



# C.A.E.S.A.R

Centrul pentru Acces la Expertiza Studenților și Absolvenților Români

## Strategia Națională privind Agenda Digitală pentru România

Feedback din partea Centrului pentru Acces la Expertiza Studenților și  
Absolvenților Români

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### Cine suntem

**Centrul pentru Acces la Expertiza Studenților și Absolvenților Români** (C.A.E.S.A.R.) este un laborator de idei ce reunește specialiști români din țară și din străinătate, cu pregătire academică la nivel înalt și rezultate remarcabile în domeniul lor de activitate. Scopul C.A.E.S.A.R. este să coaguleze comunitatea experților români într-un proiect comun și de lungă durată, care vizează dezvoltarea sustenabilă a României. C.A.E.S.A.R. este un cadru de afirmare pentru tinerii cercetători, un spațiu de recunoaștere pentru specialiștii români din țară și de peste hotare, și o platformă de cunoaștere în domeniile prioritare pentru viitorul României. Pentru îndeplinirea obiectivelor sale, C.A.E.S.A.R. dezvoltă o serie de colaborări strategice și proiecte proprii: studii de cercetare, sondaje, colocvii, evenimente și alte acțiuni publice.



## GENERAL COMMENTS

The overall text is very well written, easy to pursue, and with clear and well-argued points. The fields of action, the expected results and indicators are well delineated.

**It is a definite plus that** the Agenda is closely coordinated not only with the Partnership Agreement, but also with individual Operational Programmes, and key actions proposed in this agenda can also be identified in OPs such as OP Administrative Capacity, OP Human Capital, OP Competitiveness, or the Regional Operational Programme. The document comes to complement the key tasks laid out in the OPs and indicates how the Ministry for Information Society (as the key leader in this area), as well as other line Ministries (e.g. the Ministry of Education or the Ministry of Health) can play a complementary role.

Where **the document falls short** however is in providing the key elements of an operational program:

1. A set implementation timeline (e.g. 2014 – 2022)
2. A clearly allocated budget for the entire implementation time-line
3. An operational and stable implementation unit

With the way Governments change in Romania, it is unclear if the Ministry for Information Society will still exist in 2016 (after the Parliamentary elections will be completed), let alone if it will have a clearly allocated implementation budget for 2015.

As well, legal implications should be more clearly defined within specific paragraphs.

As such, the Digital Agenda is a wonderful document for coordinating efforts undertaken with EU funds and state budget funds, but ***the document would be much more powerful if the rigor of EU funded OPs would be applied to state-budget funded programs.***

## SPECIFIC COMMENTS

1. **It is not clear** how it was estimated that EUR2.4 billion of investments in the ICT sector would help boost the GDP by 13%. In our opinion, this is a task that is too ambitious, and **it is not clear** what type of methodology was used to get to this number. It is well known in the literature that the ICT sector has a very high multiplier effect, but usually this relates to investments done by the private sector. **It remains unclear** if the proposed public investments in the ICT sector (which are certainly necessary) will indeed lead to an expansion of the private ICT sector.
2. **It is very good** that there is a strong focus on e-Procurement (e.g. SEAP). The cumbersome and complicated public procurement system in Romania is one of the main causes for the slow and sluggish absorption of EU funds. A streamlined and improved procurement system could play a key role in improving absorption performance for the 2014-2020 programming exercise. In this respect ***simple and nimble e-procurement solutions are critical.***
3. One issue which **was absent** in the list of proposals for e-Government is ***an improved digital platform for the processing and management of investments from the state budget.*** Such a



platform should ideally follow the design of the mySMIS platform (which will be used for the management of EU projects) and be closely correlated with it. Normally, **there should be only one unified database containing all the public investments done in Romania** -- this will not only help streamline budgetary processes, but it would help make Government more responsible and strategic with its public spending.

4. In the Social Media sub-section, it would help to have **a clear action focused on enabling civil society and community groups to join forces around a common goal**. For example, civil society groups in Cluj-Napoca consider introducing an **e-Voucher system**, which would help local authorities with their participatory budgeting efforts in a simple form. Simply put, e-Vouchers would be distributed to people living in a community and these e-Vouchers would be tied to a budget earmarked for community level investments. Citizens can allocate these e-Vouchers to the projects they value the most, and the projects with the highest number of such vouchers ultimately would get funded.
5. **Increasing ITC literacy in rural areas is critical**. In this respect, Telecenters may be considered as a vehicle for such a purpose. A Telecenter could be a simple room equipped with a number of computers and with access to the internet, and it can be housed within a village hall, a school, or a community center. Such a Telecenter could offer people free access to internet, as well as a number of key services (e.g. updated information of where the highest vegetable market prices can be obtained in the country).
6. **The focus on improving ITC literacy for marginalized groups is laudable** and integrated approaches – together with hard infrastructure investments and soft investments in education – should be sought.
7. **Annex 5** (the Life Events Framework) provides a very good analysis of deficiencies in public administration and it **would deserve being expanded** (i.e. have a full-fledged analysis of some of the implications of the data/information included in there).
8. **It would be useful** to consider extending ITC services in the public administration realm so as to include aspects of city management based on **Geographic Information System (GIS)**.
9. It would be beneficial if educational ITC services & infrastructure would be **expanded & interconnected** to similar **networks** at the European level
10. The Strategy should also **include digitalizing** other elements of the Romanian **cultural heritage** in addition to text patrimony.