

Editorial

The booming of ICTs in all aspects of human life has significantly re-structured the current socio-economic environment with the provision of innovation. Various new technologies have recently emerged in the convergence of different IT-systems aiming to meet the needs of the modern society in goods and services while protecting the environment. Moreover, technology is now transforming in digitization of equipment, of processes, of structures and of business models that provide huge opportunities to those engaged in the agrifood sector, in the protection and preservation of the environment, and in sustainable development and rural planning.

In that context, ICT related research applications, innovative methodologies and practices have been presented and discussed during the 7th International Conference on Information and Communication Technologies in Agriculture, Food, and Environment (HAICTA 2015).

These proceedings contain peer reviewed research papers accepted for presentation at HAICTA 2015, which was held on September 17-20, 2015, in Kavala, Greece.

HAICTA 2015 constitutes a leading bi-annual international professional and scientific forum for IT-experts, geotechnical and agrifood scientists, environmentalists, foresters, water engineers, spatial engineers, and decision-makers, to present research works, contributions and recent developments, current practices and innovations, to suggest questions and issues, and to start a productive debate. Furthermore, another emphasis is put on the applicability of ICT solutions to real industry cases and the respective challenges.

129 papers were initially submitted from scientists from 21 countries. After a double blind review process by at least two members of the Program Committee of HAICTA 2015, 108 papers were finally accepted for presentation and publication in the conference proceedings (83.7% acceptance rate). The included papers highlight new tools, techniques and processes critical for the enhancement of agrifood and environment through information and communications technologies. Most of the papers represent academic research viewpoints while they equally discuss contemporary technologies, emerging research applications and future potential.

These proceedings merge agricultural, food and environmental sector topics with modules of Information Technology aiming to establish successful communication channels, essential for sustainable decision making in agriculture, food and the environment which consecutively contribute to productivity, competitiveness and sustainable development.

The Hellenic Association for Information and Communication Technologies in Agriculture, Food and Environment (HAICTA) marks this year 18 years of existence; the first conference took place in 2002. The conference's prestige grew over the years -mainly from an organizational aspect- arousing the interest of national and international institutions to become conference partners.

We would like to thank the authors and HAICTA participants for their contribution to these proceedings and who continue to participate in HAICTA scientific community. We would also like to thank the reviewers, members of the Programme Committee, for ensuring the Proceedings quality. We are also grateful to the invited keynote speakers Prof. Remigio Berruto, Dr. Nicolai Fog Hansen and Prof. Panos Pardalos, who agreed to share their ideas and research with HAICTA community through their inspired lectures. We would also like to thank the Organizing Committee Chairs, Conference Chairs and Conference Secretariat for their continuous help to our task.

We hope that these proceedings will promote the HAICTA focal scientific areas and contribute the challenges for the integration of innovative and advanced ICT technology, practices and emerging research applications towards environmental and agricultural sustainable development systems while it will enhance a constructive discussion within the scientific community.

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