

# Chapter 9

## From Digitalization Lag to Artificial Intelligence Revolution? Entrepreneurial Innovation and Red Tape Pitfalls in Greece

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### **ABSTRACT**

*The scope of the chapter is to analyze the state of art of artificial intelligence policy reform and implementation in Greece during the period 2019 - 2025, focusing on the crucial area of entrepreneurship. By evaluating key policy initiatives, programs and projects, research provides a comprehensive overview of how Greek government is evolving towards the promotion and the adoption of artificial intelligence models and tools from the national enterprises. The study provides a comprehensive and cross – sectoral analysis of artificial intelligence introduction and implementation, both in public and private sector in Greece, by evaluating adoption patterns and models and identifying implementation gaps and sectors needing improvement.*

DOI: 10.4018/979-8-3373-4606-9.ch009

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# 1. INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Research Background

Over the past two decades, digital technologies have become a central pillar of socio-economic development and institutional reform in advanced and emerging economies. Across the European Union (EU), digital transformation is increasingly seen not only as a mechanism for economic competitiveness but also as a means of ensuring more transparent governance, resilient public administration, and inclusive services (European Commission, 2023a). While many EU states have made significant strides toward digital maturity, countries such as Greece continue to experience both structural and cultural obstacles that inhibit their digital evolution. Despite recent efforts, the country remains characterized by a digitalization lag—an underperformance in key indicators such as connectivity, digital public services, and integration of digital technologies by businesses (European Commission, 2023b).

The paradox of Greece lies in the contrast between its recent emergence as a promising hub for innovation and entrepreneurship on one hand, and the persistent burden of bureaucratic inefficiencies on the other. Although Greece has improved its digital infrastructure and introduced key reforms—most notably the gov.gr platform for public services and the digital transformation of tax procedures—the inertia of a historically overregulated administrative state remains a significant obstacle (Carayannis & Grigoroudis, 2023). The coexistence of dynamic entrepreneurial activity and systemic red tape underscores a critical tension that shapes Greece’s ability to leverage digital and emerging technologies such as Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Globally, AI is heralded as a transformative force capable of revolutionizing sectors ranging from health and education to logistics and governance (Roundy & Asllani, 2024), though there are many issues and reservations (Mantas et al, 2024). Within the EU, AI is viewed as a cornerstone of digital sovereignty and economic competitiveness, with several Member States having adopted or updated National AI Strategies in line with the Coordinated Plan on Artificial Intelligence (European Commission, 2021). Nevertheless, Greece’s position within this evolving landscape remains uncertain. While government discourse increasingly emphasizes the importance of AI, practical integration remains fragmented, underfunded, and inadequately governed. The country’s limited participation in large-scale AI R&D projects, its shortage of AI-specific policies and ethical frameworks, and its constrained data infrastructure collectively hinder the uptake of intelligent systems across public and private domains (OECD, 2023).

The central research gap this chapter addresses is the lack of integrated analysis of how Greece’s digital lag, entrenched bureaucratic obstacles, and emerging AI policies intersect with the country’s entrepreneurial ecosystem. Existing literature

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