

OECD Public Governance Reviews

Romania

SCAN

2016



What are Public Governance Reviews?

OECD Public Governance Reviews provide governments with a 360 degree perspective on their ability to deliver on government objectives. The reviews offer in-depth analysis through a peer review process, a diagnosis of issues at hand, actionable recommendations, capacity building and implementation support. The aim is to strengthen a country's potential for sustainable, inclusive growth and to improve the well-being of its citizens.

Since 2007, over 15 Public Governance Reviews of OECD member and non-member countries have been conducted. Next to the full report, Public Governance Reviews are delivered with a 'Highlights' brochure, presenting the key messages of the full review.

What are Public Governance Scans?

OECD Public Governance Scans are the abridged version of full-fledged Public Governance Reviews. Rooted in the sound methodological approach of the latter, the Scans aim to deliver a diagnostic in a shorter period of time and in the format of a more concise output. Data collection is based on OECD surveys and complemented with a fact-finding mission. The output focusses on:

- key actors and core processes,
- ongoing reform initiatives,
- observed challenges,
- suggestions for the way forward.

The Scans also offer preliminary indications on the public governance performance as compared to OECD standards.

Thematic areas covered in the Scans are decided on a demand-driven basis, but can cover any of the thematic areas covered by the OECD Public Governance and Territorial Development Directorate, including:

- centre of government
- policy monitoring and evaluation
- budgeting and strategic planning
- human resources management
- integrity and public procurement
- multi-level governance
- open government
- digital government
- public sector innovation
- regional development
- regulatory policy
- gender
- justice

The format of a Scan is particularly appropriate for countries or regions that want:

- a solid, but succinct external assessment of key public governance areas;
- to kick-start an evidence-based debate on public governance reform priorities, as well as reform coherence and sustainability;
- a 'tour de horizon' of their public governance performance, before strategically selecting areas for a more in-depth analysis.

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WHY A PUBLIC GOVERNANCE SCAN OF ROMANIA?

The Cioloş Government approached the OECD in the summer of 2016 to engage in a conversation on the country's public governance performance and reform agenda. Five priority areas were jointly selected to analyse:

- centre of government;
- strategic human resources management;
- budgetary governance;
- open government;
- digital government.

The primary objectives of this Public Governance Scan are to:

- record ongoing reform efforts;
- identify priorities for the near future;
- support and foster a national debate on sound public governance (reform).

CROSS-CUTTING CHALLENGES IDENTIFIED

Addressing different public governance areas, Romania's Public Governance Scan identified specific challenges and priorities for each of the five areas, as discussed throughout this publication. In addition, some cross-cutting challenges emerged from the Scan:

- the importance of considering the approval of a strategy and a legal framework in support of a specific reform initiative not as the ultimate goal, but rather as the starting point to focus on actual implementation; such a focus would also require further increased attention for soft skills related to change management etc.;
- a gradual evolution towards evidence-based policy-making, including skills development in the area of policy formulation and policy evaluation;
- a sustained effort to connect specific reform projects (often benefiting from external funding, such as EU structural funds or other) with a broader strategy of organisational and institutional development;
- a logical approach to reform sequencing, optimising as such the use of the capacities and opportunities available on the ground;
- appropriate institutional anchorage for organisations, coherent with their mandate and as such maximising their potential leverage;
- a proactive engagement of Parliament to stimulate (political) ownership of the reform agenda and foster accountability.

A continuous effort to address the abovementioned challenges has great potential to contribute to the sustainability of the country's future reform efforts.

Centre of government

The centre of government (CoG) is the body that provides direct support and advice to the head of government and the council of ministers. From its traditional administrative role, the CoG in many OECD countries has shifted to a more active role in policy development and co-ordination, including strategic planning and foresight, cross-departmental co-ordination, and outcome monitoring.

THE OECD WORK ON CENTRES OF GOVERNMENT

The OECD Network of Senior Officials from Centres of Government is a firmly established network that has been active for several decades. Its annual meetings seek to: (a) review issues of how to make the centre of national governments work more effectively; (b) achieve a more in-depth understanding of decision and policymaking systems in the host country; and (c) work on broad governance issues fundamental to achieving economic and social public policy objectives. Recent thematic foci include the steering and implementing of the Sustainable Development Goals, the promotion of inclusive growth, and the nurturing of vision, leadership and innovation. Next to the comparative work at the level of the Network, OECD Public Governance Reviews all include a CoG chapter, accumulating in-depth understanding of the operating principles of CoGs around the world.

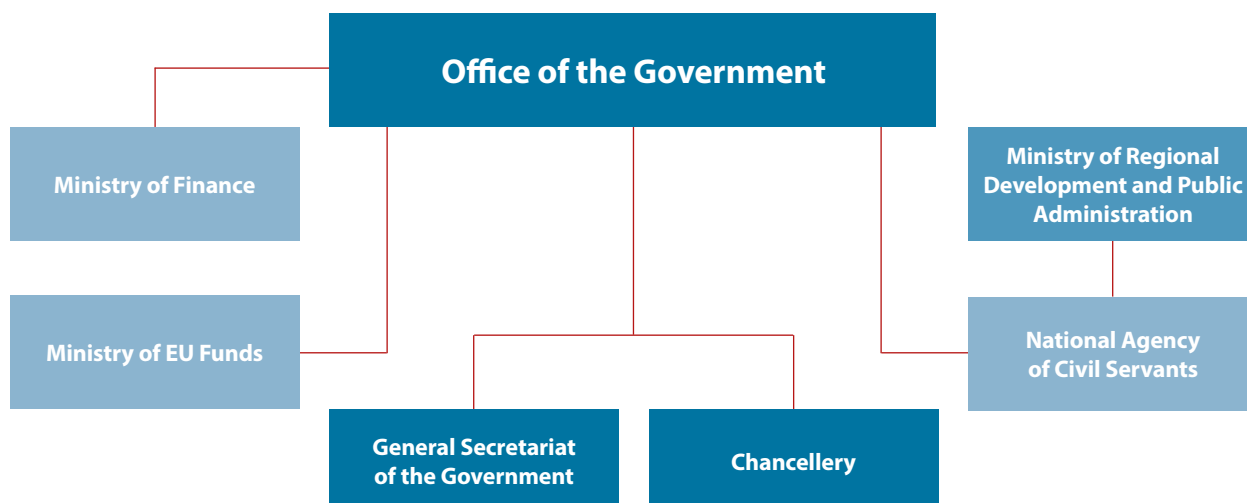
INSTITUTIONAL SET-UP, KEY FEATURES AND MANDATE

Romania's CoG, the Office of the Government, consists of two institutional pillars:

- The General Secretariat of the Government (GSG) primarily focuses on support activities, including human resources, legal and economic reviews of policies and laws, and the Council of Ministers' meeting co-ordination.
- The Prime Minister's Chancellery (PMC) primarily focuses on ministerial co-ordination, policy co-ordination, strategic foresight, and monitoring implementation.

In addition, the Ministry of Finance, the Ministry of EU Funds and the National Agency of Civil Servants (NACS) provide CoG functions in a broader sense. The existence of the Ministry of EU Funds adds complexity to the potential for CoG steering and co-ordination through the budgetary processes, though the existence of such a ministry (or a ministry with an equivalent portfolio) is not uncommon in the region. The institutional anchorage of the NACS under the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration risks limiting CoG leverage in this area as well (see section on Strategic Human Resources Management).

Structure of the centre of government



The structure and mandate of the Office of the Government are rooted in Law No. 90/2001, which lays out the organisation and functioning of the government and ministries. The latter was revised through Government Decision No. 464/2016, which specifies the organisation and functioning of the General Secretariat and Chancellery, and Government Decision No. 523/2016, which updates the procedures of elaboration, monitoring and evaluation of public policies. These Government Decisions reflect the willingness to (a) clarify the respective roles of, and complementarity between, the General Secretariat and the Chancellery and (b) increase the emphasis on policy preparation and monitoring and evaluation, and the role of the CoG in this respect.

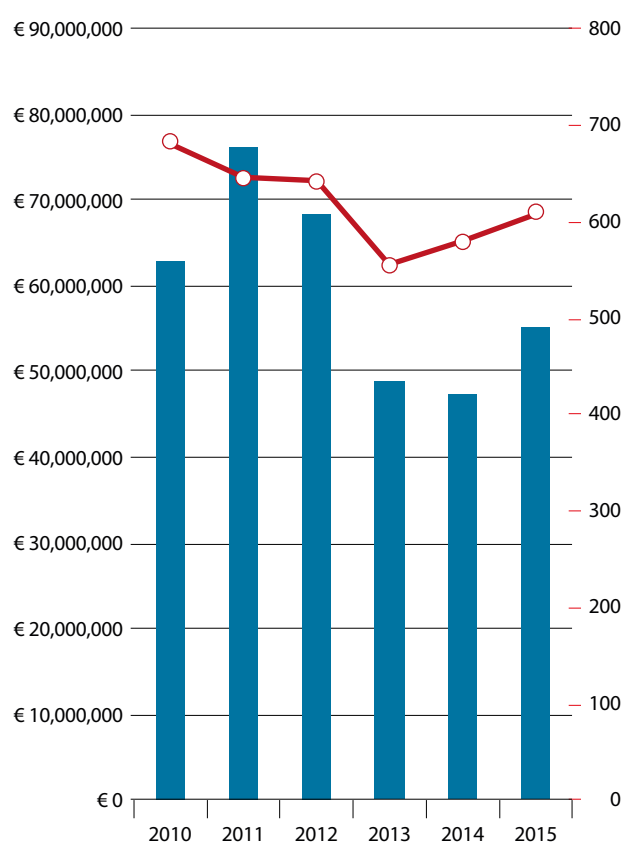
CENTRE OF GOVERNMENT IN ROMANIA – A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

The key features of Romania's Office of the Government as the main CoG institution are congruent with tendencies observed across OECD countries. In Romania, the head of the CoG is appointed at ministerial level and replaced when there is a change of government. Staff and budget have been fluctuating somewhat for the period 2010-2015, but have both decreased when considering the starting and end position for 2010-2015. The size of CoG staff as a percentage of total central government staff is a bit larger than the OECD average.

CoG key features

Question	Romania	OECD
Rank of the head of CoG?	Minister	41% Minister
		52% Highest civil servant
		7% Other
Is the head of CoG normally replaced when there is a change in government?	Yes	52% Yes
		38% No
		10% Depends
Recent change in employment of the CoG?	Decreased	34% Decreased
		48% Increased
		14% No change
		3% Fluctuated
Recent change in budget of the CoG?	Decreased	34% Decreased
		48% Increased
		14% No change
		3% Fluctuated
CoG staff as % of total central gov staff	.8%	.1%

Romania's CoG staff numbers and budget, 2010-2015



Sources: 2013 OECD Survey on the Organisation and Functions of the Centre of Government; Centre Stage Report, 2013; 2016 OECD Romania Survey. OECD data covers the period 2008-2012; Romania data covers the period 2010-2015.

Source: data provided by the Office of the Government

As regards the top four CoG priority functions, Romania identified co-ordinating the preparation of cabinet meetings, policy co-ordination across government, strategic planning for the whole of government and monitoring of policy implementation as priority functions for the Office of the Government. For OECD countries, the top three looks similar, but the preparation of the Government Programme, reform of the public administration and communication are more frequently ranked as a CoG priority function than monitoring of policy implementation.

CoG priority functions

Romania	OECD ¹
Co-ordinating the preparation of cabinet meetings	69%
Policy co-ordination across government	46%
Strategic planning for the whole of government	23%
Monitoring of policy implementation	23%

1. Percentage of OECD countries claiming this is a top four CoG function

Source: 2013 OECD Survey on the Organisation and Functions of the Centre of Government; Centre Stage Report, 2013; 2016 OECD Romania Survey.

KEY PROCESSES**Co-ordinating the preparation of cabinet meetings**

The Department for Government Meetings of the GSG holds preparatory meetings with line ministries to discuss draft lists of projects and laws to be put on the cabinet meeting's agenda. Subsequently, joined efforts by the Department for Government Meetings, the Legal Department (both GSG) and the Directorate for Co-ordination of Policies and Programmes (or DCP; under the PMC) confirm that: (a) procedural requirements are completed (i.e. public comment periods held; financial, social and environmental impact assessments conducted); (b) regulatory quality standards are met (i.e. legal reviews and Economic Council reviews); and (c) that proposed agenda items are in line with the Government Programme. This stage may involve additional exchanges with line ministries. After that, the Prime Minister's Office finalises the agenda for the cabinet meetings. Whereas a move from a paper-based process to an Integrated System for Policy Management (SIMP) was initiated several years ago in order to facilitate communication, better information sharing and, ultimately, a faster and more predictable approval process, this transition is still ongoing.

Policy co-ordination across government

The Romanian public sector currently deals with a multitude of strategies, which are not clearly connected through a hierarchical system. The Office of the Government recently identified 365 separately existing strategies as part of an inventory exercise. The DPCC, through its Strategy Unit (and somewhat as a continuation of a previously established Delivery Unit which is not operational anymore) is making an effort to foster coherence and alignment between individual strategies and both national objectives and international targets. The consolidation and streamlining exercise is an ongoing effort, which aims to strengthen and smoothen the communication between line ministries and the CoG, and to improve overall policy co-ordination.

Strategic planning for the whole of government

Romania has a number of thematic multi-annual strategies, such as the *National Reform Programme* (a framework-platform for defining structural reforms and development priorities guiding the evolution of Romania until 2020, coherent with the *Europe 2020 Strategy* objectives), the *National Sustainable Development Strategy 2013-2020-2030*, and the *Strategy for Better Regulation 2014-2020*. However, an overarching long-term strategy for the country is currently lacking. At the level of the Office of the Government, both the DCP (under the PMC) and the Directorate of Strategic Analysis (DSA; under the GSG) are involved in strategic planning. The former has the mandate to ensure that line ministries' strategies align with government priorities, while the latter has the mandate to provide analysis and foresight. Currently, there appears to be very weak links between the DCP and the DSA.

Monitoring the implementation of government policy

The primary mechanism used by the Office of the Government - primarily through the DCP - to ensure that government policies are implemented by line ministries is the Annual Working Plan of the Government (AWPG), an electronic database established in 2014. All line ministries announce planned legislative initiatives for the year and the approximate adoption date. The AWPG has fostered discipline and predictability. However, monitoring (and evaluation) of government policy is reported to be challenging in general, given historical fragmentation amongst line ministries and between line ministries and the CoG. The number of strategies, as well as limited focus on implementation beyond the approval of a legislative initiative and limited capacities in this area, limit the overall policy monitoring (and evaluation) capacity.

ONGOING REFORM PRIORITIES

Clarifying the CoG's mandate and strengthening its capacity in areas such as strategic planning and co-ordination is clearly on the radar. For the time being, these efforts are often conceived as specific reform projects, funded by external partners.

CHALLENGES

1. Institutional anchorage of reforms

Whereas substantial efforts are made to clarify institutional mandates (e.g. complementarity between GSG and PCM), some inconsistencies or potential inefficiencies continue to exist, such as the split of responsibilities for strategic planning and foresight within the Office of the Government. In addition, CoG staff is often very much focused on (externally funded) reform projects, without necessarily establishing the link with long term institutional or organisational development of the CoG.

2. Balance between horizontal and vertical dynamics

The gradual shift of Romania's CoG towards harmonised strategies, implementation monitoring, etc. is laudable, but this can only result in sustainable changes if line ministries are capacitated in a similar way and if horizontal and vertical institutions embrace a common reform agenda.

3. Addressing new CoG priorities

CoGs across the globe are revising and/or expanding their mandate. Recently observed CoG responsibilities in many countries include elements such as strategic foresight and vision, addressing cross-cutting policy problems (e.g. Sustainable Development Goals), monitoring trust, and developing sophisticated mechanisms for policy monitoring and evaluation. Romania's CoG is not yet embracing all of these, but might be pressured to do so in the near future.

PATH FORWARD

Recent reforms in the area of CoG are moving in the right direction to strengthen the CoG's function as a strategic player. In order to continuously evolve in this sense, it is important to further push for a **coherent and complementary mandate** across different subcomponents of the CoG. In addition, it is crucial to strengthen not only the CoG as a horizontal actor, but also to ensure that a **'shared language'** is developed between the horizontal CoG structure and the vertical line ministries. To make substantial progress in areas such as strategic planning, policy monitoring and evaluation, etc., line ministries need to be on board with reform initiatives. Finally, it is instrumental to ensure appropriate **institutional anchorage and ownership** of punctual (project-based) reforms within the CoG, to guarantee sustainability.

FURTHER READING

Network of Senior Officials from Centres of Government (CoG): www.oecd.org/gov/cog.htm

OECD (2014), "Centre stage: Driving better policies from the centre of government", GOV/PGC/MPM(2014)3/FINAL, OECD, Paris, www.oecd.org/gov/Centre-Stage-Report.pdf.

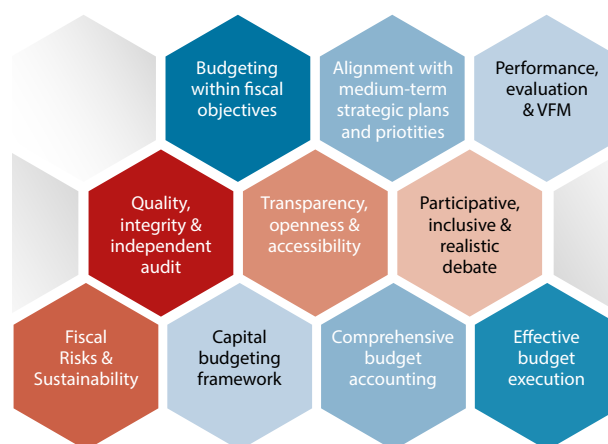
Budgetary governance

The budget is a central policy document of government, showing how it will prioritise and resource the achievement of its annual and multi-annual objectives. Budgetary governance refers to the processes, laws, structures and institutions in place for ensuring that the budgeting system meets its objectives in an effective, sustainable and enduring manner.

THE OECD RECOMMENDATION ON BUDGETARY GOVERNANCE

The *OECD Recommendation on Budgetary Governance* (2015) sets out ten principles that provide a concise overview of good practices across the full spectrum of budget activity and aim to give practical guidance for designing, implementing and improving budget systems to make a positive impact on citizens' lives. Whereas national practices on budgeting vary widely across countries because of distinct legal, constitutional, institutional and cultural practices, the principles provide a common framework for analysis. As such, the principles also orient the exploration of budgetary governance in Romania presented here.

OECD Recommendation on Budgetary Governance



THE BUDGETARY PROCESS IN ROMANIA – KEY FEATURES

In 2016, public sector revenues are planned to be 235.7 billion RON (52.2 billion EUR) and expenditures 256.5 billion RON (56.8 billion EUR). The budget deficit is predicted to be 2.8% of GDP.

Key actors budgetary process

Actor	Role
Ministry of Public Finance (MoPF)	The MoPF is responsible for managing public finances in accordance with national and EU rules. As part of this, it prepares the Fiscal Strategy, sets expenditure limits and compiles the Draft Budget using proposals from primary spending authorities.
National Prognosis Commission	The Commission sits within the MoPF but is a separate legal entity and technically independent. It is formally responsible for key macroeconomic projections including GDP, sectoral demand, inflation, unemployment, wage growth, import/export and exchange rates.
Parliament of Romania	The Parliament of Romania has a bicameral structure and consists of the Chamber of Deputies and the Senate. It is responsible for approving the Fiscal Strategy, the Ceilings Law and the State Budget Law before the start of the fiscal year.
Romanian Fiscal Council	The Fiscal Council is an independent fiscal institution, established by the Fiscal Responsibility Law in 2010. It performs a wide range of tasks, including the assessment of macroeconomic projections, monitoring compliance with fiscal rules and issuing opinions on fiscal policy.
Romanian Court of Accounts	The supreme audit institution of Romania. Its principal legal framework is Law No. 94/1992 on the Organisation and Operation of the Court of Accounts, which provides that it “shall conduct the control of the establishment, management and use of state and public sector financial resources.”

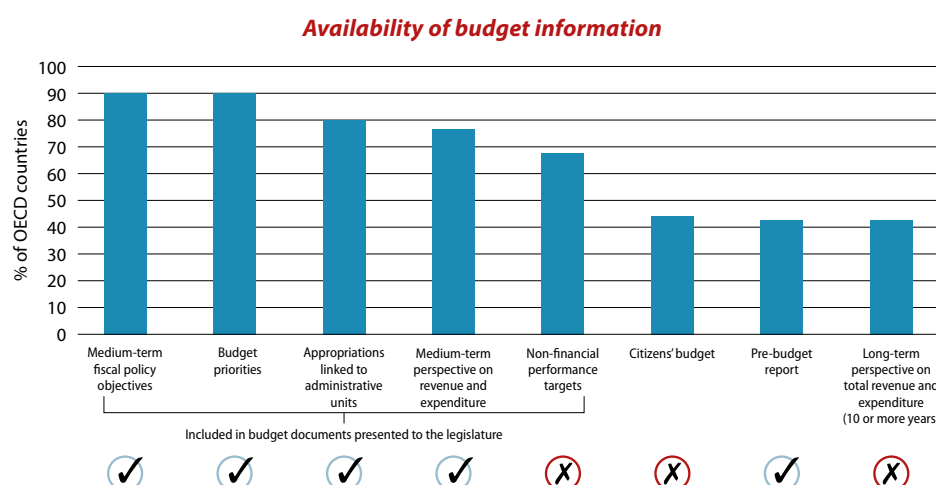
The fiscal year in Romania runs from January to December. The Public Finance Law (Law No. 500/2002), as amended and supplemented by the Fiscal Responsibility Law (Law No. 270/2013), sets out the key stages – and associated deadlines – for the budget process, as outlined below.

Calendar of the fiscal year

Setting the medium term budgetary framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 1st June: release of official macroeconomic projections by National Prognosis Commission. By 31st July: the MoPF prepares the Fiscal Strategy and sets expenditure limits and submits these to the Government. By 15th August: the Fiscal Strategy and Draft Ceilings Law should be submitted to Parliament for approval.
Developing and approving the annual budget law	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> By 1st August: the MoPF should send primary spending authorities a framework letter, key macroeconomic assumptions, the methodology for drafting the budget and the expenditure ceilings that have been approved by government. By 1st September: primary spending authorities have to submit their spending proposals for the next three years to the MoPF. By 30th September: budget negotiations between the MoPF, the primary spending authorities take place under the mediation of the Prime Minister. The MoPF compiles a Draft Budget that is consistent with the fiscal responsibility principles, the fiscal rules and the Fiscal Strategy and submits it to the Government. By 15th October: the Draft Budget should be submitted to Parliament. By 28th December: the State Budget Law must be approved by Parliament.
Monitoring implementation of the budget	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> During the budget year, at the end of April, July and October: the Government will present a public evaluation of the quarterly budget execution and the performance against the quarterly targets. By 31st July: the MoPF will publish on its website a half-yearly report on the economic and budgetary situation. By 31st May after the budget year: the MoPF should publish on its website a report on the final budget execution.

PUBLICLY AVAILABLE BUDGET INFORMATION – A COMPARATIVE PERSPECTIVE

Governments should ensure that budget documents and data are open, transparent and accessible. The following chart shows the frequency with which budget information is made available to the public in OECD countries, and whether the same information is publicly available in Romania.



Source: OECD Budgeting Practices and Procedures Database (2012)

ENSURING FISCAL DISCIPLINE

The Fiscal Responsibility Law (Law No. 69/2010) establishes a set of principles and rules for strengthening fiscal discipline in Romania. In addition, Romania was one of 25 European Union Member States that signed the Treaty on Stability, Co-ordination and Governance in the Economic and Monetary Union in 2012. As a result, there are a number of national and supra-national fiscal rules to comply with both during the planning and the implementation of the budget. These include:

- Balanced budget rule. The annual structural general government balance must remain or converge towards the medium-term budgetary objective of -1% of GDP;
- Expenditure rules. There are upper ceilings for a large number of budgetary indicators including staff expenditures, restrictions on the redistribution of unused investment expenditure and restrictions on the use of a better-than-expected general government balance;
- Debt rule. The debt ceiling is 60 percent of GDP.

BUDGET APPROVAL BY PARLIAMENT

The Parliament should receive the Draft Budget by 15th November prior to the start of each fiscal year and must approve the State Budget Law by 28th December. This means that parliamentary scrutiny is compressed into about one and a half months. By contrast, the OECD *Best Practices for Budget Transparency* (2002) recommend a minimum of three months for parliamentary scrutiny of the draft budget.

After the tabling of the budget, members are given a period of between seven to ten days to study the budget documents and to develop their proposals for amendments (proposals for spending increases have to indicate the source of funding). This is followed by a committee stage involving both sectoral committees and the Committee on Budget, Finance and Banks. At this stage, each parliamentary committee can draw on some expert staff to provide technical support, although there is no specialised budget office or similar attached to Parliament.

Next, there are discussions in the plenary that conclude with a final vote to approve or reject the State Budget Law. A rejection of the budget would be interpreted as a vote of no confidence and cause the fall of the government. Since democratisation, parliament has never refused to approve the budget.

THE ROMANIAN COURT OF ACCOUNTS

The Parliament appoints the 18 members of the Court including a president and a vice-president. The Court employs 1 200 staff and audits 1 200 entities annually. Around 50-60% of its work focuses on financial audit, around 40% on compliance audit and the remainder on performance audit. However, the Court has a strategy to increase its focus on performance audit.

The President of the Romanian Court of Accounts reports annually to Parliament on the accounts of the national public budget administration relating to the expired budgetary year. This report is usually discussed in the parliamentary committees. The Parliament recently set up a permanent committee to scrutinise audit findings. At the request of the Chamber of Deputies or the Senate, the Court also undertakes special reports that focus on particular areas of inquiry and are discussed in the relevant parliamentary subject committee. Note that the Court performs all of this activity independently, in keeping with the provisions of the Constitution and national laws.

THE ROMANIAN FISCAL COUNCIL

In carrying out its mission, the Council performs a wide range of tasks, including:

- Assessing macroeconomic projections underlying the revenue forecast in the annual budget law;
- Estimating the fiscal impact of measures influencing the budgetary balance;
- Monitoring budget implementation and its compliance to the assumed targets;
- Issuing opinions and recommendations on the current and future fiscal policy.

There are five Council members, appointed by the Parliament for a period of 9 years, following their nomination from the Romanian Academy, the National Bank of Romania, the Academy of Economic Studies, the Romanian Banking Institute and the Romanian Banking Association. Ten staff form a technical secretariat and their wage rights correspond

to personnel in the MoPF. Access to information for the Council is guaranteed through the Fiscal Responsibility Law and the Council publishes all of its reports online. The Council undertakes fiscal surveillance on an *ex ante* basis by analysing and issuing opinions and recommendations on budget developments throughout the budget process. It also publishes an annual report at the end of May. Each annual report includes discussion and analysis of the implementation of the fiscal policy set forth in the *Fiscal Strategy and Annual Budget* approved in the previous budget year.

ONGOING REFORM PRIORITIES

The need to strengthen the planning process and the limited availability and use of performance information to inform budget decisions is currently addressed by the Romanian Government with external support by the following means:

- Strengthening the strategic planning system. The aim is for each Ministry to prepare a Strategic Plan that consolidates its EU commitments, the Sustainable Development Goals and nationally assumed objectives into one overall vision. In setting out the details for each Plan, policies will be matched with financial resources to ensure they align with the overall medium term budgetary framework.
- Enhancing performance-based budgeting. The aim is for budget programs to be presented together with an annual estimation of the outcomes for each program. The MoPF intends to use outcome information to improve budget planning and its orientation towards the achievement of results.

In addition, the Government is carrying out reforms related to national planning (through the newly established Commission on National Priorities), the harmonisation of internal audit (led by the MoPF) and improved transparency.

CHALLENGES

In spite of substantial reform efforts, specific challenges limit good budgetary governance in Romania. These challenges include:

1. **Practical adherence to the Fiscal Responsibility Law in Romania.** The Law and associated fiscal framework is sound, though not always applied effectively in practice.
2. **Ownership in relation to ongoing reforms.** Leadership and buy-in to ongoing reforms is reported to be limited and government employees are grappling with the fundamental reforms.
3. **Meaningful parliamentary engagement in the budget process.** Parliament does not have sufficient time, information or technical capacity to undertake effective budget oversight.
4. **Participative debate on budgetary choices.** There is limited meaningful public participation through the budget process.
5. **Accessible and comprehensive budget documentation.** Budget documents are not always accessible and reporting in relation to fiscal risks and long-term fiscal sustainability is limited.
6. **Flexibility in resources and fiscal space.** There is limited information on the scope for flexibility in the expenditure baseline and a need for greater fiscal space.

PATH FORWARD

Whereas substantial reforms are ongoing, the budgetary governance of Romania could be further strengthened by focusing on the following issues:

- Improve **adherence to fiscal framework**;
- Better understand **flexibility within the expenditure baseline**; supplement with a spending review to enhance fiscal space;
- Develop a stronger **medium-term dimension in the budgeting process**;
- Improve **timeliness and accessibility of budget documentation**;
- Ensure there is strong **leadership and capacity building** within government in relation to reforms;
- Review **parliamentary engagement** in the budget process;
- **Expand fiscal reporting** in areas such as fiscal risks and long-term fiscal sustainability.

FURTHER READING

OECD (2014), *Principles of Budgetary Governance*, www.oecd.org/gov/budgeting/principles-budgetary-governance.htm
 OECD (2002), "OECD Best Practices for Budget Transparency", OECD Journal on Budgeting, Vol. 1, No. 3, <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/budget-v1-art14-en>



Strategic human resource management

Strategic Human Resources Management (HRM) looks at the processes and tools used to ensure that the capacities of the government workforce are aligned to the mission and core strategic objectives of the government. This means ensuring that the right people with the right skills are working in the right places to achieve goals and objectives as effectively and efficiently as possible.¹

THE OECD WORK ON STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

The OECD looks at HRM holistically, including the processes in place to bring people into the civil service, develop their skills and knowledge, and allocate their talents to priorities. This requires forward-looking workforce planning systems, up-to-date workforce data, and appropriate accountability structures. The OECD's international comparative work on strategic HRM - which is used here as a point of reference to explore Romania's strategic HRM - seeks to better understand policy approaches to:

- Ensure that the public administration attracts, selects and develops a professional, diverse and highly-skilled workforce, capable to adapt to new challenges and constraints;
- Manage this workforce in an agile manner, to align performance with future-oriented strategic objectives and respond effectively to emerging priorities and challenges;
- Improve the performance of the public service and the quality of the services provided to citizens, through effective civil service reform and by supporting the workforce to contribute to public sector innovation.

PUBLIC EMPLOYMENT AND MANAGEMENT IN ROMANIA – KEY FEATURES

The central government in Romania employs 125 446 individuals, representing 68 033 civil servants (governed by Law No. 188/1999 regarding the status of civil servants), 50 083 contractual staff (falling under the general labour code) and 7 330 public dignity positions (political appointees). Civil servants have more job security than contractual staff, are on different pay scales, undergo a more rigorous recruitment process and have a specific performance management system.

The National Agency of Civil Service (NACS) acts as central HR authority and aims to co-ordinate – and provide advice on – HR policies across departments. As such, it is responsible for the actual management of HRM at the central government level, designing an HR strategy, the co-ordination and supervision in the implementation of the HR policy/strategy, providing advice on the legal framework, transmitting public service values and the provision of training. NACS only performs these functions for civil servants across ministries and departments. Romania's first *Strategy for Civil Service Development*, adopted in July 2016, intends to strengthen NACS' oversight on all human resources in the administration through an informatics system that will provide records on all public employees. The direct management of HR will remain split amongst ministries.

Romania delegates HR authority to line ministries and agencies to the same extent as the OECD average. Delegated functions include recruitment of contractual staff, duration of contract, dismissals, and flexible working conditions. Other functions are shared between the central authority and individual ministries, such as determining the number of posts and budget allocation, pay, and post classifications, as well as the recruitment of civil servants, oversight of performance appraisal systems, and development of codes of conduct and ethics. It is rare to have such a high number of shared responsibilities between ministries and the central HR authority in OECD countries. This may suggest unclear roles and responsibilities between the NACS and line ministries.

These arrangements result in a broadly comparable framework for terms and conditions of employment within each ministry and department, though with significant differences between ministries and departments as regards pay levels.

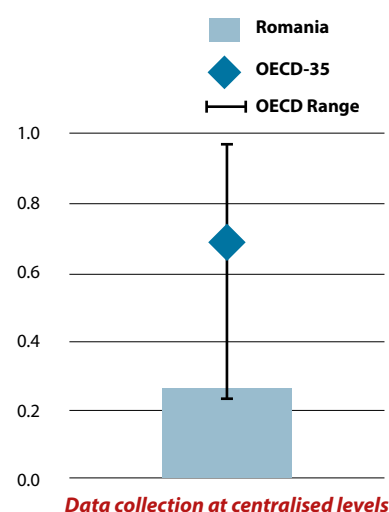
1. This section focuses on the management of employees at the Central Public Administration only.

HRM DATA AVAILABILITY

Romania does not have access to much standardised and centralised administrative data for its central public workforce. As shown in the chart, Romania collects much less data than almost all OECD countries. Furthermore, centralised data only exists for civil servants (not for contractual employees). Available data includes number of employees, level (e.g. grade, junior and senior staff, etc.), function (e.g. profession), age, gender, and level of education. Other data points related to HRM, such as employment arrangements, leave use, mobility, turnover and dismissals, are not available.

The use of regular civil service-wide employee surveys is increasingly common in OECD countries. Romania, however, only conducts such surveys on an as-needed basis by individual ministries and agencies, and indicates that this is not a common, standardised practice.

Romania uses its data for public reporting and to inform organisational training plans. This could be expanded to meet more advanced OECD practices, which may include reports to senior management and the political level, integration with workforce planning systems and dashboards for management decision making.



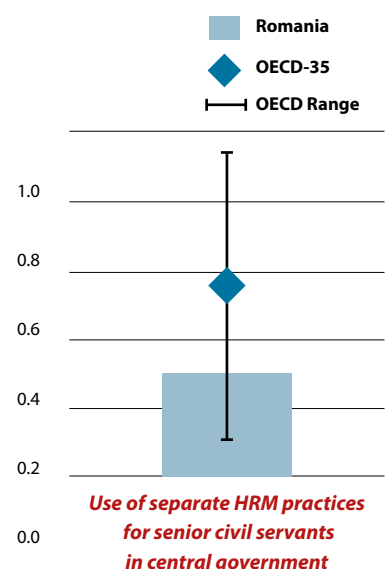
STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT

Romania has recently articulated a government-wide civil service strategic vision. The *Strategy for Civil Service Development 2016-2020* stands to provide the foundation for a more strategic approach to civil service management. The strategy makes clear statements about the future requirements of the civil service, including: leadership; performance; being an attractive employer; skills and capabilities (introducing competency frameworks); integrity and ethics in the civil service; and new recruitment procedures. The strategy takes into account internal forecasting (e.g. future skills shortages from retirement, workforce trends, future challenges, new skills and competences needed, etc.). It was developed with broad input from the senior management community (not just HRM specialists) and endorsed at the political level.

Competency frameworks are employed by most OECD countries, especially at senior levels. Currently, the Romanian government does not have a competency framework, although this will be developed by December 2018 according to the *Strategy for Civil Service Development*. Strategic workforce planning and management accountability frameworks are also essential components of Strategic HRM in almost all OECD countries, as they help ensure governments have the adequate workforce to deliver services. Romania indicates that these are not currently in place.

SENIOR CIVIL SERVICE

The management of a Senior Civil Service is a growing priority among most OECD countries. Senior civil servants include high-level civil servants and directors general. Their selection process involves a more centralised recruitment process, and more centralised monitoring and oversight. Recruitment of senior civil servants is made with special panels using a specific set of standardised exams. There are different recruitment frameworks for senior civil servants (D1) and general directors/deputy general directors (D2). More emphasis is put into the management of their performance. Overall, however, Romania uses separate HRM practices for its senior civil service to a lesser degree than most OECD countries.



Romania also sees a relatively high level of turnover of senior civil servants after elections. In comparison, 24 OECD countries report no turnover after elections at D2 and D3 levels, and 27 at D4, while Romania reports some systematic turnover at each of these levels. This may be due to the fact that the senior civil servants (D1 Managers), general directors (D2 Managers), directors (D3 Managers) and heads of service (D4 Managers) are all political appointees. While these positions are meant to be occupied through open competition, there appears to be a wide use of temporary appointments that bypass the meritocratic selection process.

CIVIL SERVICE CAREER

Recruitment to the Romanian civil service is done through a competitive examination that provides for entry into a specific group of the public service. All posts are open to internal and external (outside of the public service) recruitment and applicants apply to the different posts. Overall, Romania displays a hybrid between position-based and career-based systems, placing it near the OECD average. There is no branding strategy or action plan to brand the central public administration as an employer of choice. Fast track programs produced around 400 “public managers” in the civil service, though these programmes no longer exist due to lack of funding.

Romania integrates the use of performance assessments to a slightly larger degree than the average OECD country. Formalised performance assessment is mandatory for almost all government employees and consists of annual meetings and written feedback from a superior. According to legal criteria, performance assessment is important for career advancement and contract renewal. Despite this, there is a perception that performance assessments are often viewed as just another procedure - most of the employees score high and there is usually no consequence (either good or bad) related to the result of the assessment, even though the legal framework allows it.

Career advancement is generally done through open competition (as is the case in 27 OECD countries), though some promotions are available without a competitive process particularly for management positions. This takes the form of a “temporary promotion” of a civil servant to occupy temporarily a management position or a position of a senior civil servant. Temporary promotions have been used extensively – for example, in 2015 there were 3 050 temporary promotions to management positions and senior civil servant positions within public authorities and institutions of central government, the decentralised services of ministries and local public administration. Furthermore, career advancement is often automatic through three grades, resulting in most civil servants achieving their highest grade after only 9 years of service.

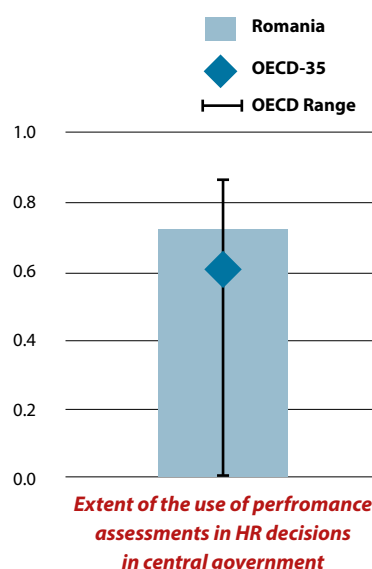
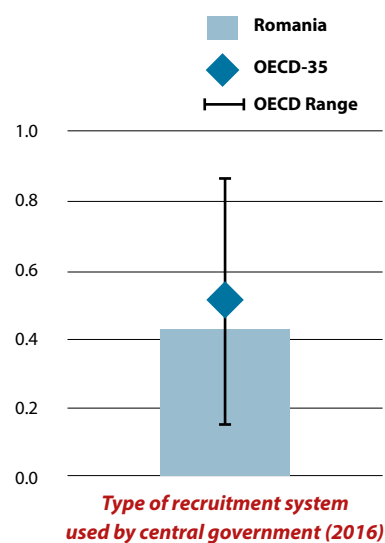
Training and development in designated priority areas is overseen by the NACS. The Strategy for Civil Service Training 2016-2020 calls for the re-establishment of the National Institute of Administration to provide training for civil servants, including executives. By law, each central public administration institution should produce a learning/training plan (this is common practice in 25 OECD countries) and communicate it to NACS. However, this does not always happen in practice. Current priorities in the field of training and development include: a “whole-of-government” training strategy; co-ordination mechanisms for civil service training (e.g. across ministries/agencies); executive leadership training and coaching; coaching and mentoring; partnerships with universities and public post-secondary educational institutions. In OECD countries, executive leadership training and online course development are the two top priorities.

As with 21 OECD countries, base pay is determined through an annual single, comprehensive negotiation for the entire central, national, and federal government sector. The most important factors to determine base salary are job content, seniority and the ministry or agency. Job content is rated as highly important by 23 OECD countries, seniority by only 6 OECD countries, and ministry/agency by only 6 OECD countries. Performance-related pay is used to some degree in 28 OECD countries. It is not used in Romania.

ONGOING REFORM PRIORITIES

The recently approved *Strategy for Civil Service Development 2016-2020* calls for:

- Clarifying roles, functions and mandates of each category of personnel in public administration (i.e. civil servants, contractual staff, political appointees and senior civil servants);
- Introducing competency-based management and occupational standards for strategic functions and areas;



- Recruitment reforms to increase transparency and neutrality from political interference, particularly at the highest levels;
- Creating programmes for the recruitment, training, placement and retention of young graduates in public administration, especially in areas with a shortage of personnel;
- Reviewing performance management systems, including the indicators and criteria used;
- Reorganising the career system to expand beyond the three professional degrees that can be reached in only nine years so as to maintain motivation among civil servants;
- Strengthening the role of the ethics counsellor.

The associated 2016-2020 *Strategy on Training for Public Administration* calls for:

- Reintroducing the National Institute of Administration;
- Developing a system to ensure training quality and tools to measure impact;
- Developing and implementing training programs for strategic groups.

CHALLENGES

The reforms put forward by the strategies are highly ambitious. They require legal amendments, but even more challenging will be their implementation, which will take time and sustained effort and a wide level of engagement across the civil service, in every ministry and agency. The key challenges facing Romania in implementing these strategies are:

1. **Capacity** – The NACS has limited capacity, authority and influence to implement such ambitious and broad reforms, especially given its current position under the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration.
2. **Data availability** – Data on workforce management is very limited, which inhibits the ability to plan reforms and monitor progress.
3. **Pay discrepancy** – The discrepancy in pay between ministries continues to be raised as a top concern. Although laws have been passed to address this, ministries do not appear to be able to implement them.

PATH FORWARD

In order to further reinforce its Strategic HRM, the Government is invited to take into consideration the following elements:

- Take steps to determine the **right institutional anchorage** to design and implement the new civil service strategies. While the NACS holds the expertise in HRM, the reform would likely benefit from significant support from the Centre of Government (e.g. the Chancellery), which could co-ordinate appropriate engagement, monitoring and follow up activities;
- **Capacity building** for the NACS and all the HRM offices in each ministry and agency needs be a priority for implementation;
- Continue to explore options on how to **address pay disparities** over the medium- to long-term within the context of the current budgetary frameworks and limitations;
- The focus on competency management is a good ambition but it must be recognised that in order to work, organisations must have significant capacity in HR offices and strong middle managers. **Implementing a competency model requires sustained engagement and capacity building activities.** This reform will therefore need to involve a wide range of ministries and agencies throughout the process.

FURTHER READING

www.oecd.org/governance/pem/

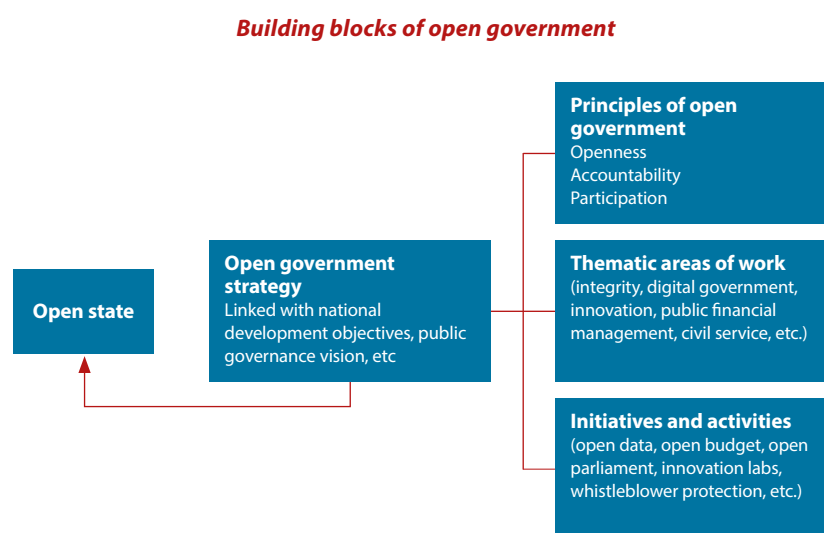
Open government

Open Government refers to a culture of governance that fosters democracy and inclusive growth, based on innovative and sustainable policies and practices inspired by the principles of transparency, accountability, and participation.

THE OECD WORK ON OPEN GOVERNMENT

The OECD's recent work on open government (2016) has fleshed out the conceptual and methodological underpinnings of open government strategies and how these can contribute to a broader notion of an 'Open State'. What open government entails in practice, and how countries pursue their open government priorities, depends on each country's specific context. But a national open government strategy can only become effective if supported by an appropriate enabling environment. Its success depends on a solid policy and legal framework to set the rules, frame the boundaries, and provide rights and obligations for both governments and stakeholders. In addition, it requires

a comprehensive approach throughout the policy cycle, comprising policy formulation and implementation, as well as monitoring and evaluation. This scan explores some of the key thematic areas of open government.



OPEN GOVERNMENT IN ROMANIA – BACKGROUND

The Government of Romania adopted its law on access to information in 2001 (Law No. 544) and on transparency in decision-making in 2003 (Law No.52), which are both instrumental to foster open government. The Council of Europe's *White Paper on European Governance (2001)* and the *Strategy for Innovation and Good Governance at the Local Level (2007)* are further seen as guiding documents for openness and transparency. The Government reinforced its commitment to open government by joining the Open Government Partnership (OGP) in 2011, as a mechanism to strengthen the national reform agenda, and is currently implementing its third OGP National Action Plan.

The Cioloş Government declared that “an open and transparent Government, in dialogue with central and local government institutions, civil society and citizens” is the first priority of its Programme. This commitment was underlined by the creation of a Ministry for Public Consultation and Civil Dialogue (MCPDC) in 2015.

ROMANIA'S COMPARATIVE PERFORMANCE

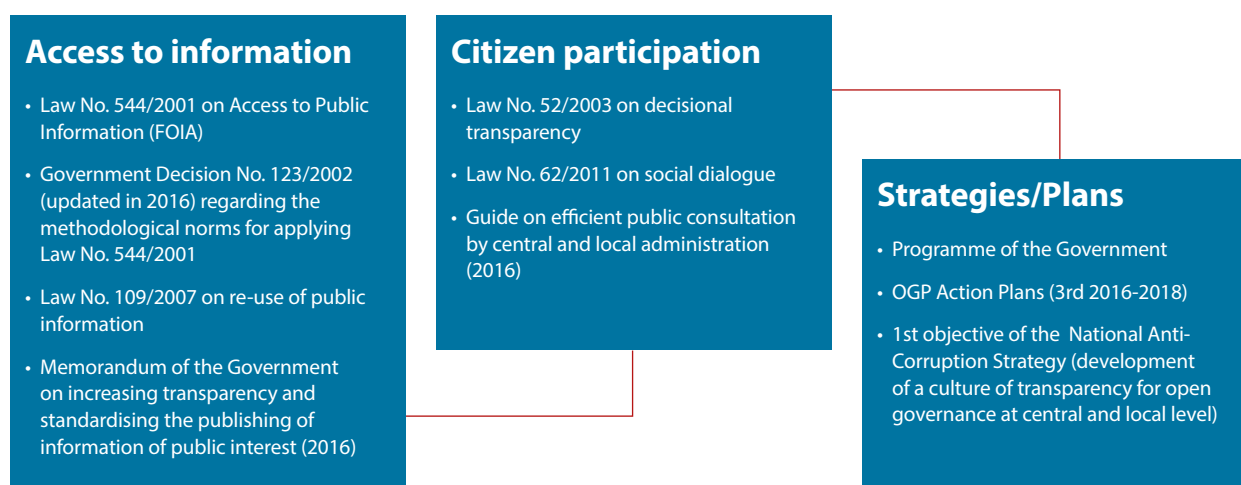
Whereas Romania possesses some of the key legal documents (such as a law on access to information), as is the case in most OECD countries, it does not have an integrated open government national strategy (which is the case for about half of the OECD member countries), nor does it have a tradition of evaluating open government initiatives (which is also the case for about half of the OECD member countries). It does however have an open government co-ordination mechanism, including civil society representation.

Selected open government aspects

	Romania	% OECD
Law on access to information	Yes	97% have such a law
National document on citizen engagement	Yes	46% have such a document
Office in charge of horizontal co-ordination of open government	Yes, but split between two (PMC & MCPDC)	77% have an office in charge
Open government co-ordination mechanism including civil society organisations	Yes, in the making	20% have such a mechanism
Open government national strategy	No	49% have a strategy
Funding mechanism of open government initiatives	At the level of institutions responsible for implementing each project	89%
Monitoring of open government initiatives	Yes	86% monitor
Evaluation of open government initiatives	No	56% evaluate

LEGAL AND POLICY FRAMEWORK

In addition to the previously mentioned Law No. 544 and Law No. 52 on accession to information and citizen engagement – which are at the centre of the current open government initiatives - the Programme of the Government presents a vision of open government that encompasses the various efforts underway. While no single and comprehensive open government strategy guides the country's efforts - which currently focus primarily on open data, access to information and citizen participation - the OGP Action Plan as well as the National Anti-Corruption Strategy define priority initiatives in the field of open government.

Laws and policies defining Romania's open government agenda

CO-ORDINATION AND MONITORING & EVALUATION

As the structure of the government has undergone frequent changes over the last years, so has the responsibility for open government co-ordination. The focus areas of the different OGP National Action Plans have evolved in line with the lead ministry's thematic focus. Since the creation of the MCPDC in 2015, co-ordination has been split between the Prime Minister's Chancellery and the MCPDC with clearly defined complementary roles; in addition to an OGP co-ordination committee (which includes 7 NGO representatives (self-selected) and representatives from 7 different ministries). Although this is not a common set-up in comparison to OECD countries – which usually assign co-ordination to one office or to a steering committee – this dual system is generally considered to be functioning well in Romania.

While Romania monitors open government activities through the OGP process and regular monitoring activities of each public institution, and MCPDC is engaged in a monitoring activity of Law 544 and Law 52, no specific evaluations take place.

THEMATIC AREAS

Communication

Important communication efforts to increase awareness about open government include:

- The website ogp.gov.ro, which was launched in 2013 and seeks both to increase awareness of open government and to centralise information;
- The MCPDC, through its work with the public administration as well as civil society, has sought to raise awareness of access to information and citizen engagement, in an effort to strengthen knowledge about, and compliance with, both laws addressing these issues.

Despite these efforts, there seems to be a limited understanding in the public administration of the value-added of open government practices. Engagement of the public, furthermore, remains limited to a few active CSOs. Ad hoc manuals aim to strengthen the capacity of public officials to implement open government, though these are not accompanied by capacity building activities or trainings in general, with only a few exceptions, such as for the Public Finance School of the Ministry of Finance or ad-hoc seminars organised by MCPDC.

Access to information and transparency

The responsibility for co-ordination and monitoring of access to information has been assigned to various departments over time; currently it is the responsibility of MCPDC. The Ministry conducted several activities to strengthen the implementation of the access to information law, through updating the methodological norms for the application of the law and thorough monitoring 1 740 public institutions (data through September 2016). The Memorandum of the Government on increasing transparency and standardizing the publishing of information of public interest (2016), which was elaborated through an inclusive process, provides guidance and templates for proactive disclosure of information. These efforts helped increase ministries' compliance of proactive disclosure from 62% to 95%. The General Secretariats of ministries became recently responsible for overseeing the implementation of the law on access to information.

The actual disclosure of information and the interpretation of the law rely heavily on court decisions, which NGOs and media have used strategically, positively influencing compliance by public institutions. In addition, information availability also depends on the overall quality of data management and the universal application of the legal framework (e.g. some actors raised concerns about information availability on procurement-related matters). Transparency efforts also serve to fight corruption and in that respect a new Unique Interest Groups Transparency Register has been established, which aims to display information on the topics that ministries, businesses and NGOs interact upon. A website (transparenta.gov.ro) is also under preparation to publish information requests and replies centrally.

Citizen engagement

Citizen engagement is guaranteed by law. Engagement occurs predominantly at the drafting stage of the policy cycle. Each ministry is responsible for the implementation of Law No. 52/2003. Ministries develop yearly reports that include aggregated information on the number of acts adopted, number of acts announced publicly, number of comments received and included, number of public meetings organised, etc. The impact of engagement is not evaluated. Some ministries also publish summaries after public meetings. The MCPDC, in collaboration with the Ministry of Regional Development and Public Administration developed a guide, through an inclusive process with public officials and CSOs, to strengthen engagement. The guide has been communicated to all ministries, though is not binding, nor is it accompanied by training. While most activities focus on Bucharest and attract a limited group of NGOs, some efforts have been made to organise regional meetings to broaden participation.

An Inter-Ethnic Council and a consultative organ promote the interests of ethnic minorities. A newsletter by the MCPDC, regrouping all ongoing consultations as well as an NGO database available to all ministries, are additional efforts to broaden engagement. A centralised consultation portal (consultare.gov.ro) is also planned. Some sectorial ministries provide additional means to interact with citizens, such as a mechanism to submit feedback on health services. Another good example includes the Ministry of Justice's engagement with CSOs and business in the design and implementation of the *National Anti-Corruption Strategy*.

ONGOING REFORM PRIORITIES

The Government's support for open government principles has been translated into the establishment of the Ministry for Public Consultation and Civil Dialogue, giving institutional visibility to the topic. Current efforts to promote open government include the effective implementation of the laws on access to information and transparency in decision-making, as well as the OGP commitments and the National Anti-Corruption Strategy. The establishment of an OGP co-ordination mechanism is another key initiative.

CHALLENGES

1. Capacity

As in many OECD countries, capacity to design and implement open government policies would benefit from further strengthening. In addition, the capacity to demonstrate the value-added of open government through policy evaluations is a particular challenge. Such an evidence-based approach would have the potential to strengthen both civil servants' commitment to implement open government, as well as citizens' demand.

2. Effective implementation

For different policy areas, the frequent use of emergency ordinances hinders the implementation of the core open government principles.

3. Sustainability and political will

Frequent changes in government structures pose a challenge to the suitability of open government reforms, including the uncertainty about the future of the Ministry for Public Consultation and Civil Dialogue. The lack of an encompassing national open government strategy may further hamper the sustainability and impact of ongoing efforts. Finally, the political will and level of understanding among political parties of open government will influence the importance of this area of work in the new government.

PATH FORWARD

The Government of Romania has put open government high on its political agenda and has made considerable efforts to raise awareness of the topic. Moving forward, Romania should focus on:

- Strengthening the **institutional anchorage of open government reform efforts**;
- Ensuring both **buy-in from the public administration, and sufficient capacity**, to deliver on transparency, engagement and accountability;
- **Demonstrating the impact, and relevance, of open government policies** to both citizens and civil servants – which will, amongst others, require systematic evaluations;
- Defining the vision, and uniting ongoing open government reform efforts, via a **national open government strategy**;
- Pursuing efforts to bring open government reforms to the Parliament, the justice system and the sub-national level in order to **move toward an “open state”**.

FURTHER READING

OECD (2016, forthcoming), *Open Government: The Global Context and the Way Forward*, www.oecd.org/gov/open-government.htm.

Government of Romania (2016), *OGP Romania National Action Plan 2016-2018*, www.opengovpartnership.org/sites/default/files/Romania-NAP_2016-2018%20EN.pdf

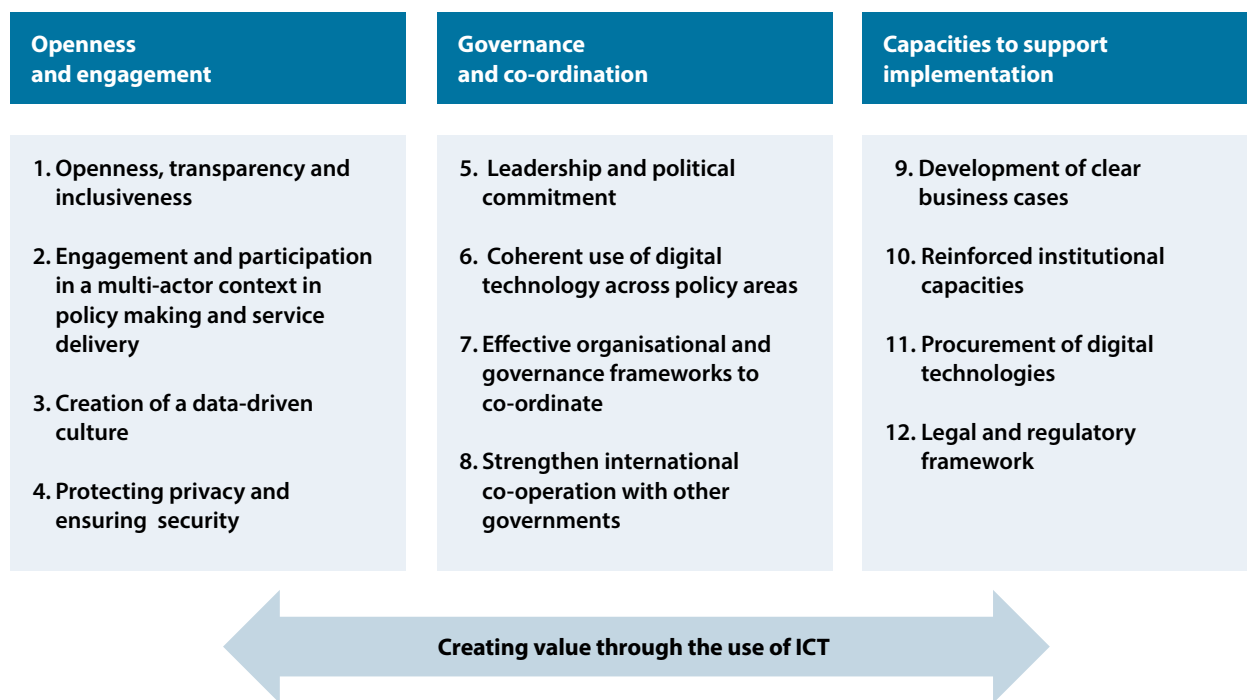
Digital government

Digital government refers to the use of digital technologies, as an integrated part of governments' modernisation strategies, to create public value. It relies on a digital government ecosystem, comprised of government actors, non-governmental organisations, businesses, citizens' associations and individuals to support the production of – and access to – data, services and content through interactions with the government.

THE OECD RECOMMENDATION ON DIGITAL GOVERNMENT STRATEGIES

Containing 12 principles grouped along 3 main axes, the *OECD Recommendation on Digital Government Strategies* (2014) emphasises the crucial contribution of technology as a strategic driver to create open, innovative, participatory and trustworthy public sectors.

OECD Recommendation on Digital Government Strategies



DIGITAL GOVERNMENT IN ROMANIA - BACKGROUND

Romania has been part of intense European co-operation that aims to push the use of ICT across the public sector. The impact of this co-operation is clearly reflected in the current Government's priorities, in major digital government projects underway, and in the legal and regulatory frameworks in place. High-level government officials express a "sense of urgency" about the need to promote the digital transformation of the public sector.

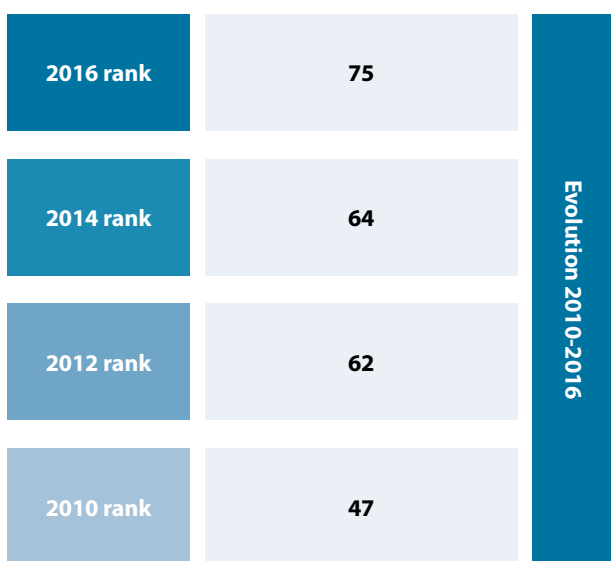
However, the country still faces the challenge of assuring better performances more closely aligned to the European average in terms of digital government development, and of responding to the increasing expectations from Romanian citizens and companies. The digital transformation of the public sector is happening worldwide, changing government operations, making them digital by design, re-engineering processes, and updating organisational arrangements across levels of government. Romania has a unique opportunity to use this digital transformation as a central lever of its social and economic development model.

ROMANIA'S COMPARATIVE PERFORMANCE

Romania ranks 75th in the *UN E-Government Development Index 2016*, and is one of the few European Union countries that is part of the middle group of the index. The tendency since 2010 is negative, not because Romania has stopped progressing, but mostly because other countries are progressing in a faster and more sustainable way.

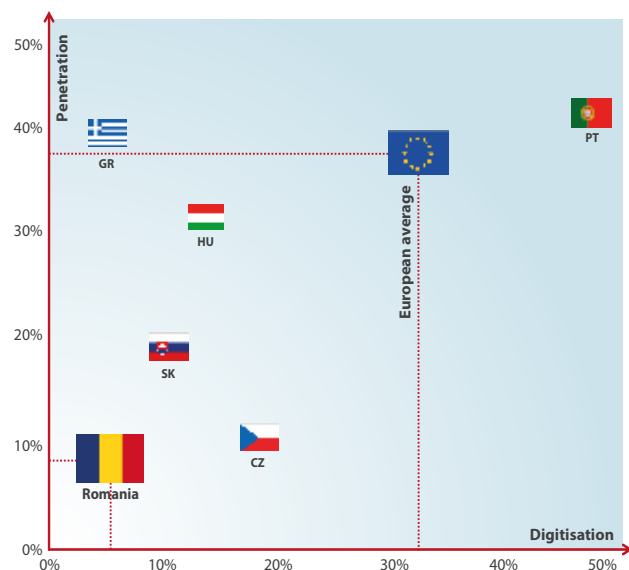
In a similar vein, Romania is part of the Neophytes Cluster in the 2016 edition of the *European eGovernment Benchmark*, implying that the country “scores very low on both penetration and digitisation, resulting in weak eGovernment that insufficiently exploits ICT opportunities and is dependent on significant efforts, which are essential to move towards eGovernment maturity”. Comparing Romania’s position with five OECD European countries presenting context-specific similarities, it is clear that better performances can be achieved in the future.

UN E-Government Index



Source: <https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/en-us/Reports/UN-E-Government-Survey-2016>

Digital Government in Romania Comparison with other OECD European Countries



Source: Based on the *European eGovernment Benchmark 2016*; <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/eu-government-report-2016-shows-online-public-services-improved-unevenly>.

ROMANIA'S DIGITAL GOVERNMENT STRATEGY

Framework of analysis

Based on the *OECD Recommendation on Digital Government Strategies (2014)*, this scan explores four dimensions of Romania's digital government strategy: governance, capacities, openness and digital service delivery.

Governance

Published in February 2015, the *National Strategy for the Digital Agenda in Romania* highlights several cross-cutting priorities that demonstrate the Government's commitment in leading the digital transformation of the public sector. By addressing topics such as interoperability, cybersecurity, cloud computing and open and big data, this strategy demonstrates Romania's strong alignment with the overall digital government trends at the European and global level.

The creation of the Government Chief Information Officer (GCIO), located in the Chancellery, also illustrates the will to assure the proper co-ordination of ICT development across the public sector. The GCIO will play a key role in steering the decisions on national investments, and ensuring their alignment with the overarching strategic goals of the *National Strategy for the Digital Agenda*.

Whereas the establishment of a GCIO structure is a positive development, it will be crucial to ensure clear complementarity between the mandate of the GCIO and the Ministry of Communications and for Information Society, in order to avoid gaps and overlaps. In addition, the GCIO will need to be equipped with appropriate levers to achieve its co-ordination function, building upon soft policy levers (e.g. guidelines, recommendations), as well as some mandatory mechanisms (e.g. funding frameworks, evaluation of ICT projects).

Capacities and key enablers

The digital transformation of the public sector requires that several key ICT enablers are in place. A consensus seems to exist in Romania about the main priorities to embrace, and the *National Strategy for the Digital Agenda* sets the path for the development of the mentioned transformation. However, the Romanian public administration faces the challenge of implementing those key enablers and spreading their use through the different sectors and levels of government. In order to better sustain the development of digital government in Romania it is a priority to invest in interoperability frameworks, public base data registers, national electronic identification system (including e-authentication and e-signature) and shared services that can promote better integration and optimisation of IT solutions across the public sector.

An important area for further improvement would be the global management of ICT investments. The lack of systematic use of business case methodologies limits the proper evaluation and intelligence of ICT spending, namely its benefits to citizens and companies. Regular monitoring and measuring mechanisms of ICT investments would also benefit from further improvement.

Openness and engagement

Romania's position in the *UN E-Participation Index* reflects the national panorama in relation to openness and public engagement. Interesting initiatives show the Government's commitment to spreading a more open culture in the public sector. Notably, the Gov IT Hub initiative is a good example of how the public sector can join forces with civil society organisations in an innovative way. Analytics.gov.ro, an initiative that monitors the access to public websites, and Contact.gov.ro, a portal that aggregates all the contacts from public institutions (available for smartphones and Apple watches), illustrate the public sector's capability to innovate through openness.

However, some mechanisms still need to be put in place to guarantee openness and engagement by default for projects and initiatives across the public sector and levels of government. The data management policy is a good example of the current challenges. Besides the national open data portal - Data.gov.ro - Romania needs to create an open data ecosystem that can sustain and add value to the public sector's efforts. The country also needs to start building a data-driven public sector, capable of bringing further efficiency and intelligence to the public administration.

UN E-Participation Index

2016 rank	60	Evolution 2010-2016
2014 rank	71	
2012 rank	29	
2010 rank	64	

Source: <https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/en-us/About/Overview/E-Participation>

Digital service delivery

The progress in the area of digital service delivery is visible across several sectors of the Romanian public administration. Key examples that demonstrate how important achievements are reached in different areas include the IT systems of the Ministry of Finance, the national health card, and the recent re-launch of the eDirect Portal (edirect.e-guvernare.ro).

The key challenge is to assure a shift from fragmented citizen-centred approaches to articulated citizen-driven approaches. The Romanian position in the 2016 edition of the European eGovernment Benchmark reveals the path that still needs to be treaded, fostering intelligence and sustainability of digital service delivery in Romania.

Coherence is needed throughout the different websites of the public sector so as to not burden citizens with adapting to diverse user experiences and alternative online tools. Romania needs to develop more interactive and transactional digital services based on life events, using common IT key enablers and made available in multichannel platforms to bring the country closer to the European average in digital service delivery.

ONGOING REFORM PRIORITIES

Through the implementation of the *National Strategy for the Digital Agenda* – which identifies the reform priorities until 2020 – Romania seeks to modernise its administration, support technologies at the sector level, provide backing for growth in the private sector, and promote social inclusion. Some of the ongoing reforms include the clarification and improvement of ICT governance in the public sector through the establishment of a GCIO, investment in infrastructure and interoperability, and the development of shared services.

CHALLENGES

1. Governance and co-ordination

The institution of a Government Chief Information Officer is an important step in the right direction, but the real challenges start now. Involving the stakeholders, putting in place the right policy processes and mechanisms to ensure co-ordination, and monitoring the implementation and impact of the strategy adopted are just some of the priorities.

2. System thinking and shared-efforts culture

To overcome the fragmented efforts in place in several sectors of the Romanian public administration, a system thinking culture supported by shared efforts should be better spread, based on national key enablers (e.g. eID, interoperability frameworks, Government Cloud strategy). Romania faces today the challenge of developing more articulated, coherent and sustainable policies for the development of Digital Government, applicable to different levels and sectors of the government.

3. Citizen- and Company-centred approaches

Important room for improvement exists in the area of digital service delivery. Romania needs to develop its platforms in an integrated way, humanizing and upgrading the citizens' and companies' experience when digitally interacting with the public administration. Integrated digital service delivery (e.g. multiplatform one stop shops, life event approaches, user friendliness guidelines) not only benefits citizens and companies, but it is also a mobilising goal that helps to promote cross-cutting co-operation within the public sector.

PATH FORWARD

Bearing in mind all the efforts underway, **Romania should continue pursuing digital government** as a priority embedded within the national commitment to modernise the public administration and as a key component of the country's development strategy. Taking full advantage of the international networks it belongs to, Romania has a unique **opportunity to leapfrog**, learning from other countries' successful experiences and from their lessons learned.

FURTHER READING

OECD (2014), Recommendation of the Council on Digital Government Strategies.
www.oecd.org/gov/digital-government/recommendation-on-digital-government-strategies.htm

OECD Digital Government Toolkit, 2016
www.oecd.org/governance/digital-government/toolkit/

OECD (2016), Digital Government in Chile: Strengthening the Institutional and Governance Framework, OECD Digital Government Studies, OECD Publishing, Paris. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264258013-en>

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