing process (section 1.3.3), the management model from the National Revenue Agency case study (section 2.4), the author’s risk assessment methodology (section 3.2), and others.

4. The contribution-related aspects of the dissertation would have significantly greater value if the dissertation included a developed example with detailed elements demonstrating the practical application of the proposed conceptual model for improving the infrastructure and management of information services within a specific organization.

5. A large proportion of the literature sources used do not comply with the requirements for complete and correct bibliographic description in accordance with the standards of the Harvard citation system.

I have the following questions for the doctoral candidate:

1. Have you conducted research on whether there are existing methodologies for risk assessment in the outsourcing of information services?
2. Is it possible for your methodology to be applied to business organizations?
3. In your opinion, are there cases in which the outsourcing of information services is not appropriate?

V. General Conclusion and Opinion

After thoroughly reviewing Marin Gerganov's dissertation thesis, I believe that the achieved results fully comply with the requirements of the Law for the development of the academic staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, the Regulations for the implementation of the Law for the Development of the Academic Staff in the Republic of Bulgaria, in the part for obtaining the educational and scientific degree "doctor".

I give my **positive assessment** of the dissertation entitled "Outsourcing of information services" and suggest that Marin Georgiev Gerganov be awarded the educational and scientific degree "doctor" in the field of higher education: 3. "Social, Economic and Legal Sciences," professional field: 3.8. Economics.

Date: 18 May 2026

Reviewer::
(Prof. Snezhana Sulova, PhD)