DIGITAL NATION

October 2025

# Digital Governance Framework for Romania

# Table of contents


**List of Abbreviations** ..... **3**
**1. Executive Summary: A Vacuum in Strategic Digital Governance** ..... **4**
**2. Overview of Government Digital Maturity in Romania** ..... **6**
**3. Our Approach — Governance Levers** ..... **8**
3.1 Strategy ..... 10
3.2 Regulations and Policy Issuing ..... 10
3.3. Regulation Review ..... 11
3.5 Skilling and Personnel ..... 12
3.6 Common Platforms/Stack ..... 13
3.7 Development Capability ..... 13
3.8 Delivery of Transformation ..... 13
**4. Proposed Model: Institutions and Responsibilities** ..... **15**
4.1 Digital Governance Maturity Journey ..... 15
4.2 Future-Proof Maturity in Digital Governance: What Does It Look Like? ..... 17
4.3 A Four-layer Proposal for Digital Governance for Romania ..... 18
4.3.1 Highest-Level Political Leadership: Deputy Prime Minister with responsibility for Digital Transformation ..... 18
4.3.2 Strategic Coordination: GCIO and GCIO office ..... 20
4.3.3 Digital Council ..... 22
4.3.4 Implementation Agency for Digital Transformation ..... 23
**5. Preconditions for Success** ..... **25**
5.1 Political Fortresses as a Barrier to Digital Transformation ..... 25
5.2 No Foundations, No Transformation ..... 25
5.3 Change Starts With Champions ..... 26
5.4 Show What Success Looks Like ..... 26
**6. Blueprints for Strategic Initiatives** ..... **28**
6.1 National Digital Transformation Vision & Strategy Sprint ..... 28
6.2 Public Sector Service Design Lab ..... 30
6.3 Chief Digital Transformation Officers (CDTO) Accelerator ..... 31
6.4 Digital Leadership Development Programme ..... 33
6.5 Creating Demand for Better Public Services ..... 34
**7. Scope and Methodology of Work** ..... **36**
**8. References** ..... **38**
**ANNEX 1 – Digital Future-Readiness Assessment** ..... **40**
**ANNEX II: Digital Governance Levers** ..... **48**

# List of Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| MEDAT | Ministry of Economy, Digitalisation, Entrepreneurship and Tourism / Ministerul Economiei, Digitalizării, Antreprenoriatului și Turismului |
| MCID | Ministry of Research, Innovation and Digitalisation / Ministerul Cercetării, Inovării și Digitalizării |
| ADR | National Authority for Digitalisation / Autoritatea pentru Digitalizarea României |
| GSG | General Secretariat of the Government / Secretariatul General al Guvernului |
| ANAF | National Fiscal Administration Agency / Agenția Națională de Administrare Fiscală |
| STS | Special Telecommunications Service / Serviciul de Telecomunicații Speciale |
| DNSC | National Cybersecurity Directorate / Directoratul Național de Securitate Cibernetică |
| CERT | National Cyber Security Incident Response Center / Centrul Național de Răspuns la Incidente de Securitate Cibernetică |
| NACS | National Civil Servants Agency / Agenția Națională a Funcționarilor Publici |
| INA | National Institute of Administration / Institutul Național de Administrație |
| ANIS | Employers' Association of the Software and Services Industry / Asociația Patronală a Industriei de Software și Servicii |
| CERB | Committee for e-Governance and Red Tape Reduction / Comitetul pentru e-guvernare și reducerea birocrației |
| CTE | Technical-Economic Committee for the Information Society / Comitetul Tehnico-Economic pentru Societatea Informațională |
| NRRP | National Recovery and Resilience Plan / Planul Național de Redresare și Reziliență |
| eIDAS | Electronic Identification, Authentication and Trust Services Regulation / Regulamentul eIDAS (Regulamentul (UE) nr. 910/2014 privind identificarea electronică și serviciile de încredere pentru tranzacțiile electronice pe piața internă) |

# 1. Executive Summary: A Vacuum in Strategic Digital Governance

Romania's digital state is stuck at a standstill: much has been done on paper, in law, and in isolated projects, yet citizens still face fragmented, siloed, and poor-quality services. Critical enablers such as eID, once-only and digital-first principles, digital signature's equivalence to the handwritten one, and data exchange between agencies all exist in principle. In practice, however, they are either underused or confined within single institutions. The core problem is clear: there is no customer-centric, whole-of-government perspective, no clear accountability for driving it, and no delivery capability to make it real. In short, Romania suffers from a vacuum in strategic digital governance.

Our task was to map Romania's current state — both digital government maturity and governance — and propose a governance model that can unlock progress within a two-year horizon. We focus on central government, where the change must begin, while noting that regional and local levels must soon follow, as significant amount of citizen-facing services are delivered there. We stress that a vision and strategy, endorsed across ministries and political forces, is indispensable. But a strategy alone will not change anything unless it cascades directly into ministries' and agencies' action plans, budgets, KPIs, and clear lines of responsibility. Without this translation into day-to-day government operations, even the best strategy risks staying on paper.

Our work is built on a wide evidence base: analysis of existing reports, interviews with 18 organisations, and workshops with the Edge Institute. The outcome is a governance model that defines sharp roles and responsibilities, creates accountability, and provides Romania with the practical machinery to move from paper promises to real transformation.

Romania has a real chance to fast-track digital transformation — but only if leadership, coordination, and delivery are aligned and enforced. A four-layer digital governance model is needed for Romania: political leadership, non-political strategic leadership and coordination, binding decisions by a high-level digital council, and delivery capacity on the ground. The chain of command must be short and clear — under the same umbrella.

**At the political level, responsibility for digital transformation must be elevated to a Vice Prime Minister mandated by the Prime Minister, with the Government CIO (GCIO) established as the head of the VPM's office at State Secretary level**. The GCIO should be explicitly apolitical, providing professional continuity and authority over strategy, standards, and coordination. Such a configuration combines political capital with technical expertise, while avoiding the risks of fragmentation within line ministries. The GCIO Office, embedded in the VPM's cabinet, must be the nucleus of digital governance driving the change.

The Digital Council, chaired by the VPM and including key ministries, agencies, and external stakeholders, must function as a real decision-making body — setting priorities, arbitrating conflicts, and approving investments with authority and transparency.

Execution rests with a dynamic and capable implementation agency. This could mean **creating a new agile unit under the VPM or radically reforming ADR into ADR 2.0 and moving it underneath VPM and GCIO Office**. This agency must become the central delivery powerhouse for shared platforms such as eID, interoperability, and cloud — building fast, delivering tangible services, and proving that whole-of-government transformation is possible.

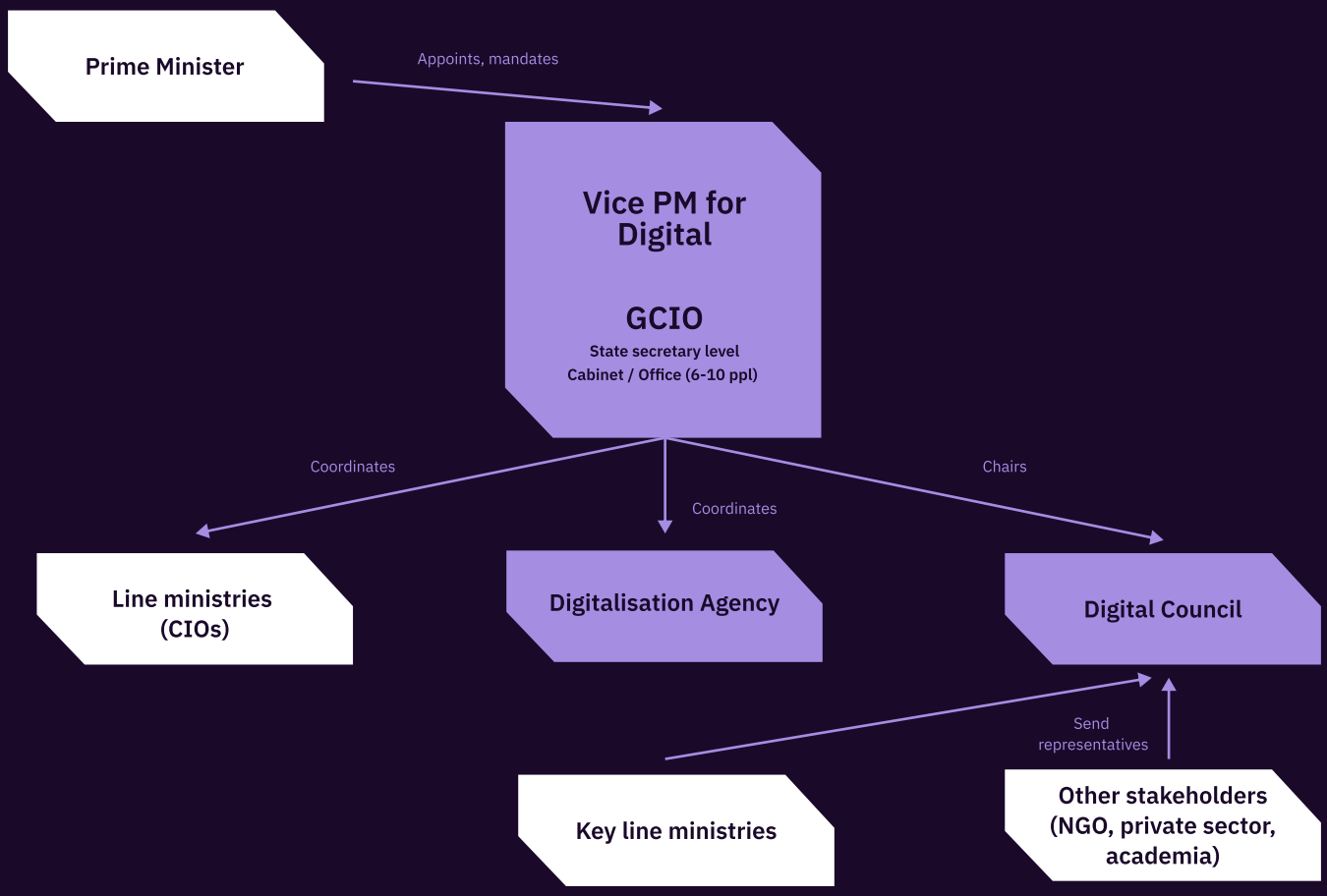
In addition, the President of Romania has a unique role to play as the chief evangelist of digital government. Beyond daily politics, the President can provide continuity across electoral cycles, champion the vision of a citizen-centric state, and raise public expectations for better services.

**Romania's digital future depends on moving from paper promises to real execution**. Political fortresses must be dismantled, core enablers like eID and interoperability must finally work, champions must deliver visible quick wins, citizens must see services that reset expectations, and top talent must be brought in to lead. These are not optional; without them, digital transformation will remain rhetoric. With them, Romania can build a truly citizen-centric digital state.

In parallel to governance reform, we have developed blueprints that set the conditions for success. These are designed to be implemented alongside the new governance model, as Romania must move faster and more dynamically than the pace of public sector restructuring usually allows. Quick, visible progress is critical to build credibility, prove the model, and create momentum for wider change.

The choice is simple: keep digital transformation trapped in paper strategies and political fortresses, or build the machinery that delivers real change. Romania does not need more declarations — it needs execution, accountability, and speed. With clear leadership at the centre, a council that decides, and an agency that delivers, digital government can finally move from promise to reality. The path forward is not theory. It is action — starting now.

## Governance model proposed for Romania



# 2. Overview of Government Digital Maturity in Romania

As part of developing Romania's digital governance framework, we conducted a comprehensive digital maturity assessment to provide a forward-looking view of the country's digital transformation.

**The assessment is grounded in Digital Nation's Digital Government Future-Readiness Framework**, which evaluates national maturity across 12 pillars essential for building an effective, future-ready government. Each pillar is further broken down into 4-5 elements, scored on a 1-10 scale.

Figure 1 presents a visual summary of Romania's overall future-readiness score. For context and benchmarking, Estonia's results are included as a benchmark. The following pages offer a concise overview of the key findings; a detailed comparison of Romania's performance against the model's ideal state is provided in Annex I.

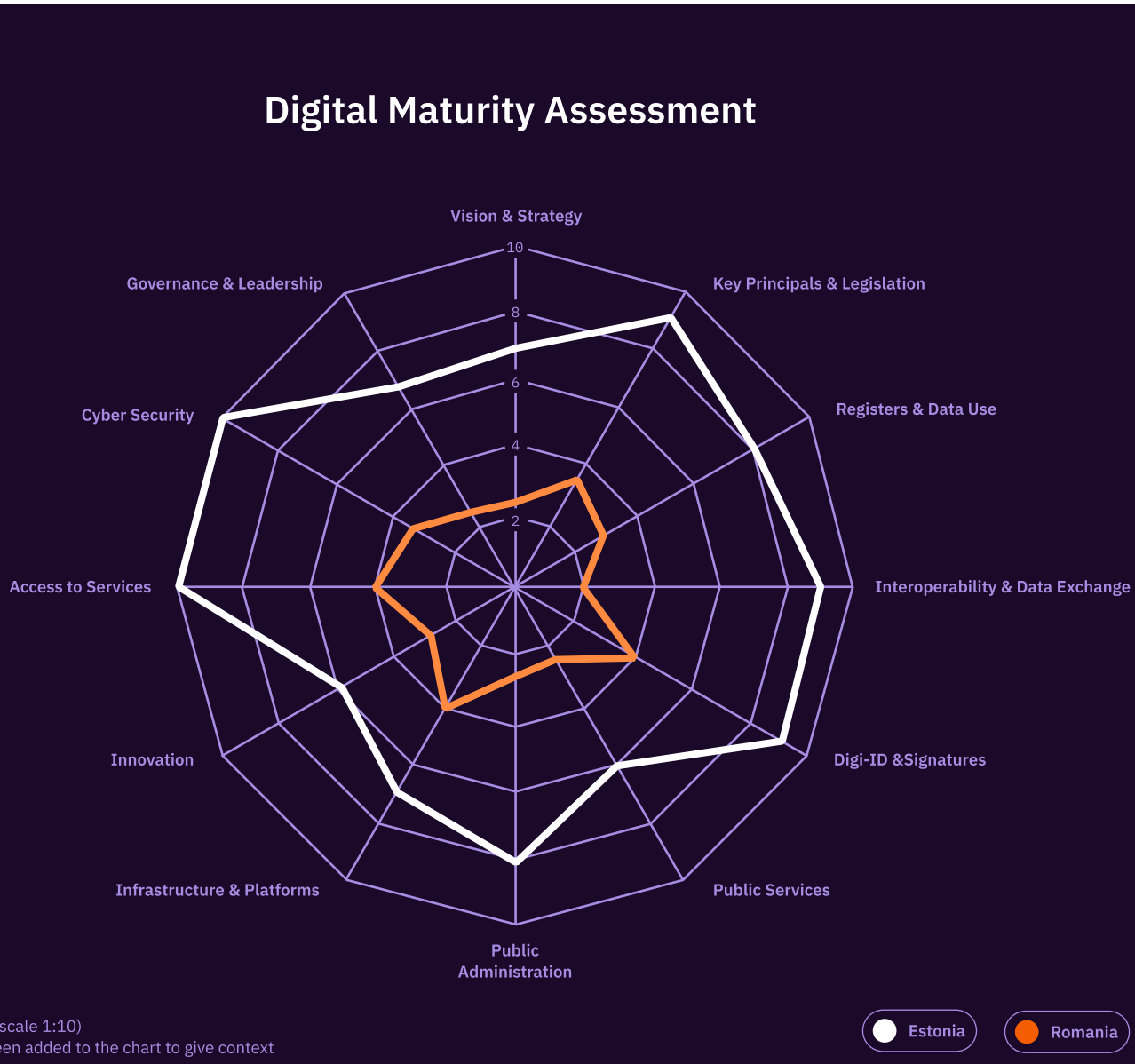



*Figure 1. Digital Maturity Assessment of Romania (2025), based on the Digital Nation's Digital Governance Future-Readiness Framework*

Romania's overall performance averages around 3.1 out of 10, suggesting that while foundational building blocks are in place, execution remains uneven. The country demonstrates clear strengths in enablers such as broadband infrastructure and digital ID. However, its digital public services are still weak, fragmented, and underused. The central challenge lies in the absence of strategic direction and persistent institutional fragmentation.

Infrastructure is Romania's strongest pillar. With near-universal broadband coverage and competitively low prices, the country has built the digital highways, but few effective services are running on them. Public service delivery and data exchange remain underdeveloped, revealing a disconnect between infrastructure and its practical use in governance. There has been visible progress on digital identity, notably through the start of rollout of biometric eIDs, the eIDAS integrated ROeID application and supporting legal frameworks for digital signatures. Yet enforcement is weak, and government adoption remains inconsistent, illustrating the broader implementation gap across the public sector.

In the area of cybersecurity and legislation, Romania shows formal alignment with EU standards. However, operational and institutional capacity remains limited. Enforcement is uneven, and key institutions such as the national CERT lack sufficient resources to effectively support the entire public sector.

At the core of Romania's struggle is a vacuum in strategic digital governance. Digital leadership is fragmented, with no unified national strategy and limited capacity of the coordinating authority (currently ADR). Heavy reliance on EU-funded projects with decentralised funding further fragments the landscape, emphasizing short-term outputs over long-term outcomes.

This governance gap translates directly into technical fragmentation. Despite legal mandates for interoperability, a national data exchange platform is still missing, and government IT systems remain siloed. The "Once Only" principle exists on paper but not in practice.

Digital leadership is fragmented, with no unified national strategy and limited capacity of the coordinating authority

These systemic issues directly affect the user experience and contribute to low adoption rates. **Services are often difficult to use, inconsistent in design, or merely informational**. Digital skills among both citizens and public servants are among the lowest in the EU and Romania continues to ranks near the bottom of the Digital Economy and Society Index (DESI), now part of the EU Digital Decade metrics[1].

The government's 2025-2028 program acknowledges this low level of digital maturity, and sets ambitious targets, including reaching the EU average in the Digital Decade score. Meeting **these goals will not be possible without a well-functioning governance model with a clear strategic vision and actionable objectives**.

In the following chapter (Chapter 3), we outline our approach to digital governance: what it entails, how to assess its current state, and how to set priorities for moving toward a more mature model. Building on this, Chapter 4 proposes a country-specific digital governance model tailored to Romania's context and reform ambitions.

1 European Commission. (2024). Romania 2024 Digital Decade country report. Retrieved from https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/factpages/romania-2024-digital-decade-country-report

# 3. Our Approach — Governance Levers

Digital transformation is not achieved through technology alone - it requires a **whole-of-government change management effort**. Successful implementation demands alignment across the entire public sector, from political leadership ensuring consistency across electoral cycles to ministries driving the reform agenda and individual institutions executing change on the ground.

At the centre of digital transformation is the citizen. **Meeting citizens' needs and expectations requires public institutions to break down silos, transcend ministerial boundaries, and act as one coordinated team**. This often calls for additional effort from the public sector, as success depends on delivering services and reforms that are seamless and citizen-centric.

To make this possible, it is critical to establish clear roles, mandates, and responsibilities across the different actors involved. Equally important is a shared understanding of how to measure progress and setbacks. Defining KPIs, accountability mechanisms, and feedback loops that feed into continuous process development ensures that reforms are not only implemented but sustained.

There is no single blueprint for an effective governance model. Each country operates within its own political culture, administrative traditions, and resource constraints. **Therefore, governance arrangements must be designed in context - taking into account existing structures, feasibility, political complexity, and budgetary realities**.

Meeting citizens' needs and expectations requires public institutions to break down silos, transcend ministerial boundaries, and act as one coordinated team

Within this complexity, governments can draw on a wide range of policy, administrative, and technical instruments. The choice of the right levers depends on where the country aims to position itself across the different layers of digital governance. Our methodology enables governments to assess their current state — spanning leadership, structures and mandates, procedures, resources, and culture — and to define a realistic desired state across these dimensions.

As illustrated in Figure 2, we have identified eight critical levers that are particularly decisive for accelerating digital transformation. These levers shape how governments organise responsibilities, allocate resources, and deliver services. For each lever, governments can adopt approaches along a spectrum from centralised to hybrid to decentralised, each with distinct implications. A concise description of the methodology is provided in Annex II.

- **Centralised** approaches typically mean that decision-making authority, standards, and practical delivery resources are concentrated in one lead institution. For example, a strong central digital agency may define common technical standards, procure or build core platforms, and oversee implementation across ministries. This model can create speed, consistency, and efficiency, but risks being perceived as top-down and less adaptable to sectoral needs.
- **De-centralised** approaches place responsibility within individual ministries or agencies, giving them a lot of autonomy to design and implement solutions tailored to their policy areas. For instance, separate

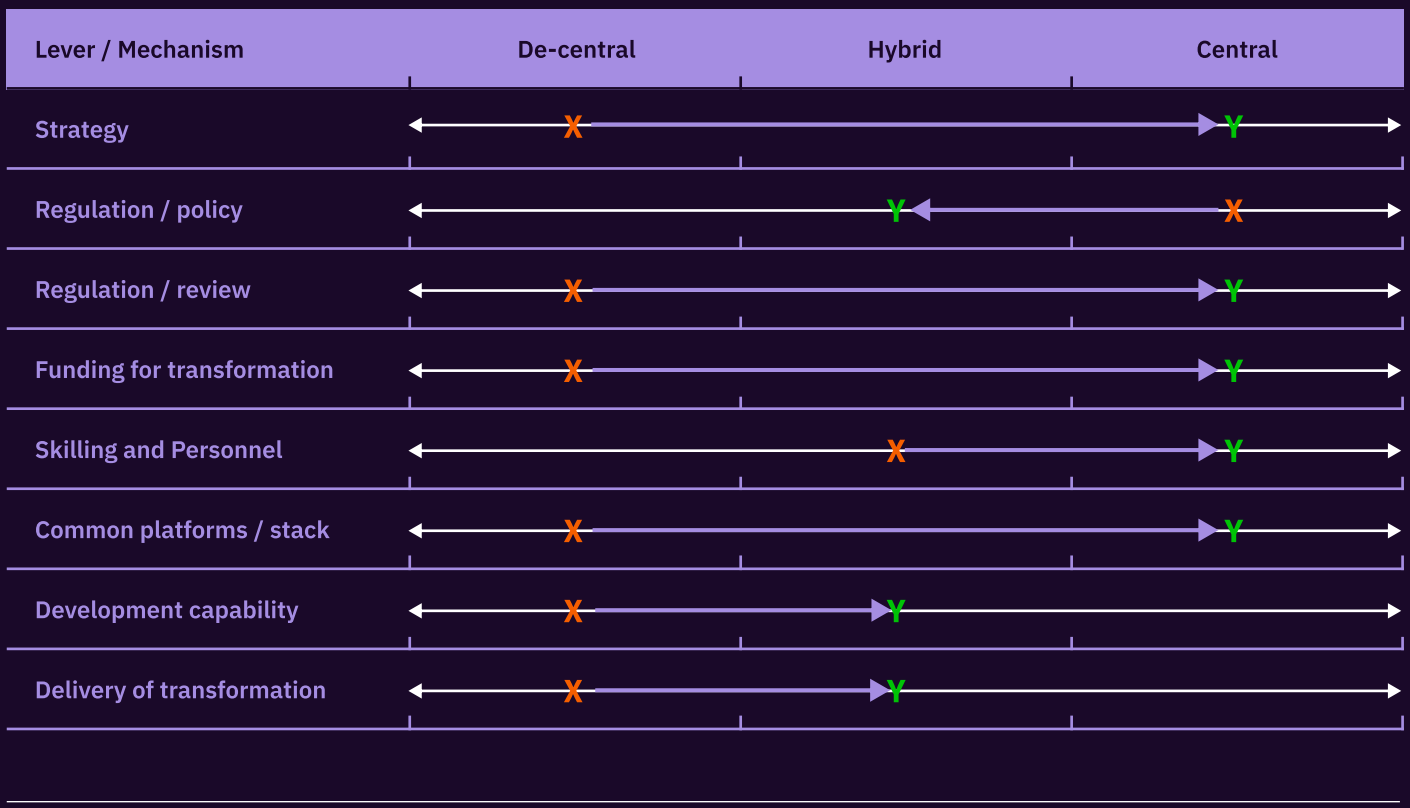



*Figure 2. Analysis of digital governance levers in Romania based on the Digital Nation Digital Governance Maturity methodology*

ministries might each manage their own digital identity solutions or service portals. This model encourages ownership and innovation at the institutional level, but can lead to duplication, inefficiencies, and fragmented citizen experiences if not coordinated.

- **Hybrid** approaches balance central coordination with sectoral autonomy. In practice, this could mean a central authority sets overarching policies and interoperability standards, while ministries retain responsibility for developing sector-specific solutions within that framework. A common government cloud, for example, might be centrally provided, while individual agencies decide how best to use it for their services. This model can foster alignment while maintaining flexibility - but requires clear governance to avoid ambiguity.

By identifying and prioritising these levers, governments can make deliberate choices about where centralisation drives efficiency and coherence, where decentralisation supports innovation and responsiveness, and where hybrid arrangements provide the optimal balance. Taken together, these decisions form the backbone of a governance model that can accelerate digital transformation and sustain it over time[2].

In the following pages, we have briefly outlined, lever by lever, two key reference points on the scale: the current situation in Romania (as-is) and the desired future state, or to-be model. This framing provides a foundation for building a coherent governance model, with clearly defined institutional roles and well-aligned responsibilities across levels

2 The digital governance maturity model includes fourteen levers in total (see Annex I), offering a slightly more nuanced approach. However, the methodology is designed to focus the analysis on those levers most relevant in 2 years horizon - transformation phase - and reliable for the specific phase of digital transformation that a government is currently undergoing.

of government to support effective policy implementation and accountability. We have aimed to present this not as a theoretical ideal, but as a realistic and achievable model tailored to Romania's current context.

Finally, it is important to note that this work, and **the recommendations that follow, are based on the analysis conducted in September 2025, reflecting the situation as it stood at that point in time**. Future adjustments will inevitably be required as both governance models and the public sector itself continue to develop and change.

## 3.1 Strategy

Romania's **digital strategy landscape remains fragmented**. A national strategy for digital transformation covered the period 2014–2020[3], but was not renewed or replaced. The eRomania Strategy of 2020[4] outlined a roadmap to improve e-government services around key life event services, but fell short as a digital government strategy that would guide digital transformation at the whole of government level. As a result, Romania currently lacks a single, operative digital transformation strategy. Digital policy objectives are in different documents: government programs, the National Recovery and Resilience Programme (NRRP), the EU Digital Decade targets — but there is no mechanism to translate digital transformation objectives into ministry-level roadmaps, KPIs, and accountability frameworks. In the absence of a shared and motivating narrative on what digital transformation means for Romania, individual agencies interpret the purpose of digital transformation in narrow, siloed terms rather than as part of a coordinated reform narrative that resonates with citizens.

In the to-be model, **one focused national digital strategy is developed**, led by a strong central unit to ensure delivery and **implemented in the whole-of-government[5] spirit**. The strategy should articulate a clear vision explaining why and how Romania intends to advance its digital government and it should be anchored in the broader socio-economic agenda. The strategy should be results-oriented, including some preliminary metrics or "quick wins" to build momentum and secure political support for deeper long-term reforms.

**It's essential that the strategy clearly explains how its priorities will be turned into concrete actions within ministries and agencies** by setting a limited number of clear KPIs, timelines, and a system for tracking progress and accountability. Where agencies already have strategies, they should treat the national strategy as the guiding reference and align their plans accordingly. Finally, the document should include a **mechanism to sustain potential political instability** and ensure continuity.

## 3.2 Regulations and Policy Issuing

Romania is **strong at passing digital-related legislation but weaker at ensuring implementation**. Primary laws (e.g., mandating interoperability, eID, or Government Cloud) set the legal backbone, yet secondary legislation — detailed rules and procedures — often arrives late or inconsistently, slowing real-world delivery. Too little use is yet made of soft law: non-binding instruments such as templates, toolkits, playbooks, and training that help to translate legislation into operational reality.

The ideal to-be state is **a balanced mix of "sticks and carrots"** (i.e. mandates and enablers). Primary laws set a few non-negotiable principles (interoperability-by-design, shared-platforms-first, cloud-first). Secondary acts then specify the how with clear, time-boxed rules tied to funding and approvals. Alongside, government continually publishes and maintains soft measures, including training, so that compliance would be easy.

3 Government of Romania. (n.d.). National Strategy on the Digital Agenda for Romania 2020. Retrieved from https://www.gov.ro/en/government/cabinet-meeting/national-strategy-on-the-digital-agenda-for-romania-2020

4 eRomania - A Public Policy in eGovernment

5 By "whole-of-government approach" we mean a coordinated and collaborative strategy across all levels and sectors of government to plan and implement digital initiatives in a unified way.

## 3.3. Regulation Review

Romania **lacks a formal "digital check" in the policy process to ensure new laws are aligned with digital transformation goals** (e.g. reuse shared infrastructure, and avoid unnecessary administrative burden). The General Secretariat of the Government (GSG) checks legislative technique and completeness, but its mandate is not tailored to digital transformation specifics. Public consultation in general is now a commonly and evenly practiced discipline. Law 52/2003 establishes minimal procedural rules to ensure transparency of decision-making, stating that draft laws must be publicly announced at least 30 working days before approval, at least 10 calendar days must be allowed for written proposals during the public debate phase, and reasoned feedback on the acceptance/rejection of proposals must be given. For different reasons, the law is not always followed and public consultation practices vary across institutions. Timelines can be tight, feedback is not systematically followed and integrated into decisions, and impact assessments rarely include a digital transformation dimension. Engagement with civil society and the private sector tends to happen too late in the process, leaving limited time for meaningful input. Finally, Romania frequently relies on Government Emergency Ordinances (OUG), which often bypass normal inter-ministerial coordination and public consultation, weakening predictability and the coherence of digital policy implementation.

Mandatory digital check should be introduced for all laws and policies relevant to digital transformation

In the future model, a **mandatory digital check should be introduced for all laws and policies relevant to digital transformation**, led by the Government CIO Office. To support this, submission for government decision-making and budget approval should be conditional on passing the check. Initially, priority could be given to legislation establishing or amending state databases. With an overview of existing systems and the data held in state registers - this capability should itself be developed as a priority — the GCIO can act as a guardian of the once-only principle and other key enterprise architecture standards.

To surface cross-government issues early and ensure alignment, a high-level inter-ministerial coordination body, such as the proposed **Digital Council (see section 4.3.2), should discuss major initiatives and align direction at an early stage**. Public consultations should be standardised through clear and concise guidelines, promoting earlier engagement with business and civil society. The use of emergency ordinances for digital policy should be limited to exceptional cases, based on clear criteria and justified urgency.

## 3.4 Funding for Transformation

There is **no consolidated overview of public-sector IT spending**, and the government lacks the basic data required to manage its technology stack as a coherent whole. A central digital investments committee (CTE, chaired by the president of ADR) exists with a mandate to ensure that digital projects exceeding 5 million lei (approx 1 MEUR) align with national ICT and cybersecurity strategies and technical requirements. However, the committee's decisions are often overlooked, and in practice, most projects still get funded. In addition, CTE **reviews tend to focus on technical compliance** rather than on business value, reuse, or interoperability. This limits the committee's potential as a policy tool to reduce duplication and prevent technical investments without clear user value. Funding is largely EU-sourced, with no evidence found about major national funding being allocated.

The desired state is to **make funding process a lever for quality and coherence**. Under thismodel, digital transformation proposals would be assessed by a committee led by the GCIO office against three key criteria: (1) alignment with the national digital strategy, (2) use of common platforms and building blocks (e.g., ROeID, interoperability platform),

(3) compliance with government-wide service design standards and user-centric principles. A mandatory, central IT-spend transparency mechanism would provide a single, government-wide view of digital investments.

It is acknowledged that the ICT budget and digital investment model is a complex and sensitive issue that requires further analysis and structured dialogue among stakeholders.

## 3.5 Skilling and Personnel

Romania's public sector faces a deep **structural gap in digital skills and talent**. Despite training programmes launched since 2009, a 2022 needs analysis showed that 62% of civil servants have never attended digital training, over 70% rate themselves at only a basic skill level, and advanced expertise is virtually absent. Valuable digital skills programmes led by NACS exist but these are project-based, demand-driven, and lack a unified digital competence framework to guide the training. So far, no clear distinction has been made between general digital competencies for all civil servants, role-specific skills (e.g., HR, audit, policymaking), and specialised ICT competencies for tech roles. **The lack of standardised ICT role profiles leads to mismatched hiring, fragmented upskilling, and vague career paths, making it difficult to attract and retain tech talent in the public sector**.

CIO and/or Digital Transformation Leader roles should be mandated in ministries with clear job descriptions and career paths, combining digital governance, change management, and advocacy skills

Digital leadership roles such as CIOs, CTOs, Digital Transformation Leader roles and service-design professionals are neither mandated for ministries nor systematically trained. While the planned digital competence framework contains relevant aspects of digital leadership and digital services, the general perception seems to be that service design related skills are the responsibility of each ministry.

The future state must replace this vacuum with a **national digital competence framework** (planned to be completed in January 2026) as the backbone of civil service learning and HR management. This means training all civil servants in digital basics and take a role-based approach, creating advanced tracks for CIOs, data and service-design specialists, and embedding mandatory use of modern learning platforms. Competence standards must be enforced system-wide - integrated into recruitment, promotions, and performance reviews — with NACS strengthened institutionally to ensure continuity and authority. **CIO and/or Digital Transformation Leader roles should be mandated in ministries with clear job descriptions and career paths, combining digital governance, change management, and advocacy skills**.

At the same time, Romania should build **central pools and centres of excellence** to provide expertise ministries cannot develop alone, while positioning the public sector as an attractive employer by offering meaningful, high-impact work. CIO or Digital Transformation Leader positions should be introduced to drive digital transformation. This role, somewhere at the intersection between traditional civil servant and tech expert, should cover competencies such as digital governance, change management and capacity to advocate.

Finally, to kickstart the digital transformation with the new governance model, lots of agile, change resistant highly experienced tech and tech-related professionals will be needed. Given the public sector's weak employer image, **external experts may be brought in temporarily**, but only with clear knowledge-transfer and exit strategies to avoid dependency.

## 3.6 Common Platforms/Stack

**Key building blocks exist** — ROeID for single-sign-on and eIDAS integration, ghiseul.ro for online payments, and the public procurement electronic portal (SEAP). However, with the exception of SEAP, their **use remains voluntary**. Legislation[6] mandates the use of government cloud, with NRRP milestones set through the end of 2025. Yet, timeline and migration plan are to be defined by ADR in coordination with each institution, and the adoption has been uneven — institutions with stronger technical teams often develop their own cloud solutions. Similarly, legislation[7] requires the reu-use of shared components and integration with a national interoperability platform, but the platform itself does not yet exist. Interoperability solutions are built within the jurisdiction of individual ministrires rather than across agencies, and base registers are not consistently used as authoritative "single sources of truth" across the administration.

The goals is the **mandatory adoption of the most critical foundational platforms, in particular, a single national interoperability platform, universal digital identity, and cloud services**. Combining the stick (clear mandate, compliance) with the carrot (excellent services, SLAs, easy integration) is seen as a feasible combination to let ministries see a clear benefit in adopting them over building their own solutions.

## 3.7 Development Capability

The current **development capacity in Romania is highly decentralised and fragmented**, with agencies building systems independently, with limited common standards or reuse and leading to siloed, unscalable solutions with limited reuse across ministries. That fragmentation slows delivery, raises costs, and makes cross-government services difficult.

> Flaw in the understanding of digital transformation, seeing delivery as a technical execution challenge rather than as a fundamental redesign of government operations around the needs of citizens and businesses

For the future, a hybrid system aligning autonomy with common standards is deemed to be realistic and feasible. This means being selective and delivery-focused: **keeping development close to the domain** (ministry, areas) where it creates value, **but setting non-negotiable guardrails** (guidelines, reference architecture, mandatory use of common platforms) so solutions interoperate, scale, and can be reused. To raise quality where it's hardest, ministries can use shared expert squads and a service design lab for discovery, user research, service design, architecture, security, testing, and procurement scoping — without transferring delivery ownership.

## 3.8 Delivery of Transformation

At present, delivery of transformation is decentralised relying on local project management skills with limited central support (standards, manuals, onboarding). While many agencies can manage a project once scoped, **the upstream work is weak with insufficient user research, a lack of customer journey mapping, and process redesign**. This reveals a fundamental flaw in the understanding of digital transformation, seeing delivery as a technical execution challenge — managing timelines and budgets for IT procurement — rather than as a fundamental redesign of

6 Emergency Ordinance No. 89 of 27 June 2022 on the establishment, administration and development of cloud-type infrastructures and IT services used by public authorities and institutions.

7 Law No. 242/2022 on the exchange of data between IT systems and the creation of the National Interoperability Platform

government operations around the needs of citizens and businesses. Without the initial work of understanding user needs and redesigning underlying processes, the result is “efficiently delivered” systems that digitise old processes rather than improve services.

The future model must **reframe digital transformation as a fundamental redesign of government operations around the needs of its users**. A fully centralised delivery model is likely unrealistic in the short term, but a hybrid approach combining agency execution with central support can yield significant improvement. This would include shared methodologies (service design, government design book) and central support teams in service design and business analysis (“SWAT teams”). The “SWAT teams” could be accompanied by a service design lab (see our Critical Initiatives) functioning as a centre of excellence, providing training in citizen-centric methodologies, advocacy for a user-first mindset across government, help in standard setting and help develop pilots.

As stated above, this policy-lever analysis, largely based on stakeholder interviews, informed our recommendation on the digital governance model that we introduce in Chapter 4.

# 4. Proposed Model: Institutions and Responsibilities

## 4.1 Digital Governance Maturity Journey

Digital governance is not a “big bang” reform — it is a systematic multi-phase journey that evolves from initial coordination efforts to comprehensive government-wide transormation. Based on global practices, countries that have successfully implemented digital governance reform typically follow four interconnected phases that build upon each other, gradually expanding scope, sophistication and impact.

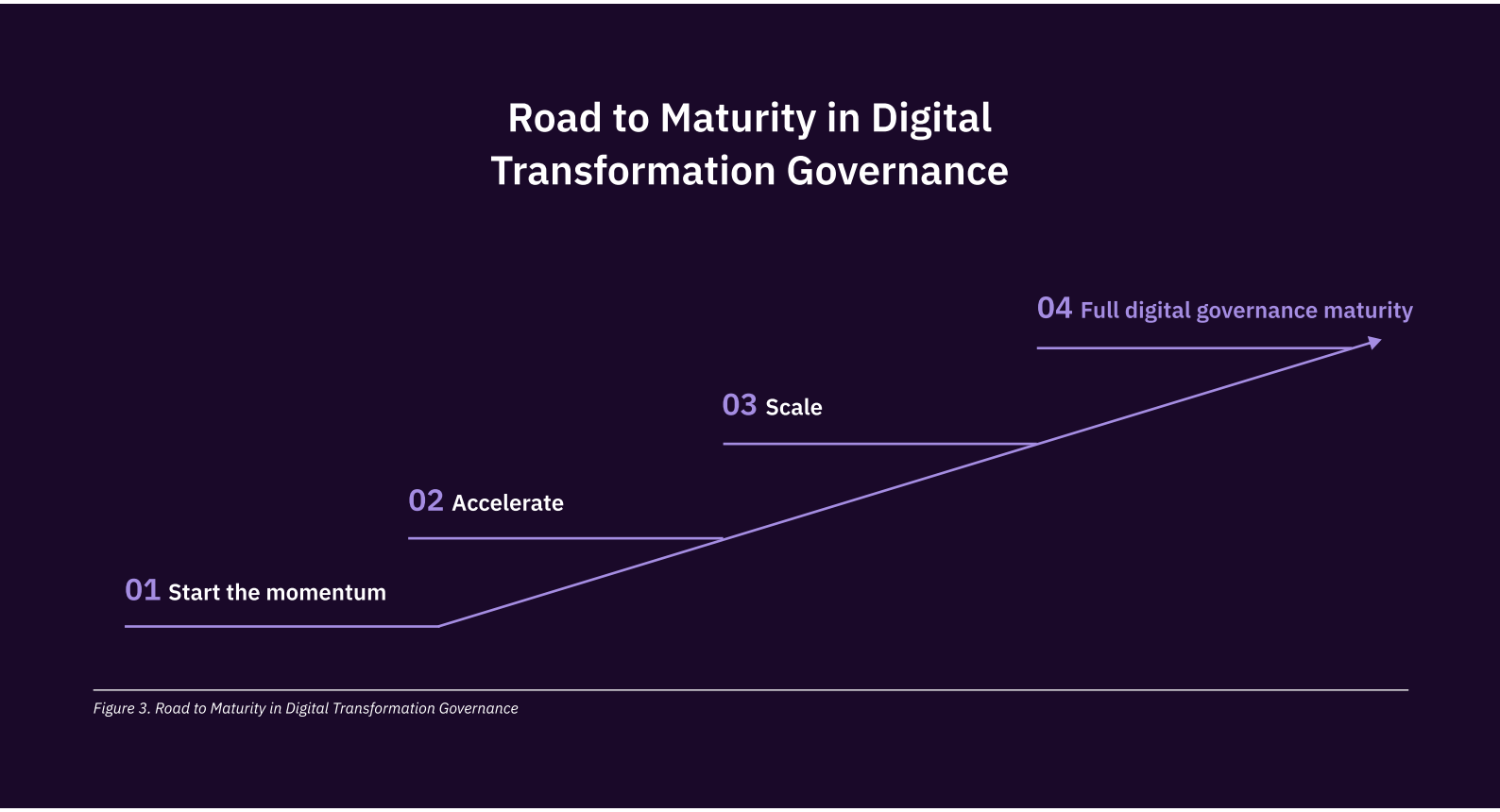



*Figure 3. Road to Maturity in Digital Transformation Governance*

In general, these phases include:

### Phase 1: Building momentum — Starting with What You Have

This phase focuses on developing structures, actors, and political capital to kickstart coordinated digital governance without creating major disruption. It is about building legitimacy, identifying quick wins, and establishing core coordination mechanisms for broader participation and policy development in the next phases.

## What needs to be done in this phase?

1. Establish a basic digital governance model:
    - Designate a **lead agency** (e.g. a line ministry, Government CIO, or an agency) and empower it with a clear mandate to coordinate digital governance.
    - Establish a **high-level whole-of-government body** (e.g. council) to ensure cross-government alignment and a dispute settlement environment. Such a body should be chaired by the Prime Minister or an equivalent to guarantee the enforcement of the decision.
    - Create a **technically strong executive/implementing agency** to build and manage shared tools and services across ministries.
    - Mandate the creation of **CIO or digital transformation expert positions** in all ministries and launch a network of ministry-level CIOs led by the Government CIO.
    - Place coordination **under the highest political level leadership** to ensure enforcement during this fragile period.
2. Develop a **shared vision and a limited set of actionable objectives with metrics** that will form the digital strategy for the whole government. This is typically done in the form of a digital transformation strategy coupled with a practical implementation roadmap. Such a strategy does not need to be lengthy, but it should aim a small number of achievable goals.
3. Put in place **tech foundations**:
    a. Launch a national interoperability platform to enable secure data exchange across government — a clear "must" for user-centric service delivery.
    b. Develop a catalogue of government databases to map existing digital solutions and the data they hold. This will serve as a basis for future investments.
    c. Develop the first version of a service standard that sets out common requirements for the design and delivery of digital public services.
4. Take initial steps to **put the user at the centre of service delivery**:
    - Pilot user research for some services.
    - Launch a flagship pilot or showcase project (e.g., integrated life-event service, or a first use case for public registry interoperability).
5. **Lay the groundwork for management and funding**:
    - Tie funding to compliance with interoperability and service standard requirements.
    - Shift the narrative around digital transformation.

In our assessment, **Romania currently remains at an early stage of digital governance maturity**. For this reason, the subsequent phases are outlined only in broad terms rather than in full detail. While each country's journey reflects its own institutional and cultural context, the progression toward maturity generally follows a similar pattern.

## Phase 2: Acceleration

The scope widens from early champions to most ministries, with a short national plan that names a few priority services and dates for visible improvements within 6-12 months. Funding decisions begin to favour projects that reuse common platforms (eID, interoperability platform, digital-first principle) and exceptions must be formally justified. A light central review checks that major projects follow a first version of the service standard and have measurable outcomes. Platform teams start to operate the shared components as products with owners and backlogs; service teams move through discovery, beta, and live. Progress is tracked publicly with a small set of metrics: adoption, satisfaction and time saved.

## Phase 3: Scaling

Pilots give way to a consistent way of delivering across government. A strong GCIO coordinates the digital transformation project portfolio and uses spend controls to ensure that large investments align with the service standard, cybersecurity baselines, and platform reuse. Shared platforms (eID, interoperability platform, single government portal)

run on roadmaps, while legacy systems are retired on published schedules to cut cost and risk. Procurement shifts to outcome-based contracts that fit iterative delivery, and regional or sector agencies are onboarded through common patterns and reusable components. Benefits derived from digital transformation are measured and reported, making savings and user results visible.

### Phase 4: Future-Proof Maturity

Digital becomes the default operating model for policy, budgeting, and service delivery. The GCIO office has a permanent, legally and politically backed mandate to set direction, establish standards, and fund platforms. A mandatory digital check ensures new laws are buildable, reduce administrative burden, and align with shared infrastructure and data protections. Platforms are resilient by design and regularly tested, with performance made public. Data reuse is controlled and auditable, and AI is introduced where it adds value and meets EU requirements. Services update continuously and life-event journeys are orchestrated end-to-end. The system remains coherent, affordable, and adaptable even as leadership changes.

## 4.2 Future-Proof Maturity in Digital Governance: What Does It Look Like?

Services are life-event-oriented, proactive, and inclusive. They are designed around user journeys, not institutional charts; tested with real users; and accessible through multiple channels so nobody is left behind. Inclusion is a first-order requirement. Where the state already holds the necessary data and consent, services are provided without citizens needing to apply for them — the government shows up for the citizen, not the other way around.

At the core of the mature digital government sits a legally empowered central digital orchestrator — typically the Government CIO — that sets the vision, standards, and priorities, and wields portfolio and funding levers to keep the whole system aligned. Execution is distributed by design: line ministries, agencies, municipalities but also stakeholders from the private sector and academia co-own delivery through joint councils, working groups, and communities of practice, ensuring a unified strategy while implementing it collaboratively and grounded in sector realities. This is “strong centre, strong network”: the centre secures the path and the platforms; sectors bring domain expertise and scale the change.

The vision is captured in a single national strategy with a living roadmap that focuses resources on the few things that move the needle, and explicitly deprioritises the rest. Progress is tracked with platform- and service-level KPIs that measure outcomes, not just outputs: time saved for people and businesses, satisfaction, adoption, and cost efficiency.

Regular reviews tighten the feedback loop: insights from implementation learnings, from usage analytics and research reshape the next iteration of the roadmap.

Data is treated as a shared national asset. Base registries provide authoritative truth (people, businesses, addresses) and power once-only service delivery through a secure, government-wide data-exchange platform. Stewardship roles (CDOs) and common data standards ensure quality, traceability, and trust. As a rule, what can be made open and reusable is open by default — from datasets to APIs to service performance — unlocking innovation while respecting privacy and security. Transparency extends to critical algorithms and their performance where feasible, reinforcing accountability and public trust.

The technology backbone follows the “Government as a Platform” principle. Rather than rebuild the basics a hundred times, the state provides shared components — digital ID and trust services, interoperability, secure payments, government cloud, design systems, and common SDKs. delivered with clear, robust APIs and mandated where it makes sense. Compliance with enterprise, security, accessibility, and service design standards is enforced at funding and architecture checkpoints (“gates”) so that services connect, look, and behave consistently across the estate. This keeps the total cost of ownership under control and speeds time to value.

Money follows strategy. The GCIO office manages a whole-of-government portfolio, prioritising cross-cutting initiatives that use shared platforms and meet common standards. Funding and technical assurance are two sides of the same coin; projects that ignore reuse or security do not pass. This creates the right incentives for teams to "build once, use many times."

Finally, maturity is built to outlast political cycles. Laws, institutions, and long-term investment frameworks protect continuity; skills programs cultivate digital leadership from ministers to front-line staff; and open participation with citizens and businesses sustains legitimacy. The result is a resilient digital state — capable of continuous adaptation, trusted to handle data responsibly, and disciplined enough to scale what works. That is the to-be: a government that is digital by default, human by design, and cohesive in execution.

## 4.3 A Four-layer Proposal for Digital Governance for Romania

A certain level of managed disruption will be essential to move beyond past coordination gaps and unlock real progress

Although Romania is still at an early stage in developing its digital governance framework, there is a clear window of opportunity. Digital transformation has become an increasingly important topic of discussion, increasingly referred to as a lever for boosting socio-economic development. This momentum should be harnessed and translated into practical action.

The legacy of fragmented coordination makes clear that progress cannot come from continuity alone. While acknowledging the value of current structures and political realities, a certain level of managed disruption will be essential to move beyond past coordination gaps and unlock real progress. The immediate objective is to establish a coordination structure, build trust-based relationships, and deliver quick wins to demonstrate the tangible benefits of digital transformation.

A preliminary high-level visualisation of the suggested digital coordination model is presented next.

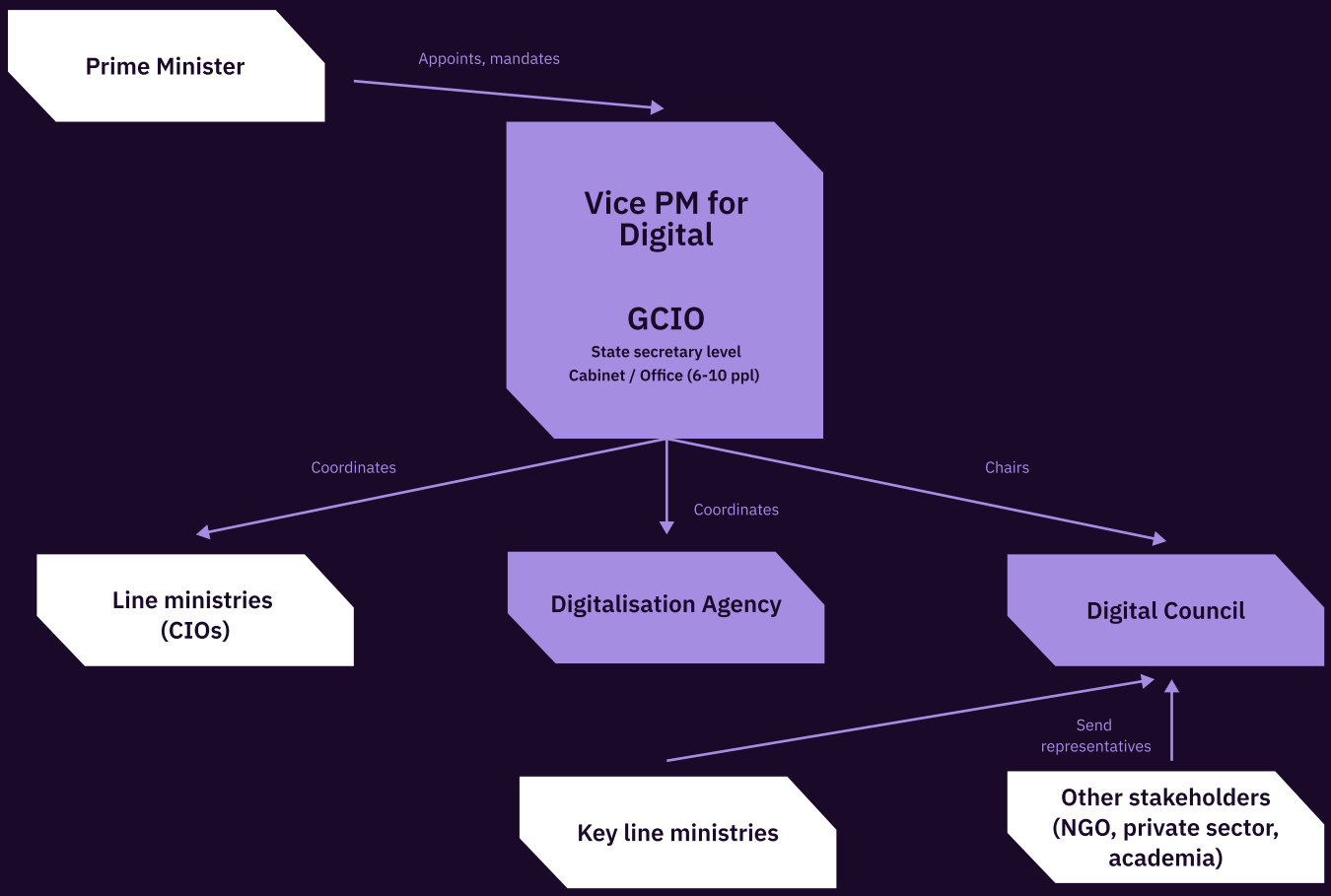
### 4.3.1 Highest-Level Political Leadership: Deputy Prime Minister with responsibility for Digital Transformation

#### Typical objectives and tasks

In countries where a senior political figure, such as the Prime Minister (PM), Vice Prime Minister, or an equivalent, is assigned a responsiblity for digital transformation, their role typically includes:

- Ensuring political prioritisation and cross-ministerial cooperation;
- Arbitrating between competing priorities and aligning reforms with government programmes;
- Advocating for digital transformation both internally (within the government) and externally (to the public and private sectors);
- Chairing the national Digital Council or equivalent coordination body.

## Governance model proposed for Romania




### Proposal for Romania: Elevate the political level to Vice Prime Minister

Given the current fragmentation of roles and responsibilities in Romania's digital governance landscape, and the limited institutional capability of line ministries such as MCID and MEDAT, we recommend **elevating the coordination role to the highest political level**. Romania has precedent: Vice Prime Ministers have previously held domain-specific mandates tied to government programmes, including legislative coordination.

Building on this, we propose that Romania **appoint a Vice Prime Minister (VPM) for Digital Transformation**, formally mandated by the Prime Minister. The VPM would be supported by a dedicated Cabinet/Office of the VPM, lead by a professional **Government Chief Information Officer (GCIO) at State Secretary level**, and a GCIO Office of 6-10 experts in digital policy, government technology, and service design.

Although VPM positions could in theory be designed to be apolitical, in practice they are often short-lived and political in nature. The average tenure of a Romanian minister is 8-10 months, which makes continuity fragile. For this reason, **long-term stability must be anchored in a professional GCIO and an empowered implementation agency**.

In some cases, there may be a political desire to merge the roles of VPM and GCIO. Taking into account Romania's current political situation and political culture, we do not recommend this. **Combining the two roles would introduce unnecessary risk, reduce continuity, and compromise the durability of Romania's digital transformation**.

### Key tasks for the VPM for Digital (first 1-2 years):

- Provide high-level political leadership inside the government and for the public for the digital transformation agenda;
- Establish the GCIO position and office; identify a good candidate and make the GCIO office operational;
- Renew the composition of the Digital Council to better reflect strategic priorities, and convene its meetings with binding decisions and transparent outcomes.
- Define a limited set of clear, measurable and actionable goals, in collaboration with the GCIO office and Digital Council. For example, define the national strategy for digital transformation, launch of a national interoperability platform or the adoption of a government-wide service standard with showcase pilots.

## 4.3.2 Strategic Coordination: GCIO and GCIO office

### Typical objectives and tasks

The Government Chief Information Officer (GCIO) and their office typically serve as the central coordinating body with responsibilities including:

- **Strategic leadership**: Defining national digital strategy and policies, launching and leading major digital initiatives. This includes setting standards for government enterprise architecture, interoperability, data, and services, and guiding ministries in aligning with national digital roadmaps.
- **Policy formulation and oversight**: Drafting supporting legislation and regulations, and ensuring compliance across government through digital checks. The GCIO office often reviews and advises on agency-level IT investments to avoid duplication and enforce whole-of-government standards, and approves ICT spending.
- **Coordination and capacity-building**: Convening and supporting ministry-level CIOs[8] (Chief Information Officers[9]) or CTOs (Chief Technology Officers), providing guidance and frameworks for project management and service design, and promoting the use of shared infrastructure.

### Proposal for Romania: GCIO + Office directly linked to VPM

Based on international good practices and Romania's current institutional context, we **recommend establishing the GCIO position as the head of the VPM's cabinet**, with a formal status at the level of Secretary-General. The GCIO should be a **non-political**, high-level professional leader, able to navigate both policy and technology. He/she should be supported by a dedicated **GCIO office** of at least 6 to 10 experts with competencies in:

- Government enterprise architecture[10]
- Service design

8 Chief Information Officer (CIO) in this context is a senior official within a ministry who ensures that the ministry's digital, data, and technology initiatives are aligned with both the ministry's policy goals and the government's central digital standards and platforms.

9 Chief Technology Officer (CTO) is a senior technology leader within a ministry responsible for the technical architecture, engineering standards, and implementation of digital solutions, ensuring they are secure, scalable, and interoperable with government-wide platforms.

10 Government Enterprise Architecture is essentially the public-sector adaptation of enterprise architecture (EA), used to ensure that digital systems, data flows, and services across ministries and agencies are coherent, interoperable, and efficient.

- IT regulation
- Policy formulation and strategy-building
- Communication (to support advocacy and coalition-building).

## Proposed GCIO tasks for the first 1-2 years:

1. **Lead the development of the digital transformation strategy** by facilitating an inter-ministerial process to define a shared vision together with a limited set of actionable objectives.
2. Adopt a one-page **Service Standard** (plain-language rules for teams) with common requirements for the design and delivery of digital services. No need to invent from scratch, excellent examples exist and are easy to localise[11].
3. Steer **one to two lighthouse services** (end-to-end, cross-ministerial) to model the standard (e.g., birth of a child; moving home, starting a business).
4. Define **the mandatory** building blocks: **identity (ROeID), data exchange platform, and the government cloud** and **mandate their use**, connecting it to digital funding.
5. Mandate the creation of **CIO or "Head of Digital"** positions in all ministries and launch a network of ministry-level CIOs led by the Government CIO. Make these roles report to Secretary-General with clear mandate (architecture, data compliance, service design).
6. Launch a **Digital Leaders Accelerator Program** (CIOs/CTOs, service design, business and data analysts) for a short-term intensive training to create a digital transformation-minded and capable network for change.
7. **Propose amendments to procurement rules** to allow dedicated funding for **discovery and design phases and to enable agile procurement frameworks**. This will unlock a new way of working. Introduce model procurement templates aligned with the new service standard.
8. **Enforce the "digital impact check" on legislation**: empower the Government CIO office to review all draft legislation and policy with the authority to return proposals that do not contradict the requirements for interoperability, data reuse, service design or other commonly agreed digital transformation principles.
9. Acting as the **secretariat of the Digital Council**, the GCIO Office ensures that all investment proposals are pre-screened for alignment with national digital ambitions, coordinated across ministries, and focused on shared platforms and citizen-centric outcomes.

## Alternatives considered

In the process of drafting this report, we evaluated **the potential of the Authority for Digitalisation of Romania (ADR) to take on the GCIO** role. This was based on:

- The OECD's 2023 recommendation to strengthen ADR's leadership in digital government[12].
- Proposals from Romanian stakeholders suggesting to the ADR's former role in the government working apparatus.
- International cases where GovTech agencies combine both policy and service delivery roles, successfully operating as GCIO-like structures.

However, our 2025 on-site mission found that **while ADR plays a critical implementation role, its current profile does not match the strategic mandate required of a GCIO**.

- ADR primarily acts as a project implementation body, focused on managing EU-funded initiatives.
- Although it has a mandate to provide and promote shared platforms (e.g. interoperability platform, digital ID, cloud), it lacks the enforcement authority necessary to ensure adoption across government.
- Being structurally under MEDAT, ADR is not positioned to drive digital transformation across ministries or develop cross-cutting digital policy or legislation.

11 Digital Nation. (n.d.). What are service standards and why do they matter? LinkedIn. Retrieved September 24, 2025, from https://www.linkedin.com/posts/digitalnationeu_dn-what-are-service-standards-and-why-do-activity-7361662177818083328-vu6e

12 OECD. (2023). Digital Government Review of Romania: Towards a Digitally Mature Government. OECD Digital Government Studies. OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/68361e0d-en

Moreover, in international models where implementation agencies serve as de facto GCIOs, they are typically placed under direct political leadership (e.g. President or PM), which support them in enforcing relevant policy from the top down. In the absence of this authority, ADR cannot currently fulfill the strategic GCIO role.

**An alternative that could be considered in theory is placing the GCIO role within MEDAT**. On paper, this would align with the current formal setup, as MEDAT is already designated as the ministry responsible for digital transformation. However, in practice, the conditions are not supportive. Given Romania's pressing economic challenges, digital transformation receives limited political attention within MEDAT, and the ministry lacks both the visibility and the authority to elevate the agenda across government.

Beyond the issue of political prioritisation, there is also a structural limitation. In Romania's political-administrative culture, it is both politically and administratively difficult for a single line ministry to impose policy changes on other ministries and their subordinate agencies. Digital transformation, by its nature, requires cross-governmental enforcement, not sector-specific stewardship. Locating the GCIO within MEDAT would therefore risk perpetuating fragmentation and leaving the role without the necessary leverage to secure adoption across the system.

This is the main reason why **we recommend excluding the leadership of digital transformation from MEDAT and instead elevating responsibility to a higher political level**. The most effective configuration would be a Vice Prime Minister mandated by the Prime Minister, supported by a professional GCIO at State Secretary level and their office. This setup combines political authority with professional continuity, creating the conditions for Romania to drive systemic digital reform rather than fragmented initiatives.

## 4.3.3 Digital Council

### Typical roles and tasks

Digital Councils or similar high-level bodies play a vital role in aligning priorities, resolving inter-agency conflicts, and prioritising investments. Their key features include:

- Chaired by a senior political leader (often PM or VPM) to guarantee visibility and authority.
- Membership includes most relevant ministers and/or heads of agencies, and representatives from business, academia, and civil society.
- Ability to make binding decisions and publish them, while being inherently consensus-seeking
- Supported by a secretariat (typically the GCIO office), which handles preparation, follow-up and monitoring.

### Proposal for Romania: upgrade CERB into Digital Council

We recommend establishing a high-level committee chaired by the VPM for Digital and bringing together high-level representatives from the most relevant ministries and government agencies, as well as representatives from other stakeholders. We envisage the composition of Digital Council as follows:

- Key ministries: MEDAT (communications policy), Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice and Ministry of Education should be represented at the ministerial level, to ensure real commitment and ability to make decisions. Other agencies can participate at the level of state secretary or agency head, depending on their relevance.
- Private sector, academia and civil society: To broaden perspectives, the Council should also include one representative from a business association, a representative from civil society, a representative from academia, and potentially some external experts.
- An Adviser to the President on Digital Affairs: To create a degree of continuity for the digital agenda that transcends electoral cycles and government changes, a person dealing with digital transformation and/or innovation issues at the President's office should be a member of the Digital Council. Being part of the government's practical work in the area would allow the President to actively contribute to the country's digital transformation efforts by being a vocal advocate of the topic in the society.

Way of working

- The Council should convene regularly (e.g. monthly), with each meeting producing clear, binding decisions that ministries are required to implement. The decisions should be made available to the public shortly after the meeting to improve visibility and create trust.
- The GCIO office would serve as the secretariat, preparing agendas, providing background materials, and ensuring communication and follow-up.

**This council could build on the existing Committee for e-Governance and Red Tape Reduction (CERB)** — an inter-ministerial digital transformation body chaired by the Prime Minister and supported by the General Secretariat of the Government (GSG). However, the committee's current shortcomings, such as irregular meetings, infrequent sessions, and non-binding decisions, must be replaced with a stronger mandate, genuine decision-making authority, and clear empowerment.

After the GCIO office is in place, it will be best positioned to prepare the agenda and coordinate the organisation of Digital Council meetings instead of the GSG. Moreover, as noted earlier, the council would gain both credibility and practical insight by extending its membership to include representatives from the private sector, academia, and civil society.

A critical consideration is to avoid the risk of this council becoming just a formal or ex officio gathering. Instead, **it should be designed as a functional and decision-shaping body**, with a clear mandate, defined responsibilities, and mechanisms that ensure active participation and tangible outcomes.

### Tasks of the Digital Council during the next 1-2 years:

- Guide and approve the national digital strategy and its implementation plans with primary focus on keeping it to the point (with a limited set of high-impact objectives) and actionable.
- Facilitate discussion on, and approve, decisions on common service standards.
- Prioritise areas for government digital transformation efforts.
- Give an approval on digital investments.
- Address and resolve inter-ministerial conflicts.

## 4.3.4 Implementation Agency for Digital Transformation

### Typical roles and tasks

Implementation agencies, typically under the jurisdiction of the Government CIO office or the digital ministry, build and operate shared platforms (eID, interoperability, cloud, single front door etc), provide onboarding help to ministries, and run operations (helpdesk, incident response etc). They execute the vision and policies defined by the GCIO and the Digital Council with sufficient technical capacity and institutional stability.

To deliver on the mandate described above, the implementation agency must combine diverse technical expertise, including:

- core technology: software engineers, system architects, DevOps and data management experts;
- products and service design: project management, user experience;
- governance and legal: standards development and operations (helpdesk and incident support, performance tracking, etc).

### A Proposal for Romania: new Implementation Agency under VPM

ADR, which formally holds the mandate to provide shared services, currently has a mandate that extends beyond its present operational focus and capabilities. At this stage, much of its attention is directed toward the management of EU-funded projects, and its team is structured accordingly. As a result, ADR is not yet fully positioned — in terms of

technical capacity, institutional authority, or leadership profile — to drive shared platforms as a central pillar of digital transformation.

Against this backdrop, we propose two possible approaches:

**1) Create a new GovTech-style agile delivery agency under the VPM for Digital**
This agency would focus on the development of shared services, with a strong focus on engineering, architecture, product management, and service design. ADR would continue to lead and manage EU programs and projects, preserving considerable part of its current role. The new agency would be staffed with highly skilled technical professionals and managed by agile, change-oriented leadership — qualities often difficult to embed in traditional project management structures. International experience suggests that launching new initiatives with a distinct structure and culture often delivers better results.

For this reason, we recommend this option as the preferred approach. At the same time, we recognise that establishing a new agency may not always recieve the necessary political and institutional support. Accordingly, a second option could be considered.

**2) Radically transform ADR into "ADR 2.0" by creating a dedicated "Shared Platforms" or "Delivery Directorate" within the institution**
Under this model, ADR would serve as the executive branch under the authority of the VPM for Digital, with policy guidance provided by the GCIO. Restructuring and modernisation of the agency will be essential to enable ADR to fulfil its main role: the development and provision of shared services and supporting agencies in their adoption.

To launch this transformation, the modernized ADR would need a Delivery Department — an internal unit the work with its own recruitment track, governance model, pay scale, and working methods. It should operate independently from traditional waterfall-style procurement processes and be empowered to act with agility.

In the longer term, ADR could in theory evolve into the role of GCIO, provided it undergoes substantial reform under modern GovTech leadership and acquires broad technical competence. Achieving this will require ADR to establish itself as a robust digital transformation agency, with the authority to enforce common policies and the sustained backing of the VPM or the Prime Minister's Office.

## Tasks of the Implementation Agency during the 1-2 years

First and foremost, avoid overambitious big-bang reform and instead focus on targeted early wins that can demonstrate credibility and feasibility.

- Begin fostering cooperation among different ministries and institutions in order to build trust and to position the agency as a centre of competence and dynamic execution for the entire public sector, rather than as a rival to individual institutions.
- Operationalise the interoperability framework by developing a national interoperability platform.
- Establish a dedicated program and team to actively partner with and support priority government agencies in onboarding the interoperability platform. This program will provide hands-on support, including collaborative service redesign workshops and embedded technical expertise, to ensure the successful integration of their services with the national interoperability platform.
- Publish a living catalogue of government databases to provide an overview of existing systems and the data they maintain.
- Develop a concept and roadmap for a single citizen portal.
- Start a voluntary community of tech experts, across the government and including private sector representatives, to foster dialogue, share best practices, and promote peer learning.

# 5. Preconditions for Success

zero-sum mindset persists: opening up data, services, or platforms is often perceived not as creating public value but as surrendering influence or power

## 5.1 Political Fortresses as a Barrier to Digital Transformation

One of the key obstacles to successful digital transformation lies in the political environment. Too often, digital transformation becomes a hostage to short-term political powerplay, where party interests and zero-sum thinking undermine coherent, long-term reform.

Senior appointments are frequently driven by considerations beyond professional competence, which can limit the ability to build a stable, merit-based leadership needed to sustain the reform. This tendency shifts focus away from government-wide strategy and weakens continuity across electoral cycles.

In addition, **a zero-sum mindset persists: opening up data, services, or platforms is often perceived not as creating public value but as surrendering influence or power**. This perspective makes it difficult for institutions to collaborate across boundaries and to place the citizen — rather than political interests — at the centre of reform.

Addressing these political fortresses — and reinforcing the change with both soft and hard measures (the right mix of incentives and enforcement, or "carrots and sticks") to ensure whole-of-government cooperation and a citizen-centric approach — is a critical precondition for establishing a governance model capable of delivering consistent, coherent, and sustainable digital transformation.

## 5.2 No Foundations, No Transformation

Digital transformation cannot be sustained without the right foundations in place. Governments can launch pilots, build individual services, and announce ambitious strategies — but without functioning core enablers, these efforts will remain fragmented and ultimately fail to scale.

**Two elements are particularly non-negotiable: trusted digital identity (eID) and true interoperability. These are not optional add-ons; they are the infrastructure that makes a digital state possible**. Without them, services cannot be integrated, data cannot flow securely across institutions, and citizens cannot fully trust or adopt digital solutions.

The current situation illustrates the risks of weak foundations:

- **eID** exists, but its rollout is blocked by institutional resistance and public mistrust.
- **Interoperability** is defined in law and applied through isolated APIs, but there is no functioning data exchange platform to enable government-wide connectivity.

Without trusted identity and seamless data exchange, digital government cannot move beyond isolated initiatives to become a coherent, citizen-centric system

- There is a **limited understanding** of how interoperability actually works and what transformative opportunities it unlocks for both institutions and citizens.

As a result, services remain siloed, fragmented, and unscalable. **Without trusted identity and seamless data exchange, digital government cannot move beyond isolated initiatives to become a coherent, citizen-centric system**.

Ensuring these foundations are fully operational and widely adopted is therefore a critical precondition for meaningful and lasting digital transformation.

## 5.3 Change Starts With Champions

It is not possible to transform the entire system at once. Successful digital reform begins by identifying and building on existing strengths — the champions already driving progress. These champions provide the momentum, credibility, and proof points needed to inspire and scale change across government.

Champions can take different forms:

- Institutions: agencies already leading in digital reforms and demonstrating what works.
- Solutions or services: pilots or platforms with proven adoption that can serve as visible examples of success.
- Individuals: motivated leaders, whether formal or informal, who are willing to take risks and push reforms forward.
- Other preconditions: strong political momentum, critical demand, or external pressures that create urgency for change.

By starting with champions, governments can achieve quick wins that reduce resistance, build trust in digital reforms, and demonstrate tangible benefits. These early successes create a foundation for scaling reforms across the system, turning isolated initiatives into coherent, government-wide transformation.

## 5.4 Show What Success Looks Like

One of the barriers to digital transformation is low public expectations. Citizens often anticipate bureaucracy and inefficiency, rather than seamless services, and institutions mirror this mindset by equating “digital government” with simply putting paperwork online. As a result, demand for real change is weak, and reforms risk reproducing old patterns in digital form.

The current challenges are clear:

- **Citizens** are accustomed to red tape and poor digital experiences, which has led to low trust and little pressure for improvement.
- **Institutions** lack a true vision of user-centric services, so reforms often digitise outdated processes instead of redesigning them around citizens' needs.

To break this cycle, governments must **demonstrate what success looks like**. This means identifying politically feasible quick wins where change can be delivered fast, and showcasing services that are radically simpler, faster, and more user-friendly. Visible success stories reduce resistance, inspire demand, and reset expectations — both among citizens and within the public sector. They build momentum for deeper reforms and create proof that digital government can be truly transformative.

# 6. Blueprints for Strategic Initiatives

In our work, we emphasise the importance of a clear governance model - one that aligns responsibilities, decision-making, and accountability to ensure that digital transformation efforts succeed. Yet governance alone is not enough. To accelerate the transformation curve and achieve tangible impact, governments also need to invest in a set of critical initiatives. These initiatives act as enablers: targeted interventions that strengthen capabilities, close existing gaps, and create momentum across the system. The following blueprints outline such initiatives — practical, high-impact solutions designed to complement the governance model and help build a future-proof, citizen-centric digital state.

## 6.1 National Digital Transformation Vision & Strategy Sprint

### Problem today

Despite a strong political consensus that digital transformation is a national priority, there is currently no overarching digital transformation vision and strategy for the public sector. Efforts remain fragmented across ministries, agencies, and levels of government, resulting in duplication, inefficiency, and lack of coherence.

While government programs often include concrete bullet points on digital transformation, these are not supported by a clear mechanism for implementation. Ministries and agencies have no agreed responsibilities, KPIs, or timelines that would ensure alignment and accountability. Even more critically, it remains unclear whose responsibility it is - or should be - to create and own such a strategy, leaving both authors and ministries uncertain about leadership and mandate.

In practice, many institutions point to the RRF/PP (Recovery and Resilience Facility Plan) as their main reference for digital transformation. However, this is primarily a tactical financial instrument, not a whole-of-government transformation strategy. It provides funding but does not articulate a unifying vision or governance model.

At the same time, the political will for digital transformation is evident: all major political parties support it, and numerous initiatives are underway across ministries and agencies. Yet without a common framework to guide these efforts — and without clear ownership of who is responsible for strategy-setting — the risk is that digital transformation will continue to be pursued in silos: ambitious, but inconsistent, and lacking the collective impact that a shared national vision could deliver.

### Proposed solution

Given the current vagueness around responsibility for developing a national digital transformation vision, we propose that the **NGO sector takes the lead role** in convening and driving the process. By engaging public sector leaders, private sector experts, and civil society organisations, the effort can ensure inclusivity, neutrality, and broad legitimacy.

The initiative would take the form of an **8-10 week Strategy & Vision Development Sprint**, designed to:

- **Co-create** a citizen-centric, whole-of-government digital transformation vision.
- **Translate** strategic priorities into a practical, actionable roadmap with clear KPIs, responsibilities, and accountability mechanisms.

- **Secure buy-in** from political leaders, institutions, businesses, and citizens by involving them in the design process.

This fast, collaborative approach ensures momentum, builds trust across sectors, and delivers a strategy that is both implementable and owned by a wide coalition of stakeholders.

## Operating model

Leadership & Mandate

- The sprint is mandated and coordinated directly by the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), giving it authority and political weight.
- Execution is taskforce-led by the NGO sector, ensuring neutrality, agility, and cross-sector convening power.

Taskforce Composition

- NGO Lead — overall facilitation, sprint management, stakeholder convening.
- Public Sector Representatives — ministries, agencies, and local government to secure alignment.
- Academia & Civil Society — to ensure inclusiveness and user-centricity.
- External Experts — international practitioners and advisors to bring comparative experience and best practices.

## Implementation Roadmap

- **Weeks 1-2 – Preparation**
  PMO mandate confirmed, task force assembled, roles defined.
- **Weeks 3-6 – Vision Sprint**
  Co-creation workshops with ministries, agencies, NGOs, the private sector, and external experts to define vision and guiding principles.
- **Weeks 7-10 – Roadmap Design**
  Translate vision into an actionable roadmap with KPIs, responsibilities, and timelines.
- **Weeks 11-12 – Validation & Launch**
  Secure cabinet approval and publicly launch the national vision and roadmap.

## Critical Enablers for Success

- Political Leadership – The Prime Minister must take visible ownership, champion the process, and secure support across government.
- Top-Down Commitment – A sprint approach requires strong buy-in from political and administrative leaders. While the process engages stakeholders, it cannot be fully inclusive — willingness to adopt a top-down strategy is essential.
- Implementation Mechanism – Clear structures must be established to translate the vision into ministerial workplans, with accountability mechanisms, KPIs, and monitoring to ensure delivery.

## Value

The Strategy & Vision Sprint provides government with a whole-of-government framework that aligns ministries and agencies around a single digital transformation agenda. By co-creating the vision with civil society, businesses, and experts, it ensures citizen-centricity, inclusivity, and broad legitimacy. Most importantly, it translates the shared vision into the practical duties of ministries and institutions, with measurable KPIs and accountability mechanisms that enable transparent monitoring of progress and sustained reform.

# 6.2 Public Sector Service Design Lab

## Problem today

Despite growing recognition of the importance of digital transformation, government institutions still lack a culture of citizen-centric thinking. Services are often designed around institutional structures rather than user needs, resulting in complexity, inefficiency, and low trust.

Key gaps include:

- No systematic responsibility for embedding user-first principles in public service delivery.
- Limited service design skills and expertise within the public sector.
- Reforms risk digitising bureaucracy rather than redesigning services to be simple, inclusive, and efficient.
- Without a dedicated mechanism to champion citizen-centric innovation, government risks continuing to deliver fragmented digital solutions that fail to meet citizens' expectations.

## Proposed solution

We propose the creation of a **Public Sector Service Design Lab** — a national competence centre for citizen-centric innovation in government. The Lab will promote culture change, build capacity, provide expertise, and showcase impact through pilot projects.

The Lab will serve four primary functions:

1. **Awareness and Advocacy**: Promote user-first thinking across government through campaigns, workshops, and policy advice.
2. **Capability Building**: Train civil servants in service design methods and tools.
3. **Expert Pool**: Offer specialist expertise that ministries and agencies can access for their service design projects.
4. **Co-Creation and Prototyping**: Run design sprints, citizen engagement processes, and pilots to test and scale new solutions.

## Operating Model

- **Mandate and governance**. To ensure agility, neutrality, and cross-sector legitimacy, the Service Design Lab should be **mandated to and hosted by the NGO sector**. This positioning allows the Lab to remain dynamic, avoid bureaucratic inertia, and act as a trusted convener across government, private sector, and civil society. A strong cooperation framework will be established with the **Government Chief Information Officer (GCIO) team** to secure alignment with national digital priorities.
- **Financing**. The Lab will be financed through a **hybrid model**: partial funding from the public sector (direct budget allocation or via purchase of Lab services by ministries/agencies), complemented by contributions from private sector partners and international donors. This diversified model ensures sustainability and independence while keeping services accessible to government institutions.
- **Team Setup**. The Lab will build a **core in-house team** with private-sector-level competences (service design, UX, technology, policy design), while maintaining partnerships with a broad pool of external experts who can be mobilised flexibly for specific projects.
- **Engagement and Positioning**. The Lab must position itself as modern, attractive, and inspiring - a place where civil servants want to learn and collaborate. While all public servants are required to complete annual mandatory training, the goal is to make the Lab one of the **most desirable training providers** through cutting-edge methods, practical case studies, and a "cool and creative" working environment that differentiates it from traditional government training institutions.

## Implementation Roadmap

- **Phase 1 – Launch (0-3 months)**
  Establish the Lab in a lean setup with a small core team, NGO mandate confirmed, financing secured, and first pilot collaborations identified. The focus is on fast start-up and early visibility — delivering at least one tangible project or training within the first 3 months to showcase value and generate momentum.
- **Phase 2 – Early Scale (Months 4-12)**
  Expand activities by running multiple pilot projects with ministries and agencies, launching the first training programs, and growing the expert pool through partnerships. Begin to position the Lab as a trusted competence centre for service design and citizen-centric innovation.
- **Phase 3 – Consolidation (Years 2-3)**
  Broaden reach across government with scaled-up training (hundreds of civil servants trained annually), reusable toolkits, and stronger integration with GCIO priorities. Demonstrate measurable improvements in service quality, uptake, and efficiency.

## Critical Enablers for Success

**Political Cover & Endorsement**
Visible support from the Prime Minister's Office and key ministers to legitimise the Lab's role, ensure government buy-in, and protect against institutional resistance.

**Sustainable Financing**
A hybrid funding model (public sector budgets, service contracts, donor and private sector contributions) that secures long-term sustainability and independence from short-term political cycles.

**Talent & Competences**
A multidisciplinary core team with private-sector-level expertise in service design, UX, data, and digital policy, supplemented by a flexible pool of external experts to scale capacity as needed.

**Branding & Attractiveness**
Positioning the Lab as a modern, inspiring, and "cool" space that public servants want to engage with. By making training desirable, the Lab becomes a magnet for participation, raising the profile of service design across government.

## Value

The Service Design Lab creates a path for government to leapfrog in embedding citizen-centricity, moving beyond digitising bureaucracy toward redesigning services around people's needs. It sparks a culture of public services development as a "cool new thing," attracting fresh talent and showcasing what success looks like, while fast-forwarding the spillover effect and uptake of this thinking across ministries and agencies.

# 6.3 Chief Digital Transformation Officers (CDTO) Accelerator

## Problem Today

Ministries currently lack **clear digital leadership and ownership**. Digital initiatives are fragmented, often driven by external funding or ad hoc projects, with little consistency across government. No single role is accountable for setting priorities, leading change, or ensuring reforms align with broader national goals.

Equally important, ministries cannot **speak a common digital lingua franca**. Leadership teams often do not fully understand digital principles, data-driven approaches, or interoperability requirements. This gap limits their ability to set coherent strategies, engage productively with experts, or coordinate effectively with other institutions.

At the same time, simply creating a new role will not automatically close these gaps. To succeed, ministries must appoint the **right people — selected on merit, not political loyalty** — who combine digital expertise with leadership skills. Without capable and credible individuals in place, the CDTO role risks becoming symbolic rather than transformational.

## Proposed solution

We propose mandating the appointment of **Chief Digital Transformation Officers (CDTOs)** across all ministries and launching a structured **CDTO Accelerator Program** to empower them with the skills, mandate, and network required to drive reform.

The initiative will:

- Establish a **legal mandate** requiring every ministry to appoint a CDTO.
- Deliver a **6-month accelerator program** to train, educate, and connect CDTOs.
- Provide a **support framework** that balances responsibilities with benefits and incentives, making the role attractive to ambitious, open-minded leaders
- Build a sustainable **peer network** of digital champions who can exchange experiences, share solutions, and scale impact across government.

## Operating Model

- **Governance**. The creation of CDTO roles and the launch of the Accelerator must be formally mandated and endorsed by the Prime Minister and the Cabinet Council he chairs, ensuring political weight and cross-ministerial agreement. Coordination of the initiative sits with the Government CIO Office (GCIO), providing overarching leadership and alignment across ministries.
- **CDTO Roles**. Appointed to senior-level positions within each ministry, with direct reporting lines to ministers to guarantee authority and visibility. These appointments must be merit-based, ensuring candidates bring both digital expertise and leadership capacity, not political loyalty.
- **Accelerator Program**. To secure agility and avoid bureaucratic delays, the program's design and delivery should be developed and executed by the NGO sector, in close partnership with GCIO. The curriculum will cover digital leadership, service design, data-driven policymaking, change management, and digital ethics, combined with cross-ministry collaboration projects. This model blends political mandate and institutional ownership with the flexibility and innovation capacity of NGOs.

## Implementation Roadmap (12-15 months)

- **Phase 1 – Legal Mandate & Program Design (Months 1-3)**
  Pass legislation requiring each ministry to appoint a CDTO. In parallel, design the Accelerator Program (curriculum, mentors, expert pool, delivery model) in cooperation between GCIO and the NGO delivery partner.
- **Phase 2 – Talent Identification (Months 4-5)**
  Identify and select the first cohort of potential CDTOs through a transparent, merit-based process. Ensure candidates are motivated leaders with the right blend of digital competence, change management skills, and institutional credibility.
- **Phase 3 – Accelerator Program (Months 6-11)**
  Deliver a 4-6 month intensive training and mentoring program, combining workshops, online modules, peer-to-peer learning, and pilot projects. Build both the technical expertise and leadership capacity required to drive reform.
- **Phase 4 – Deployment (Month 12 onward)**
  Graduates formally take up their CDTO positions within ministries, equipped with mandate, skills, and peer network support. Ministries begin implementing early projects under their leadership, with ongoing coordination from GCIO and support from the CDTO network.

### Value

The CDTO Accelerator helps save valuable time by preparing a capable cohort of future leaders in parallel with the formal process of embedding the role into structures and legislation. This ensures that once the mandate is in place, ministries can immediately benefit from individuals ready to jump-start reform. At the same time, the program creates a strong peer network of like-minded leaders who share a common understanding of what modern digital government and citizen-centric services should look like. Even if not all CDTOs succeed due to institutional barriers or personal choices, those who do will already shift culture, set new standards, and build momentum for transformation across government.

## 6.4 Digital Leadership Development Programme

### Problem Today

Digital transformation efforts often falter not because of technology but because of leadership gaps. Many political and institutional leaders lack a deep understanding of what digital transformation truly means, its benefits, and the risks of inaction. Even the best strategies and investments will fail without leaders capable of championing change. This challenge cuts across all levels: from ministers and senior executives to mid-level managers and the next generation of leaders. Without a systematic approach to building leadership capacity, digital reforms risk being inconsistent, fragmented, and unsustainable.

### Proposed Solution

We propose establishing a Digital Leadership Development Programme  as a dedicated platform for cultivating digital leadership capacity across government and public sector. The Programme would bring together political, executive, managerial, and next-generation leaders, equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to lead transformation.

The initiative will:

- Provide tailored leadership development programs focused on digital transformation, ethics, data-driven governance, and change management.
- Create peer-to-peer learning opportunities, retreats, and networks to strengthen trust and cross-institutional cooperation.
- Offer mentoring and access to local and international experts to guide leaders in practical decision-making.

### Operating model

- **Governance**. The Lab is anchored within government (NACS?)  but delivered in close partnership with universities, think tanks, and the NGO sector. This ensures political legitimacy while leveraging external expertise, innovation, and flexibility.
- **Target Groups**. Political leaders, senior civil servants, mid-level managers, and emerging next-gen leaders.
- **Program Delivery**. A mix of in-person courses, online modules, mentoring, and experiential learning, complemented by peer networks and exchange forums.

### Enablers for Success

- Strong political buy-in, ensuring leaders see leadership development as a national priority.
- Institutional support, with ministries and agencies nominating participants and incentivizing engagement.

### Value

The Digital Leadership Development Programme lays the path for a cultural shift in public sector leadership, recognising that the key to successful digital transformation lies not in technology but in the mindset of top and mid-level managers who own services and processes. It builds a systematic approach to defining and developing the competences required for modernising public service delivery, while fostering strong formal and informal networks around digital leadership. Together, these efforts embed a new culture of accountability, innovation, and citizen-centric thinking that sustains transformation beyond individual projects or political cycles.

## 6.5 Creating Demand for Better Public Services

### Problem Today

Public demand for digital transformation remains weak and fragmented. Citizens often express mistrust in government, concerns rooted in tradition or even religion, and a sense of resignation after repeated failures of public sector reforms. As a result, there is little vocal or organized demand for better digital services, leaving reforms politically fragile and vulnerable to shifts in priorities. Without stronger bottom-up demand, digital transformation risks being seen as a top-down, technocratic exercise rather than a citizen-driven change.

### Proposed Solution

We propose establishing a coordinated effort to align and amplify initiatives that create demand for better public services. Rather than a single national campaign, this work should be orchestrated behind the scenes, bringing together existing communication efforts, civil society projects, and community initiatives. The goal is to build momentum, strengthen political legitimacy, and create a sustained societal push for more citizen-centric digital services.

The initiative will:

- Align and connect ongoing awareness and outreach efforts across civil society, media, and business associations.
- Provide a common narrative framework so digital transformation is consistently framed as citizen empowerment, not just technical reform.
- Support community-driven activities — showcases, debates, forums, grassroots campaigns — that foster ownership and trust.
- Create recognition mechanisms for successful reforms, while encouraging open acknowledgment of failures to sustain credibility.
- Build a trusted ecosystem of multipliers (NGOs, professional associations, local leaders) who can drive engagement within their communities.

### Operating Model

- **Governance**. Anchored in the NGO sector, ensuring neutrality, flexibility, and independence from government cycles. NGOs act as conveners, connecting multiple actors while avoiding duplication.
- **Delivery**. Behind-the-scenes orchestration: NGOs facilitate collaboration between media, grassroots networks, civic groups, and reform-minded public institutions.

### Enablers for Success

NGO Leadership – Independence and convening power to coordinate without being perceived as political.
Sufficient Funding – A sustainable financial base, contributed by diverse stakeholders and donors, to support orchestration, outreach, and community-driven activities.

## Value

The key to lasting success in digital transformation is strong and continuous political support — and in democracies, such support depends on visible citizen demand. By aligning and amplifying initiatives that showcase the benefits of better services, this effort demonstrates that demand, translating societal expectations into political will through elections. In doing so, it builds the foundation for reforms that persist across political cycles and remain anchored in citizens' needs.

# 7. Scope and Methodology of Work

This report, commissioned by the Edge Institute and conducted by Digital Nation, sets out to diagnose the current state of Romania's digital governance and propose a pragmatic, context-sensitive framework to accelerate the country's digital transformation over the next two years. At the heart of this effort lies a central question: **What would it take to spark a coordinated, forward-looking movement for digital governance in Romania — one that finally breaks through inertia and fragmentation?**

Recognising the historically low prioritisation of digital transformation in Romania, as well as the growing interest from the current government, we focused on identifying **what a viable digital governance framework for Romania should look like — and what could realistically be achieved within 12-24 months**. More specifically, the project set out to answer the following questions:

1. Where does Romania stand today relative to a clearly defined "future-ready" state?
2. Which digital governance levers most constrain or enable momentum?
3. What institutional design (roles, mandates, coordination) is feasible now and credible to scale in the near term?

While digital services are often delivered at the local level, this report focuses primarily on the **central government**. Sustainable and scalable transformation requires coherent leadership and governance from the centre. Regional and municipal levels will need to be addressed in future phases, building on the foundation laid here.

To develop a framework with clear short-term priorities that reflect Romania's digital maturity and political-administrative context, we applied two proprietary methodologies developed by Digital Nation:

## 1. Digital Governance Future-Readiness Framework

This framework, structured as a maturity model, is designed to assess a country's overall digital maturity across 12 pillars, including Vision and Strategy, Legal Frameworks, and Access to Services etc. Each pillar is broken down into 4-5 core elements, for which both an ideal "future-ready" state and intermediate development stages are defined. To assess Romania's position along this framework, we conducted:

- **Desktop research**: analysing national and international reports, the Romanian legislative and institutional landscape, digital strategies and programmes (e.g. NRRP, Digital Decade Compass), statistical indicators, and prior EU and OECD recommendations.
- **On-site interviews** with 18 key organisations, including central ministries, agencies, private sector actors, and civil society. These meetings, held in September 2025, provided critical insight into real-world implementation challenges, institutional dynamics, and operational constraints — complementing the desk research findings.

## 2. Digital Governance Maturity Model

This second methodology builds on the understanding that **there is no universal blueprint for effective governance**. Instead, models must be adapted to each country's political culture, institutional arrangements, and available resources. Governments must choose the right mix of policy, administrative, and technical instruments based on their desired positioning in digital governance.

Digital Nation's governance maturity model identifies 14 critical levers that influence how governments assign roles, allocate resources, and deliver digital services. These levers vary along a spectrum from centralised to decentralised approaches.

Given Romania's current state, we focused in-depth on **eight priority levers**, which we analysed using:

- Insights from the desktop research, interview findings, and maturity framework described above;
- A co-creation workshop with the Edge Institute and its board, where we validated the current state across the eight levers and collaboratively defined a realistic and desirable future state for each.

These findings shaped our proposal for Romania's digital governance model. The recommended four-level coordination scheme reflects the country's current baseline, future aspirations, and globally recognised best practices. For each key institutional player, we outline concrete, near-term actions to strengthen Romania's digital transformation capacity. These are intended to inform the next stages of implementation planning.

Finally, the purpose of this report is not to present a distant, idealised vision, but to offer a realistic, two-year actionable plan for enhancing coherence, leadership, and delivery capacity in Romania's digital governance. The recommendations are grounded in what is politically and administratively feasible today, while laying the groundwork for longer-term structural reform. The approach balances ambition with implementation realism, acknowledging that success depends as much on leadership, trust, and culture as on institutional structures and technical strategies.

# 8. References


**BPV Grigorescu**. Romania introduces government cloud legislation. Retrieved from https://www.bpv-grigorescu.com/romania-introduces-government-cloud-legislation/

**Digital Watch Observatory**. Romanian Cybersecurity Strategy 2022–2027. https://dig.watch/resource/romanian-cybersecurity-strategy-2022-2027?utm

**European Commission**. **(2024, July)**. Romania: 2024 Digital Public Administration Factsheet — Supporting document: Main developments in digital public administrations and interoperability. Interoperable Europe. https://interoperable-europe.ec.europa.eu/sites/default/files/inline-files/NIFO_2024%20Supporting%20Document_Romania_vFinal.pdf

**European Commission. (2024)**. Romania 2024 Digital Decade Country Report. Digital Strategy — European Commission. https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/factpages/romania-2024-digital-decade-country-report

**European Commission. (2025)**. Romania 2025 Digital Decade Country Report. (June 2025). Digital Strategy — European Commission. https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/factpages/romania-2025-digital-decade-country-report

**European Commission. (2025)**. State of the Digital Decade 2025 Report: Keep building the EU's sovereignty and digital future. Publications Office of the European Union. https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/state-digital-decade-2025-report

**European Commission. (n.d.)**. Electronic identity card and digital signature. https://commission.europa.eu/projects/electronic-identity-card-and-digital-signature_en

**European Commission. (n.d.)**. Governance - Romania. Interoperable Europe. https://interoperable-europe.ec.europa.eu/collection/iopeu-monitoring/governance-romania

**European Commission. (n.d.)**. Interoperability initiatives — Romania. Interoperable Europe. https://interoperable-europe.ec.europa.eu/collection/iopeu-monitoring/interoperability-initiatives-romania

**Issue Monitoring. (2024, August 23)**. Romania's Digital Environment: Navigating the Path to a Tech-Driven Future. Retrieved from https://issuemonitoring.eu/en/romanias-digital-environment-navigating-the-path-to-a-tech-driven-future/

**Issue Monitoring. (2025, June 23)**. Special Report on the 2025–2028 Government. https://issuemonitoring.ro/api/document/imbucket/Special_Report_on_the__2025-2028_Government_2025-06-23-11-49-29.pdf

**OECD. (2020, October 7)**. The OECD Digital Government Policy Framework: Six dimensions of a Digital Government. OECD Public Governance Policy Papers, No. 02. OECD Publishing. http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/f64fed2a-en

**OECD (2023)**. Digital Government Review of Romania: Towards a Digitally Mature Government. OECD Publishing. https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2023/12/digital-government-review-of-romania_4dee897c/68361e0d-en.pdf

**OECD (2023)**. Open Government Review of Romania. OECD Publishing. https://doi.org/10.1787/ff20b2d4-en
OECD (2023). Strengthening the Innovative Capacity of the Government of Romania. OECD Publishing. https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2023/11/strengthening-the-innovative-capacity-of-the-government-of-romania_0d4f695b/b8a3950d-en.pdf

**OECD. (2023, July)**. Coherence and co-ordination at the centre of government in Romania OECD Public Governance

Policy Papers No. 34) https://www.oecd.org/content/dam/oecd/en/publications/reports/2023/07/coherence-and-co-ordination-at-the-centre-of-government-in-romania_ea2bb794/3feaa33e-en.pdf

**Open Government Partnership. (2023, July)**. Romania 2020-2022 Results Report https://www.opengovpartnership.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Romania_2020-2022_Results-Report_EN.pdf

**Romania National Identity Card Portal**. carteadeidentitate.gov.ro. https://carteadeidentitate.gov.ro

**Romania-Insider. (2025, August)**. Romania committed to digitalizing 36 public services. Retrieved from https://www.romania-insider.com/romania-committed-digitalizing-36-public-services-aug-2025

**Romanian Government. (2025, June 24)**. Program de guvernare https://www.gov.ro/fisiere/pagini_fisiere/25-06-24-11-11-52PROGRAM_DE_GUVERNARE.pdf?mc_cid=13bfac6b7e&mc_eid=cd1f92f96c

**Romanian Parliament / State. (2022)**. Law No. 242/2022 on the exchange of data between IT systems and the creation of a national interoperability platform (Legea nr. 242/2022). Monitorul Oficial. https://legislatie.just.ro/Public/DetaliiDocumentAfis/257856?utm

**ROeID. (n.d.)**. Home. https://roeid.ro/en/home

**Servicii Publice. (n.d.)**. Punctul de contact unic electronic. https://serviciipublice.gov.ro/serviciu/punctul-de-contact-unic-electronic?utm

**The Diplomat Romania. (2023, June 28)**. ADR launches debate on regulatory framework in the field of digital transformation of the public administration. The Diplomat Romania. https://www.thediplomat.ro/2023/06/28/adr-launches-debate-on-regulatory-framework-in-the-field-of-digital-transformation-of-the-public-administration/

**United Nations Public Administration Programme. (n.d.)**. Country Information: Romania. UN e-Government Knowledgebase. https://publicadministration.un.org/egovkb/en-us/Data/Country-Information/id/140-Romania

**World Bank. (2022, December)**. GovTech Maturity Index 2022 Update: Trends in Public Sector Digital Transformation https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099035001132365997/pdf/P1694820bcef0903e091160315d2050d03b.pdf

**World Bank. (2023, May)**. Reimbursable Advisory Services: Report on high-level concept and key functional requirements for an information system to support the coordination mechanism, Romania (P171255). https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/099112923184023069/pdf/P1712550b01f9209a0a86a052d878e8c42d.pdf

# ANNEX 1 – Digital Future-Readiness Assessment

This assessment draws on Digital Nation's **Digital Governance Future-Readiness Framework**. The methodology examines a country's digital governance across 12 pillars that are critical to an effective, future-ready government. For each pillar, we outline 4–5 core elements and define both the desired ("future-ready") state and the preceding developmental stages.

Romania's position across pillars and stages was determined through:

- desk research covering policy documents, studies, prior assessments, statistics, and EU/OECD recommendations;
- 18 stakeholder interviews with representatives from government, the private sector, and civil society conducted during the fact-finding mission in Bucharest in September 2025.

A summary view of Romania's digital maturity assessment is presented in Figure 1.

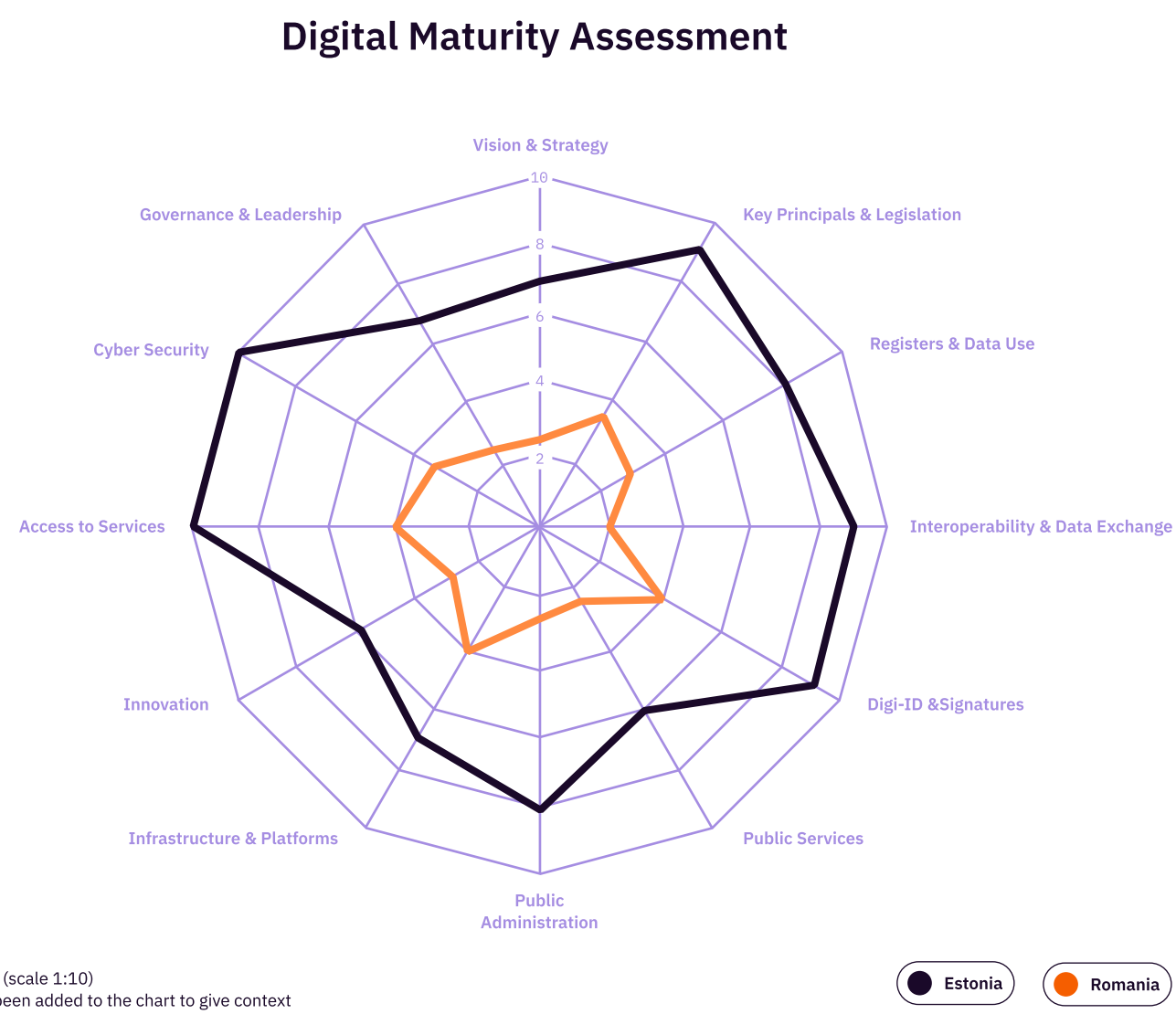



*Figure 1. Digital Maturity Assessment of Romania (2025), based on the Digital Nation's Digital Governance Future-Readiness Framework*

## 1) Vision & Strategy

| Future-ready state to aim for | State-of-play in ROMANIA |
|---|---|
| A clear and challenging vision statement exists, describing what the future will look like and giving actionable guidance for government employees | Romania's digital vision is spread across the NRRP, the EU Digital Decade roadmap, and the 2025–2025 government program, but it is largely reactive to EU frameworks and funding rather than a nationally owned, proactive strategy. While the government program lists important digital objectives, clear implementation roadmaps and guidance for officials are missing. |
| Measurable goals are defined, and progress is monitored systematically | Measurable goals come mainly from EU Digital Decade KPIs and NRRP targets. OECD notes a lack of systemic, outcome-focused monitoring across government. Current monitoring is compliance-driven - centred on fund absorption and deliverables - rather than tracking the real-world outcomes of digitalisation government-wide. |
| Measurable midterm (2-3 years) milestones with measurable and understandable benefits for people and businesses - the results | NRRP sets clear, measurable milestones (e.g. issuing 5 million eIDs), but these are output-focused rather than oriented around user value or impact. Goals target quantity (e.g. eIDs issued) rather than real-world improvements like faster business registration. |
| Digital government strategic plans are incorporated at both national and sectoral / ministry levels and are complemented by clear, synced roadmaps | Romania's digital agenda is driven by government programs and EU targets, but lacks a unified strategy and clear implementation roadmaps. There is no whole-of-government approach to make sure that the national plan's objectives will be supported by sectoral/separate ministry-level plans. |

## 2) Key Principles & Legislation

| Future-ready state to aim for | State-of-play in ROMANIA |
|---|---|
| Key Principles are firmly defined and fully enforced, and enshrined in policy/law | Principles like "once-only", "cloud first", and "single source of truth" are legally defined, but implementation is not enforced |
| The legal and policy framework supports and prefers electronic transactions. Public service offering procedures do not require paper-based transactions | A strong legal framework gives e-signatures legal equivalence, but legacy processes often still require paper. Some ministries insist on handwritten signatures for certain core processes, such as draft laws and government meeting documents. |
| Advanced and detailed data privacy and cybersecurity legal frameworks are in place and also enforced. | While Romania has formal legislation and structures in place (e.g. GDPR, NIS), enforcement remains weak, particularly in proactive monitoring, institutional capacity, and consistent public-sector compliance. |
| People and businesses have full trust and oversight into how their data is used by the public sector, and full ability to manage that data. | Citizens can request access to their personal data logs under GDPR, but the process is manual and slow. Updating personal data still often requires in-person visits to public authorities like the population registry or tax office. |

## 3) Registers & Data Use

| Future-ready state to aim for | State-of-play in ROMANIA |
|---|---|
| All subjects/objects in primary registers have national-level Unique Identifiers, and those are used in all public sector information systems to tie relevant subjects/objects to data | Principles like “once-only”, “cloud first”, and “single source of truth” are legally defined, but implementation is not enforced |
| All Primary Registers are operational on a national level and defined as the single source of truth | Key national registries exist, but remain siloed, with only some—like the Population and Trade Registers—operational nationwide and moving toward single sources of truth (SSOT) |
| All public sector data is in digital form, and digital records in all public sector databases prevail over paper-based documents | Most primary registers are digitised, but paper-based documents still have legal primacy in many processes |
| Data governance requirements are clearly defined and enforced through daily practice across the whole of the public sector | Frameworks for open data, data protection, and EU regulations are in place, but their implementation remains uneven |
| Advanced data analytics is a regular practice throughout the public sector, and all decisions and processes are data-driven (including predictive). | Emerging examples of data-driven practices exist, but they are not yet widespread or systematic. According to OECD (2023), clear leadership and accountability structures for advancing a data-driven public sector are still lacking. |

## 4) Interoperability & Data Exchange

| Future-ready state to aim for | State-of-play in ROMANIA |
|---|---|
| Digital data exchange between government entities is mandatory and fully implemented | Data exchange is mandated by the law, but a national interoperability platform is still missing (some intra- and inter-agency API-based exchanges are emerging) |
| The interoperability framework for public sector information systems is mandatory and fully implemented | National Interoperability Framework mandates data exchange and reuse across public IT systems, but adoption and enforcement remain limited |
| The public sector interoperability platform is operational and managed sustainably. All entities are connected, and private sector ecosystem connections can be made | Despite there being some bilateral data exchange over APIs, no national platform exists |
| Once Only is implemented in all public sector entities | The principle is a stated goal in strategic documents and law, but is currently rarely implemented |
| Cross-border data sharing is a regular practice, follows the interoperability framework and is conducted with the interoperability platform. | Romania has defined and operational cross-border data-sharing priorities, using EU platforms like TESTA, EUCARIS, and PDURO. However, full implementation depends on stronger governance, capacity building, and a cultural shift toward data-driven collaboration. |

## 5) Electronic Identity & Digital Signatures

| Future-ready state to aim for | State-of-play in ROMANIA |
|---|---|
| All residents have access to an affordable eID issued with a high level of assurance, and the eID is managed sustainably. | High-assurance biometric eID cards are being rolled out, with initial issuance funded through the PNRR and offered free of charge. While the implementation is currently adequately funded, its long-term sustainability beyond PNRR support remains uncertain |
| Qualified digital signature means for use in public sector entities and for digital public services that are available and affordable for all citizens and residents, and is managed sustainably | Qualified digital signatures from multiple private providers are widely available and legally recognised. The new eID will also include an optional qualified signature |
| A qualified digital signature is legally equal to a handwritten signature. All public sector entities are obliged to accept it as such and do so | Law 214/2024 and the eIDAS regulation provide full legal equivalence. Law 9/2023 mandates acceptance by public authorities, but this is not happening in practice |
| It is obligatory for public sector entities to accept a nationally accepted eID in their service and administrative processes | The new biometric eID is not yet widely rolled out, and adoption of the ROeID single sign-on (SSO) system remains voluntary and limited to some institutions |
| Over 50% of the adult population has used their national level accepted eID and digital signature means | Over 50% of the adult population has used their national level accepted eID and digital signature means |

## 6) Digital Public Services

| Future-ready state to aim for | State-of-play in ROMANIA |
|---|---|
| All government services are available in uniform digital channels (including in a one-stop shop portal), can be fully completed online and/or are proactively offered | While some key transactional services like Ghiseul.ro and online tax filing are available, many digital services remain fragmented or purely informational. There are multiple “single portals” |
| All public service offering results are in digital form | Romania’s digital public services score well below the EU average, especially for businesses. Citizen services reach about 76% of the EU average, while business services lag further behind at around 64% |
| Service standard for design, delivery and management of user-centric digital public services is mandatory and fully implemented | According to OECD (2023), Romania lacks comprehensive, binding service standards, relying instead on voluntary guidelines. On-site interviews revealed no clear user-centric service design policy, with agencies still operating along internal processes rather than end-to-end services or customer journeys |
| A common design framework for public sector digital services is mandatory and fully implemented | A common design framework is not yet adopted and mandatory |
| Almost all public services are heavily used online (if not proactive and automated) | While usage of platforms like Ghiseul.ro is growing, overall use of e-government services by internet users remains low (23.55% in 2023) |

## 7) Digital Public Administration

| Future-ready state to aim for | State-of-play in ROMANIA |
|---|---|
| Public administration operates fully digitally internally - all work takes place with digital solutions, across the whole of government | While digital tools are used, the process is in its early stages, with paper being widely used |
| Document exchange and public procurement are fully digital within the public sector | The e-procurement platform and mandatory B2G e-invoicing indicate widespread digital exchange, but document exchange is not yet fully digitalised, and no data confirms the overall volume of digital transactions |
| High level of computer literacy: all public servants have basic user skills; most are trained in advanced skills, and systematic (further) training is ongoing | Low level of computer literacy: There are many civil servants who do not use ICT in their duties. Public servants' digital skills remain low, despite being a focus of the NRRP. While NACS-led training projects may help, a broader, more sustainable approach beyond project-based funding is needed, especially in areas like service design and problem-solving, which currently lack ownership and coordination |
| Government-wide IT architecture and horizontal requirements are defined for public sector information systems, and their development is mandatory and fully implemented | Romania has established a government-wide IT architecture and horizontal requirements that are formally mandatory. However, implementation remains incomplete, with uneven adoption and coordination across the public sector (OECD 2023) |
| Automation and AI are systematically applied within the public sector, with solutions developed and maintained sustainably | A national AI strategy was recently adopted (2024), RPA is being implemented, and some piloting with it is occurring (e.g., tax authority), but systematic application is not yet happening |

## 8) Digital Infrastructure & Platforms

| Future-ready state to aim for | State-of-play in ROMANIA |
|---|---|
| All government entities are connected to the internet with sufficient bandwidth across the country | Romania has world-class fixed broadband infrastructure with near-universal coverage, including in rural areas |
| Data centres are managed sustainably and in a consolidated manner | Data centres are built up, but fragmented |
| Cloud solutions are fully used as per the national cloud policy, and the government cloud is operated sustainably | The policy framework and government cloud project are in place, but operational use remains limited and mandatory adoption is not yet enforced. Parallel institutional clouds also raise questions about the coherence and value of a unified government cloud |
| Sharing and reuse of digital solutions and components is mandatory and thoroughly implemented, while sharing and finding them is very easy through central solutions | Reuse of shared digital components is limited, with no clear requirement for using common solutions. While tools like ROeID and the eID card are being introduced, their integration and coherence remain unclear, and agencies often build their own systems due to weak onboarding and a lack of a national interoperability platform. |

| Future-ready state to aim for | State-of-play in ROMANIA |
|---|---|
| Government-as-a-Platform approach is fully adopted - platforms systematically developed, mandatory to use and sustainably managed | There are some common platforms (Ghiseul.ro, the new eID card and ROeID app) that have potential for wider use, but their adoption is not yet mandatory. A key concern is long-term sustainability, as many platforms are EU-funded with limited support for ongoing maintenance beyond the initial funding period |

## 9) Innovation

| Future-ready state to aim for | State-of-play in ROMANIA |
|---|---|
| Open innovation is a systemic practice - frameworks and incentives exist and are actively applied in all of government for innovative solutions to emerge in co-creation with the private sector, academia, and civil society | Partnerships exist (e.g., for AI strategy), but they are not systemic. The OECD notes a need to foster a culture that encourages innovation and collaboration |
| Publishing of open data and per standard requirements is routine practice and widely (and mandatorily) done throughout the public sector | data.gov.ro portal exists, and a legal framework is in place, but Romania is ranked as a "follower" in the EU, with limited high-value data available. There are no people in the public sector to make sure data is published and updated |
| Systematic and mandatory sharing and reuse of solutions and components, and active joint design and delivery of services with the private sector, is ongoing | Systematic co-design of digital services is not a common practice, but the Ministry of Interior is piloting the use of an electronic identity card with financial services providers |
| Systematic experimentation and uptake of emerging technologies is happening in the public sector, including for scaling across government and relevant capacity building | A national AI strategy exists, and there is ad-hoc piloting. The NRRP provides funding, but systematic experimentation and scaling are not yet evident |

## 10) Access to Services

| Future-ready state to aim for | State-of-play in ROMANIA |
|---|---|
| A well-developed telecom market with country-wide very high-speed broadband coverage, and affordable tariffs for all segments | Romania has excellent fixed broadband coverage (>90%) and some of the most affordable prices in the EU. 5G coverage is the main weakness |
| A well-developed banking sector, both with traditional and digital banking services, is accessible to everyone. Digital payments are universal | The adult financial inclusion rate reached 71% in 2024, meaning 29% are unbanked. While improving, cash remains dominant for a large segment |

| Future-ready state to aim for | State-of-play in ROMANIA |
|---|---|
| A high level of digital literacy and security awareness among end users, people and businesses prefer to use digital channels | Only 27.7% of adults have basic digital skills, in particular as regards the use of government services (one of the lowest in the EU). Training programs exist, but are not yet systemic or sufficient to close the gap |
| People are well aware of public service offerings and available digital channels, clear incentives to use digital channels, and communication is well-established | Very low usage of e-gov services (23.55% of internet users) and low citizen satisfaction (59%) indicate poor awareness and insufficient communication |

## 11) Cybersecurity

| Future-ready state to aim for | State-of-play in ROMANIA |
|---|---|
| The national-level cybersecurity strategy is in place and enforced by legislation and policies. | The National Cybersecurity Strategy 2022-2027 is adopted. Enforcement legislation (e.g., for NIS2) is in place, but full implementation is ongoing |
| CIRT and/or CERT and/or SOC are fully operational, their capacity is sustainably ensured, and they cover all of the public sector in their work | CIRT and/or CERT and/or SOC have been created, and some activities have started |
| The cybersecurity standard for public sector entities is implemented and followed by all public sector entities to ensure cybersecurity-by-design, while compliance is regularly audited | Romania's CERT/CIRT structure (via DNSC) is operational, with a defined national mandate. However, capacity is not yet robust or sustainable, and the coverage across all public sector institutions remains incomplete |
| All public sector entities have information security roles and responsibilities defined and sufficiently manned, while proper risk management and incident response procedures are in place with systemic training | While Romania adheres to EU standards like NIS2, there is no evidence of a single, mandatory, universally implemented cybersecurity standard for all public entities |
| There is high cyber security awareness in the public sector & high basic cyber hygiene among public sector employees, regular training and testing taking place | There is some cybersecurity awareness in the public sector & some basic cyber hygiene among public sector employees, but no systemic training and testing are taking place |

## 12) Governance & Leadership

| Future-ready state to aim for | State-of-play in ROMANIA |
|---|---|
| The political will and ambition to develop Digital Governance is shared widely within political circles, society and the private sector. The clear political owner is an active champion of delivery and change | Digitalisation is a declared priority (government program, allocation of NRRP funds to digitalisation), but the OECD notes the need for greater political support, and ownership is split across several bodies, leading to a lack of clarity |
| A coordinating body is in place with a strong mandate and sufficient resourcing and team - covering both planning and policy as well as delivery and operations to execute the whole-of-government view | According to the OECD 2023 report, ADR is the assigned coordinating body, but the onsite mission in September 2025 brought no evidence to this |
| Clear and powerful whole-of-government coordination mechanisms exist and are actively used, with stakeholders taking co-ownership | While a formal whole-of-government coordination mechanism exists (CERB), its decisions are non-binding and its work is irregular |
| All public sector entities have digital leadership roles and responsibilities defined and sufficiently manned, and advanced practices are in place with systemic training. | Leadership roles are not consistently defined or manned across all entities. A major training program for digital leadership is underway, confirming a current deficit |
| There is sustainable funding for digital government, in terms of the amount and type of funding, while political agreement on longer-term financing exists. Investments are fully coordinated, including from a business case perspective. | While the NRRP provides a large, coordinated investment, the underlying baseline budget remains fragmented between agencies, with little coordination. Funding is strongly project-based, putting sustainability in great danger |

# ANNEX II: Digital Governance Levers

| LEVER / MECHANISM | Guiding / decentralised | Midway / hybrid | Doing / central |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Strategy** | Only a national digital agenda exists; ministries create their own strategies | The central authority provides templates/guidance for sectoral strategies | Sectoral strategies require approval from the central unit |
| **Regulation/policy issuing** | Broad principles and non-binding "soft law" exist | A combination of hard-coded rules with advisory soft measures | There are hard requirements with enforcement mechanisms ("sticks") |
| **Regulation review** | The central unit gives general guidance for regulators and ministries | There is a consultation process with central digital experts on draft laws | The central authority approves or vetoes any legislation based on digital compliance |
| **Monitoring performance** | Ministries use voluntary guidelines and toolkits for self-monitoring | The central body conducts benchmarking and maturity assessments | There is mandatory monitoring of progress with KPIs and formal reporting obligations |
| **Funding for transformation** | Small stimulus grants exist for pilots and experimentation | Significant grants and co-financing are available for scaling initiatives | The central unit has full control and allocation of transformation funding |
| **Financial planning** | Guidance and methodologies are provided for ministries' financial planning | Spending controls are in place to align resources with digital priorities | The central body has veto and/or approval authority over digital-related spending |
| **Skilling** | Voluntary thematic trainings are provided, and communities of practice exist for sharing experiences | Large-scale training programs are available; digital academies exist, and efforts for reskilling are made | Clear mandatory requirements and certifications for digital competencies are in place and considered in training planning and for HR management |
| **Common platforms / stack** | The central unit gives guidance for selecting and designing platforms, but adoption is left to agencies | Adoption of shared platforms is voluntary and encouraged through incentives | Use of shared platforms across is mandatory for all public sector entities, often linked to funding decisions |
| **Personnel** | Competence frameworks guide recruitment and role design within agencies | Digital leadership roles (e.g. CIO, CTO, CDO) are mandatory in ministries | On top of competence frameworks and mandated digital roles, the central authority selects or appoints digital leaders to ensure alignment and capacity |
| **Experimentation / innovation** | Agencies use voluntary guidelines and toolkits for innovation | Central body promotes innovation labs, sandboxes, and hackathons | Central innovation programs or centres of excellence lead and coordinate innovation efforts |

| LEVER / MECHANISM | Guiding / decentralised | Midway / hybrid | Doing / central |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Development capability** | Agencies have full autonomy to build and manage their digital systems and services, but common principles need to be followed | Central government teams or consultancies provide expert support and shared capacity for system development | Core development capabilities are pooled and delivered by a central authority |
| **Delivery of transformation** | Agencies use guidelines and toolkits to deliver their own projects | The central body provides PMOs and expert consultancy support | Central delivery teams lead major transformation projects end-to-end |
| **Standard IT services** | Agencies procure and manage their own IT services with centrally provided guidance | Use of shared services and pooling of procurement is voluntary for agencies | Use of centrally managed standard IT services (e-mail, network security, etc) is mandatory for all agencies |
| **Procurement** | Agencies follow best-practice guidance but run their own procurement | Shared guidelines/frameworks and pooled procurement are available for voluntary use | The central authority manages and executes all digital procurement |

This report and the governance model was developed by the team of Digital Nation experts between September–October 2025. It was commissioned by **Edge Institute**; all rights and any questions about the use or reproduction of the material are subject to Edge Institute's approval.

Digital Nation is a **global digital-change advisory born from Estonia**, the world's first and the most successful digital society. We intimately understand the complexities and constraints that modern governments face when driving digital transformation. Our team combines hands-on experience from the Estonian government with ongoing work across 30+ governments on four continents, supported by a global expert pool of 150+ practitioners and partner agencies who have led real-world government transformations.

We don't just theorise about change — we have lived it, succeeded and failed at it, and learned the pragmatic lessons that make transformation stick. We work with our clients, not for them: co-creating ambitious but practical solutions, rolling up our sleeves to implement them, and watching for the blind spots that undermine progress. We aim to help solve your toughest, real-life puzzles so you can deliver lasting, citizen-centred change — not to sell cookie-cutter gimmicks.

The project was led by **Taavi Linnamäe**, co-founder and partner at Digital Nation. Taavi is an acknowledged professional who has advised institutions around the world. His work focuses on the foundational elements of digital society, governance and change management, and on enhancing successful digital transformation by accelerating digital leadership skills.

The lead expert for this project was **Siim Sikkut**, co-founder and managing partner of Digital Nation. Siim previously served as Government CIO of Estonia, has advised three consecutive Prime Ministers and the President of Estonia, and leads Digital Nation's work globally.

The expert role was carried out by **Karin Rits**, an acknowledged professional in digital transformation. Karin has worked in the Office of the Government CIO of Estonia and has led digital projects in the private sector.
For questions about this report or permissions for its use, please contact Edge Institute.

For more information about Digital Nation, see www.digitalnation.eu