



Norway
grants

This project benefits from a grant in the amount of €3,020,000, offered by Norway within the Program "Local development, poverty reduction and increasing the inclusion of Roma", financed by the EEA and Norwegian Grants 2014-2021 and administered by the Romanian Social Development Fund.

More information about the project and about the Program "Local development, poverty reduction and increasing the inclusion of Roma" can be found on the websites: www.frds.ro and www.eeagrants.ro.

HIGHLIGHTS PAPER

Building the Capacity of the Romanian Government

This paper provides a high-level summary of the key findings and insights from the detailed Innovative Capacity Assessment Report on leveraging innovation to deliver better outcomes.



It is time for the Government of Romania to transform how and what it delivers to citizens

In the face of the COVID-19 pandemic and the impacts of the Ukrainian security crisis (rapid influx of refugees and uncertainty), the Government of Romania has been pushed to capacity and showcased its potential to work differently and collaboratively across government and across sectors **to deliver innovative, effective and impactful solutions** in a time of rapid change and uncertainty.

This type of innovative action, **that challenges the status quo**, is crucial for the Government of Romania **to achieve its current and future ambitions** including establishing an e-health system, seamless services, clean energy transition, tax reform and healthcare renewal.

Many of these ambitions are supported through the influx of 29 Billion Euros of funding from the Recovery and Resilience Plan. At its core, these ambitions call for **new solutions** that require **new ways of governing and policymaking** – this, is innovation.

WHY INNOVATE?

Innovation is necessary for the Government of Romania's **reform efforts to work, stick and deliver on intended ambitions**.

The Government needs the trust of citizens to carry out its ambitions and deliver in impactful ways. The Government of Romania is struggling to maintain the trust of citizens (67% of Romanians do not trust the Romanian Government). Innovative approaches such as participatory, iterative and systemic approaches will deliver more tailored, reflective solutions to citizens that will help **build trust and satisfaction in public institutions**.

Romania experiences nearly the highest global levels of emigration (17.1% of Romanians leaving the country for opportunities elsewhere). Taking an innovative approach – one that **holistically considers contemporary policy solutions** will help **build Romania's quality of life and improve economic conditions**.

Achieving EU and international competitiveness is not possible without innovative action - this will help Romania **earn global standing and recognition**. Countries don't earn global recognition for doing what has always been done. Examples such as Estonia's seamless digital services, Denmark's environmental successes and Dutch healthcare system have showcased what can happen when governments push the limits of what they imagine to be possible.

Without change, the Government of Romania will struggle to govern effectively and proactively in the face of emerging challenges and evolving citizen needs.

A view of the Romanian civil service's current capacity to use innovation to achieve outcomes

The OECD is working with the Government of Romania to build its innovative capacity – so it can innovate effectively to achieve outcomes. The recent [Assessment Report](#), informed by extensive research and engagement of 150+ stakeholders, showcases key opportunities and challenges impacting the Government's ability to deliver on its ambitions.

The below heat map highlights key challenges to address and strengths to leverage to improve, through innovative approaches, the impact of the Romanian Government.



PURPOSE FOR INNOVATING

Crises, shocks and global standards are driving innovation, but innovation is not being sufficiently leveraged to achieve the goals outlined in Institutional Strategic Plans and the Government Programme.

Political and government leaders need to provide an explicit mandate for why, when and how to use innovation.

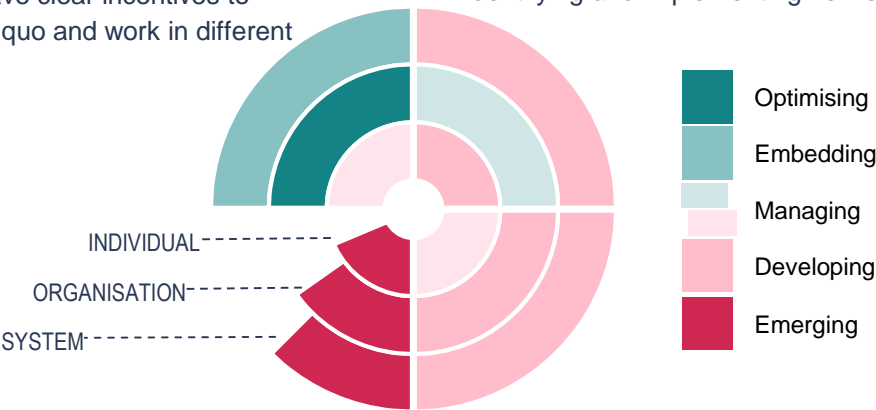
Individuals do not have clear incentives to challenge the status quo and work in different ways.



POTENTIAL FOR INNOVATING

The complicated legislative environment, limited risk tolerance, external scrutiny and multi-layered decision making processes are stifling the inception of new and impactful ways of delivering government policies and services.

Leaders play an important role in creating a culture and shaping governance mechanisms to make them conducive to working differently, and for identifying and implementing new solutions.



IMPACT OF INNOVATING

Despite a push for indicator development, the impact of policy and services is often unknown. This makes it difficult to identify when inefficient and ineffective solutions need to be replaced or transformed to lead to better outcomes.

Using iterative evaluation approaches will help ensure effective investment and demonstrate the value of innovation for outcomes.



CAPACITY FOR INNOVATING

Innovating needs to be integrated into the everyday work of the Romanian public sector.

There is a lack of clear innovation supports such as diverse skills, structures, funding and resources.

Both explicit supports (innovation strategy, hub, training) and implicit supports (flexibility of legislation, human resources, leadership backing etc.) are needed to create opportunities for staff to propose, test and deliver new solutions.

Leveraging innovative capacity to deliver to citizens

THE CROSS-CUTTING THEMES TO SHAPE ACTION

The OECD Observatory of Public Sector Innovation is working with the Government of Romania to build its innovative capacity. The research findings captured in the Innovative Capacity Assessment Report surfaced seven cross-cutting systemic insights that will frame the recommendations in the subsequent action plan.

1

Innovation is needed to deliver on major ambitions and goals, the status quo will not suffice.

Innovation is not being leveraged to achieve Romania's ambitions such as reforming healthcare, achieving digital transition and improving social welfare outcomes

2

Leaders need to demonstrate and communicate that innovation is required, and lead the change to make it happen.

Increasing flexibility of legal and regulatory approaches, working norms, decision making and workplace culture will help shift the public sector environment to one where innovation is expected rather than exceptional.

3

Improving innovative capacity will require a systemic approach.

A blend of innovation explicit supports (e.g. innovation strategy and hub) paired with embedded supports in Romanian governance frameworks (e.g. regulation, HR, digital government) can help drive transformative change in how government delivers impactful and effective policies and services to citizens.

4

Recruiting and training a diverse workforce is crucial to changing the current trajectory.

Recruiting diverse staff and building skillsets of personnel will help equip the public sector workforce with the capacities to develop, test and implement innovative approaches.

5

Capturing knowledge across sectors will expand the range of what's possible in Romania.

Creating explicit collaboration mechanisms across sectors can help Romania achieve ambitions and goals (e.g. SDGs) that would not be possible within the public sector alone.

6

Better data and knowledge of results will help identify opportunities for better impact and cost savings

By gathering better data and information on the impact of policies (including traditional approaches and innovative approaches), and using that to inform future practice, there is an opportunity to find greater efficiencies and improve the overall satisfaction of citizens in government policies and services.

7

Digital transformation will require innovative skills, mindsets and approaches.

Building innovative processes and skillsets will help ensure that digital transformation efforts and technological innovation are designed for success and achieving desired outcomes.

Breaking the status quo to achieve ambitions: How do we get there?

DRIVING CHANGE

Successfully transforming the Romanian public service to one that is innovative, impactful and high-performing into the future will necessitate politicians, ministerial leadership, technical staff, actors across sectors and citizens to **challenge what is normal and possible**. Decision makers need to set the right tone and environment for staff to think and work in new ways to develop better solutions that have meaningful impact.

This is at the heart of building innovative capacity: to drive and steer an innovative civil service that can achieve its ambitions, build trust in citizens and rise to the global spotlight.

This [Assessment Report](#) is a starting point to identify how to drive and steer change in a holistic way that is pragmatic and makes the best use of available resources. It will be followed by the development of an action plan and innovation lab to support change.

The Romanian Government needs to balance compliance and integrity with delivering the best outcomes to citizens. Innovation is key to delivering better outcomes.

Building trust and support amongst the public requires Romanian public servants and leaders to challenge the status quo.

The most successful and impactful leaders are those that can see a better world and help create it: leaders need to steward innovation and support it with mandates, funding, resources, policies and capabilities.

Questions regarding this project can be directed to opsi@oecd.org. Further information about the project and the work of the OECD Observatory of Public Sector Innovation can be found at <https://oecd-opsi.org/> and on the OECD OPSI's [Twitter](#) and [LinkedIn](#) pages.

The content of this publication (text, photos, video) does not reflect the official opinion of the Program Operator, the National Contact Point or the Financial Mechanism Office. The information and opinions expressed are the sole responsibility of the authors.