

MOLDOVA

- ▼ GovTech Maturity: **B, high**¹
- ▼ Lower middle-income country
- ▼ Emigrants as % of population: **31% (1m)**
- ▼ Remittances as a share of GDP: **16.3% (\$1876m)**
- ▼ Dedicated diaspora policy: ✓
- ▼ Dedicated diaspora institution: ✓

Digitalisation Strategy

The government launched the first Moldova Digital Strategy in 2013. With the support of UNDP, it is now developing a new 2023-2030 Strategy. One of the main result of this strategy was the creation of the e-Governance Agency (EGA), which provides e-services to its citizens, with a strong focus on diaspora digital services.

Diaspora communities can access various EGA services such as the government's electronic signature service (MSign), the information diaspora section of the public service portal and the citizens portal with various dedicated services for diaspora (e.g. request a birth certificate).

Diaspora engagement & skills

Institutional framework

- ▼ Bureau for Diaspora Relations within the State Chancellery of the Government of the Republic of Moldova – the main coordinating body in charge of diaspora engagement policy (established in 2012); BRD leads the official communication platform Emoldovata.
- ▼ Inter-ministerial Committee on diaspora, migration and development, which includes the main institutions and ministries dealing with migration and diaspora policies and the National Bureau for Statistics, created in 2017. BRD runs the Secretariat of the Committee and is the institution directly involved in the establishment of this mechanism.
- ▼ Ministry Labour and Social Protection - responsible for implementing diaspora engagement, emigration, return and reintegration policies and contributes to the protection of Moldovan migrants' labour rights and social guarantees.

1 GTMI is the simple average of the normalized scores of four components– the Core Government Systems Index (CGSI), Public Service Delivery Index (PSDI), Citizen Engagement Index (CEI), and GovTech Enablers Index (GTEI)– measuring the maturity of GovTech focus areas based on 48 key indicators, as explained in this chapter. See: GovTech Maturity Index: The state of public sector digital transformation (2021) World Bank



- ▼ Ministry of Foreign Affairs and European Integration - key actor in liaising with diaspora professionals providing access to consular services, guaranteeing the rights of Moldovan citizens abroad.
- ▼ Ministry of Education and Research – main actor for recognition of skills, training and education programmes involving diaspora professionals and attraction of talents from diaspora.
- ▼ The network of Diaspora, Migration, and Development (DMD) Focal Points operates throughout the country at national and local level.

Strategic/legal framework

- ▼ Moldova takes a transversal 'whole-of-government' approach to diaspora, migration and development (DMD), at the national and local levels. The DMD is mainstreamed across all institutions, giving an interesting potential to analyse how the DMD approach has influenced its skills registry, and could guide the DU with similar institutional coordination.
- ▼ Moldovan diaspora strategy 2025 developed with the support of UNDP and IOM is currently being implemented. It has a strong focus on enhancing and developing new services for diaspora communities across the globe. The strategy includes four objectives: i) drafting and developing the strategic and operational framework for the DMD sector; ii) ensuring the diaspora rights and building trust; iii) mobilising, harnessing and recognising the diaspora's human potential; iv) engaging the diaspora directly and indirectly in the sustainable economic development. The skills dimension is not one of its main objectives, but references to it can be found transversally under objectives iii) and iv).
- ▼ The Government Action Plan for 2020-2023 focuses on the need to unlock the human and professional potential of the diaspora in the process of decision-making.
- ▼ Guide for reintegration of Moldovan citizens from abroad, developed with the support of SDC and aimed to support the facilitation of reintegration and return of diaspora members.

The Ministry of Education and Research (MER) has done significant work to address the needs of diaspora members returning to Moldova. In 2019, the MEER approved two documents in this sense:

- ▼ recognition and equivalence of study documents and qualifications obtained abroad²
- ▼ validation of non-formal and informal education.³

The latter was developed to provide a normative framework for identification, documentation, assessment, and certification of such learning. This tool formally recognizes the skills and abilities acquired informally or non-formally by migrants abroad, aiding their successful reintegration into the local labour market.

For more on Moldova's approach to diaspora engagement, read the EUDiF country factsheet on Moldova.

2 *Order nr. 1702 as of 26.12.2019 on the recognition and equivalence of diplomas and qualifications obtained abroad*, available at: https://mecc.gov.md/sites/default/files/ordin_1702_de_aprobare_a_regulamentului_de_recunoastere.pdf

3 *IOM Moldova (2020). Practical Guidelines for the validation of competences acquired in non-formal and informal education contexts (levels 3, 4, 5 of the NCCRM)*, available at: <https://moldova.iom.int/resources/practical-guidelines-validation-competences-acquired-non-formal-and-informal-education-contexts-levels-3-4-5-nccrm>



Initiatives related to diaspora skills transfers

A. Short term diaspora skills transfer schemes, initiated by IOs:

▼ Diaspora Engagement Hub

Timeline: 2016 – ongoing

Led by: BRD in partnership with IOM and SDC. In 2022, BRD launched a new grant under DEH programme financed by the state budget only. As of 2023, the DEH programme is fully funded from the state budget, as a commitment of the government to development partners.

Aim: To support Moldovan citizens abroad in implementing their ideas and engaging the human and professional capital of the diaspora towards national and local socio-economic development.

Format: small grants (covering the deployment, travel and activities, not the expertise);

Activities: DEH subprogrammes offer:

- *Diaspora Professional Return* – short-term skills transfer schemes for highly skilled migrants (2 weeks – 2 months).
- *Diaspora Innovative Projects* targeting diaspora representatives for transfer of knowledge, experience and best international practices.
- *Diaspora Women Empowerment* – aimed at improving the social and economic conditions of women migrants via the transfer of knowledge and skills.
- *Subprogramme for Diaspora Youth* (18-35 years), contributing to economic, social, cultural, educational or civic development;
- *Programme to support cultural and educational activities in the diaspora* - for diaspora associations and educational centres in diaspora in countries of destinations.

B. Knowledge networks:

▼ Diaspora Excellence Groups

Led by: BRD and IOM Moldova

Timeline: launched in 2017

Aim: To utilise the expertise of diaspora professionals to support targeted development

Sectors: economic development, justice system, environment, and health.

Activities: knowledge transfers and innovative projects

▼ Mentor ME

Led by: diaspora volunteers

Timeline: 2014 – ongoing

Activities: offers mentorship, guidance, knowledge exchange and expertise to citizens in Moldova

▼ 'DiasporaConnect'

Timeline: 2020 - ongoing

Led by: NGO Fortius

Aim: To serve as a 'LinkedIn for Moldovan Diaspora' (including around 1000 profiles) and to create a community of professionals and share knowledge related to various professional fields.

Activities: diaspora members can register in an online portal, create their profile to implement projects, organise trainings, exchange on the forum, look for partners and post job offers.

Note: BRD and other ministries contact DiasporaConnect frequently to look for sectoral experts on topics such environment, ICT, research, engineering etc.

BRD expressed willingness to take over DiasporaConnect, before creating EMoldova ta. However, the founder preferred to maintain the 'neutral' character of the platform and original setting (created by diaspora), as a non-state actor, with no political affiliation. Currently, fundraising continues to cover the maintenance and management costs, since resources are limited.



e Moldova ta (gov.md) = “This is your Moldova!”

Context

e Moldova ta is an online communication platform for diaspora, migration and development, led by the Bureau for Relations with Diaspora. e Moldova ta was launched in 2021 with the support of international donors, on the occasion of Diaspora Congress, which is organised once in two years. Currently the platform is managed by BRD.

Objectives

- ▼ Promotion of diaspora engagement
- ▼ Information services for diaspora
- ▼ Communication with diaspora
- ▼ Mobilisation of diaspora expertise and transfer of skills
- ▼ Consolidation of relations with diaspora
- ▼ Active participation of diaspora in the development of the country

Funding

The platform was conceptualised, designed and developed with the support of international partners – the Swiss Agency for Development Cooperation (SDC) and IOM. The preparation started in 2019. The conceptualisation and development was ensured by SDC, who covered the costs of a local consultant assigned to help BRD in this process. Furthermore IOM helped with maintenance costs for a while after the platform's launch in 2021. Currently, BRD owns and manages the platform, based on state budget resources.

Team

A working group created under the auspices of BRD developed the platform. The team included representatives from SDC, BRD, main national stakeholders, consulted at different stages within the Inter-ministerial committee on the diaspora, migration and development (e.g. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Education and Research, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Economy). A consultant was assigned and hired to develop and conceptualise the platform (paid by SDC), and an IT company was selected to design it. (paid by SDC). Diaspora members were also consulted during the design process, via a questionnaire and online consultations through the consultation platform www.particip.gov.md.

Currently, BRD has one staff member who is responsible for the communication and data update on the platform, they received guidance and training from the IT company which developed the platform. The IT support and monitoring is offered by the State Chancellery, under which the BRD is subordinated.

Design & development timeline

The following actions were taken by BRD to develop the platform:

- ▼ Including the platform development actions in policy documents (Government Action Plan; Action Plans of the State Chancellery and the BRD)
- ▼ Cooperating with development partners and seeking funding opportunities



The design process included the following steps:

- ▼ Needs analysis (survey and consultations with the main stakeholders) – started in April 2019. Led by BRD and guided by SDC;
- ▼ Recruitment and consultancy (ToR for the consultant who develops the platforms and signing of the service agreement) – BRD with the donors. The consultant was paid by SDC;
- ▼ Development of the concept (analysis of good practices, needs assessment and guiding steps for the platform) – with SDC technical guidance;
- ▼ Programing (preparing clear IT specifications for the digital platform, which shall include the expected structure of the platform; webpage functional elements; general, security, software etc)
- ▼ Testing (2020) – BRD jointly with the donor and software provider
- ▼ Promotion (launch at the Diaspora congress in 2021) led by BRD;
- ▼ Maintenance and update (support from SDC and IOM) – 2021-2022.

The design concept of the platform included:

- ▼ Platform structure
- ▼ Draft questionnaire on analysis of information and communication needs from diaspora
- ▼ Sample of the first page of the platform
- ▼ Roadmap for its testing and development



Target audience & user types

- ▼ Natives of Moldova residing abroad and eager to maintain sustainable connections;
- ▼ Natives of Moldova residing abroad and eager to return;
- ▼ Citizens of Moldova intending to go abroad;
- ▼ Public, academic, private and business institutions in Moldova.



Technical features

A national IT provider hosts the platform.

Among the mandatory features of the platform BRD required: focusing on the user experience, accessibility, ease of navigation, the existence of the reverse link. Direct contact with users is made through a help desk located on the first page.

In terms of content information, the platform includes various sections which are publically available:

- ▼ Sections providing information on the legal and institutional framework on DMD
- ▼ Sections offering diaspora engagement opportunities (e.g. investment, business)
- ▼ Section on opportunities for involvement in the development of the country (e.g. transfer of expertise, internship, volunteering, public consultations)
- ▼ A section to facilitate the skills profiling and knowledge transfer from diaspora. The platform generates an online form for diaspora members, called “Provide your expertise”.
- ▼ A section with success stories from diaspora, meant to inspire a better engagement and involvement



Launching the "eMoldovaTa.gov.md" Platform

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ↓Diaspora-Migration-Development (DMD) policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DMD vision • Regulatory framework • Institutional framework ↓Migration <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bilateral agreements – Useful information for employment abroad • Diplomatic and consular missions of the RM ↓Diaspora <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government-Diaspora (DRB; Programs for the diaspora; Cooperation with development partners) • Diaspora Educational Centers • List of diaspora associations • Success stories • Philanthropy ↓Become an entrepreneur at home: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Investment opportunities in the RM • Business support programs • Invest at home ↓Get involved at home! <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scholarships and internships • Opportunities for volunteers • Your initiative • Providing expert services to institutions in the RM • Public consultations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Return/Guidance and Public Services ↓News/Events (feedback form: Share your news with us) Voting abroad E-library Frequently asked questions Virtual map of diaspora associations and educational centers E-learning Partners Useful Links Employment ads Useful groups on social networks Blog/registration for diaspora associations "eMoldovaTa" Telegram Platform usefulness feedback form
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Communication strategy

BRD does not have a communication strategy for diaspora engagement. Currently, BRD is working with GIZ under the Policy Advisory Fund project to develop a comprehensive strategy in this regard (in 2023). More details here: [Supporting Moldova's pro-European reform process \(giz.de\)](https://www.giz.de/en/press-releases/2023/01/supporting-moldova-s-pro-european-reform-process) - An external consultant was hired by GIZ to guide and help BRD to design the strategy -

For the launch and promotion of the platform, the BRD was guided by SDC.

Social media were used extensively to engage and consult diaspora in the design process of the platform (focus-groups, public consultations, bilateral meetings, etc). The communication channels of BRD used at the moment are based on the implementation Action plan of the Diaspora strategy, including regular e-newsletter for diaspora, the digital platform and social media (telegram, Facebook, Ok.ru).

Key messages for launching and promotion: the name "this is your Moldova" was supposed to attract and trigger the attention of diaspora, especially after Covid 19. BRD promoted the platform very actively through social media, in particular on Facebook, which is the most common social media platform for the Moldovan diaspora.

Timeframe: the platform was prepared during 2019-2020 and launched in 2021 with the occasion of Diaspora Days and Diaspora Congress. The diaspora congress is held every two years.

User feedback

There is a constant monitoring of the platform. The results of the regular surveys on the degree of user satisfaction are used to improve the content and the ways of interaction with the target groups.

- Users can provide their feedback by using the "propose" button under the "suggestions on the utility of platform";
- Based on the questions and requests received, the Frequently Asked Questions section will be developed by BRD in near future.



Site analytics

At the moment, BRD mentioned that the “provide your expertise” section is not used by diaspora. Therefore, no concrete diaspora skills transfers have been organised through the digital platform. However, the platform is still new and with the new launch of grants under the diaspora engagement hub, BRD hopes to engage the diaspora more actively directly through the platform. Diaspora continue to contact BRD through other channels: email, Facebook, contacts, public meetings, events. Interpersonal relations remain a strong preference.



Challenges

- ▼ Funding, dependence on external support for design and development
- ▼ Limited human resources in the BRD responsible for the platform maintenance and upgrade
- ▼ The Covid 19 pandemic affected the implementation and launch



Lessons learnt

- ▼ It is crucial to factor specialised trainings and guidance for the staff who will be responsible for the administration and management of the platform, especially if the unit has no dedicated IT staff, like in the case of BRD.
- ▼ To consider diverse and tailored formats of promoting the platform, including through social media. In the case of Moldova, Facebook played an important role to reach diaspora, especially youth diaspora.
- ▼ It is important to provide a clear understanding and communication on the roles of the state stakeholders who will be in charge of providing and updating the information and data for the platform.

