ROMANIA

- **GovTech Maturity: B, high**[1]
- **High income country**
- **Emigrants as % of population: 18.2% (3.6m)**

- **Remittances as a share of GDP: 3% ($7447m)**
- **Dedicated diaspora policy:** ✓
- **Dedicated diaspora institution:** ✓

Digitalisation approach

Romania has become known as a digital country due to its rapidly developing tech sector policy initiatives to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in the tech sector. It is important to note that education has been a core focus of Romania's digital policy initiatives, as the government has recognised the importance of digital literacy and skill-building in order to promote innovation and entrepreneurship in the tech sector, and to expand access to digital technologies for all citizens.

- 2014 - 2020: A citizen centric strategy as it aims to ensure access to electronic public services/e-government services for citizens and organisations. The strategy's framework includes the payment registration of Romanians abroad by using the digital service. This agenda was created to align with the EU Digital Agenda for Europe 2010-2020. It was structured around 5 pillars: digital economy, digital infrastructure, e-government, research and innovation and trust and security.

- Overall, the National Strategy for Digital Agenda for Romania 2014 - 2020 has been successful in promoting the development of digital technologies in the country. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the process of digitisation in Romania, leading to increased adoption of digital tools in various sectors (particularly in the tender sector and e-government). Also, the government has launched several initiatives to promote digitalisation, including a programme to support remote work and the expansion of digital infrastructure.

- The strategy includes specific targets for each objective, as well as a timeline for implementation. The strategy is designed to be implemented in phases, with the first phase focusing on the development of digital infrastructure and connectivity in schools. Another key element of the strategy is the website SMART-EDU, which is created by the Romanian Ministry of Education to provide online educational resources and tools for students, teachers, and parents. The platform offers a wide range of resources, including digital textbooks, educational videos, interactive learning games, and assessment tools.

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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

Diaspora engagement & skills

Strategic Framework for diaspora engagement

Diaspora engagement has become an increasingly important priority for Romania, as the government recognises the potential of its citizens abroad to contribute to the country's economic and social development. Romania has a sizable diaspora population, with an estimated 5 million Romanians living and working abroad.

The core document of its diaspora engagement is the National Strategy for Romanians Abroad 2023-2026. Within this strategy, the objectives 5 and 7 prioritize the facilitation of repatriation for the Romanian diaspora and guarantee their access to the state's programmes and information. In addition, the strategy aims to support the diaspora through community-building initiatives and new digital services.

It is important to remark that the Romanian government has consistently prioritised the support of Romanians living abroad, which is reflected in the country's foreign policy and various state policy documents.

Main actors

This is a list of the main state and non-state actors involved in Romania's diaspora policy, including government agencies, diaspora organisations, and other relevant actors who are engaged in a diverse range of diaspora-engagement activities.

State actors

- **Ministry of Foreign Affairs**: The ministry is responsible for coordinating and implementing policies related to the Romanian diaspora, including initiatives to promote skills transfer and support the integration of Romanians living abroad into the country's economic and social fabric.

- **Department for Romanians Abroad (Departamentul pentru Românii de Pretutindeni):** The department is part of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and is responsible for coordinating government policies related to the Romanian diaspora, as well as for providing assistance and support to Romanians living abroad.

- **Ministry of Labor and Social Protection**: The ministry is responsible for developing policies related to employment and social protection, including initiatives to promote skills transfer and support the integration of returnees into the Romanian labor market.

- **Ministry of Education**: The ministry is responsible for developing policies related to education and training, including initiatives to promote skills development and support the training of Romanians living abroad.

- **Romanian Chamber of Deputies' Committee for Romanians Abroad (**Comisia pentru comunitățile de români din afara granițelor țării): This committee is responsible for developing policies related to the Romanian diaspora and promoting the integration of Romanians living abroad into the country's economic, social, and cultural fabric. The committee also works to protect the rights and interests of Romanians living abroad.

- **Romanian Chamber of Deputies' Committee for Education, Science, Youth, and Sport (Comisia pentru Învățământ, Știință, Tineret și Sport)**: This committee is responsible for developing policies related to education and training, including initiatives to support the training of Romanians living abroad and promote the development of their skills and competencies.

Non-state actors

▼ **Federation of Romanian-American Organizations:** The biggest umbrella organisation that unites the Romanian-American communities in a single collaborative forum for mutual support. It organises several activities related to diaspora engagement in USA, Canada and Romania.

▼ **Romanian United Fund:** A global network created in the USA . Its goal is to create opportunities for encouraging and financing the development of the Global Romanian Diaspora and its connections with Romania. They organise various skills development activities, including Code for Romania.

▼ **DOR (Romanian Diaspora in UK):** it is a network of CSOs involved in promoting active citizenships within the Romanian diaspora in UK. They organise and promote education opportunities both in UK and Romania.

Initiatives related to diaspora & skills transfer

▼ Strategy for Romanian Vocational Education and Training 2015-2020 . The development of this document was carried out within the framework of the Europe 2020 Strategy, which prioritises smart growth through significant investments in education, research, and sustainable innovation, as promoted by the European Commission. It is also in accordance with European principles and instruments for collaboration in education and vocational training within the Romanian school system.

▼ The National Center for Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas was established to recognise study documents issued abroad and to represent Romania in the EU institutions with regard to academic and professional recognition

▼ A guide for the recognition of professional experience and of qualifications acquired abroad was developed at the initiative of the Presidential Administration (Working Group for the repatriation of Romanians abroad) and the Department for Romanians Everywhere (DRP). Stakeholders involved were-the Ministry of Labor and Social Protection, the National Agency for Employment, the National Center for Recognition and Equivalence of Diplomas (CNRED), the National Authority for Qualifications and the INCA Romania Association and DRP.

▼ The UNESCO Upskilling initiative focuses on the topic of digital and soft skills for social and professional inclusion and is co-financed by the Erasmus+ funding.

▼ The government-led-intiative InvestRomania has the objective to attract Romanian diaspora to invest in Romania and includes a series of educational materials to learn more on how to invest in Romania. There is specific section on vocational education and skills.

Brainmap.ro

Context

Brainmap.ro is an online platform which enables the Romanian diaspora to participate in research, innovation and entrepreneurship activities. It also allows diaspora to contribute to policy debates and serves as an online community platform.

Brainmap.ro was developed by the Executive Unit for the Financing of Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation (UEFISCDI) under the Ministry of National Education (MEN).

Objectives

To facilitate the evaluation process of research projects funded by UEFISCDI and other similar agencies

1. To bring together national and international expertise in research, innovation and entrepreneurship; to become an online community including Romanian and foreign expert evaluators;
2. To create an online community for actors involved in research, innovation and entrepreneurship activities
3. To become a one-stop shop of access to relevant information for research and innovation.

Note: Brainmap is a large and complex project which goes beyond a skills registry. Half of the resources are dedicated to maintaining a large repository of projects and researchers' profiles (not uniquely diaspora researchers).

Funding

Annual budget:

- Staff: € 50,000
- Datacentre and other maintenance costs: € 20,000

Brainmap.ro is funded by the Executive Unit for the Financing of Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation (UEFISCDI) under the Ministry of National Education (MEN) and projects for other agencies.

Team

Team of 7:

- 2 in charge of the infrastructure
- 1 business analyst
- 4 developers

Design & development timeline

The current platform started with Brainromania (2012-13) and Brainmap (2013-2014) which were combined into the existing version of Brainmap in 2016-17. A new version will soon be developed that will include features to foster the sense of community among researchers (a chat function, for example).

Target audience & user types

- Project coordinators from universities and companies. They are the ones who input all the information regarding projects and researchers profiles needed
- Researchers and scientists
- Recruitment specialists who are looking for specific scientific profiles

Technical features

Website with advanced features

- Repository of projects and data
- Able to source information from multiple databases

User feedback

No external feedback mechanism

- If a specific internal request arises, the team will add the features needed
- There is a constant monitoring of the website and of its features

Site analytics

Analytics are integrated in the website. The team can monitor: the number of people allocated to projects by type, by skills, by researcher and by country of origin.

Communication strategy

There was no external communication strategy to roll-out the platform as the previous iteration of Brainmap already had a list of 20,000 people who had worked on projects funded by the Ministry of Education.

For the ongoing community management (30,000 researchers and coordinators in 2023) a weekly newsletter is sent out by email. If specific scientific skills are requested, a targeted message is sent through Brainmap with "push" notifications.

User feedback

No external feedback mechanism

- If a specific internal request arises, the team will add the features needed
- There is a constant monitoring of the website and of its features

Challenges

◣ Issues with unique identification of researchers, projects, companies. A lot of time was spent on cleaning the database (on-going). They now tend to use VAT number for foreigners and social security numbers for Romanians.

◣ Not all projects follow the same scheme: they may have different project structures, no abstract which makes them harder to be searched by word for example.

Other

After the completion of a project, researchers/evaluators recruited receive a certificate of completion by email that can be used for job applications.