

A hand is shown holding a glowing blue globe. The globe is covered in a network of white lines and dots, representing a global network or data flow. The background is dark blue with a blurred image of a person in a suit. The overall theme is global connectivity and technology.

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Interview

BDO ROMANIA - NAVIGATING CHANGE WITH CONFIDENCE

CRISTIAN ILIESCU, Managing Partner, BDO ROMANIA

1. BDO is one of the largest global networks of audit, tax and advisory firms. What are the benefits and challenges for BDO Romania?

Our clients benefit from the expertise and global reach of our dynamic global network combined with our local experience in delivering quality, since more than 30 years ago. Global solutions include sustainability, innovation and technology that power the success of our team. Commitment to quality and excellence is a must for both network and our local office, while the aim to remain independent from external investors and highly competitive is challenging us and the whole network in increasing the level of integration and cooperations between member firms. By pooling expertise, infrastructure, and client relationships, more integration will offer broader capabilities, drive innovation, and respond more effectively to client needs.

2. BDO Romania offers a broad suite of services – audit, accounting, tax, advisory, legal. How do you ensure “one-firm” cohesion while addressing diverse client needs?

Cohesion starts with culture, and for us that means upholding the principle ‘One BDO’. Each service line has its own expertise, but we encourage joint planning and client reviews to identify opportunities where we

can add value together. Our governance model emphasizes transparency and shared accountability, so decisions are made in the best interests of our organization. We act with objectivity and fairness, and this is embedded in all solutions we provide. An appropriate level of local independence in taking decisions, combined with the alignment and integration across BDO member firms worldwide, ensures that we can deliver tailored solutions for diverse industries while maintaining the integrity of a unified brand and client experience.

3. The business environment in Romania faces structural transformations: digital transformation, ESG pressures, economic fluctuations. How do you guide your clients to navigate such changes while maintaining resilience and growth?

Navigating structural change is complex, but it comes with significant opportunities. We work closely with clients to understand their unique challenges and design solutions that align compliance, efficiency and innovation.

At BDO, we combine deep sector expertise with practical tools to guide clients through these shifts. Whether it's digital transformation, ESG reporting, or adapting to economic fluctuations, we provide insights and hands-on support that help businesses



stay resilient and competitive in a fast-changing environment.

In a world shaped by change, insight and precision remain the strongest advantages.

4. What are the key challenges and opportunities you observe for your practice in Romania in terms of regulation & digitalization?

The Romanian business environment is evolving rapidly, shaped by constant regulatory updates and accelerated digitalization. These dynamics create both challenges and significant opportunities for

companies operating locally.

At BDO, we help clients navigate this landscape by combining deep local knowledge with the strength of our global network, operating as one BDO. This global – local model enables our clients to access the expertise they need to adapt quickly and confidently.

Digitalization and AI continue to transform industries, and in line with our focus on tomorrow's value, we invest in emerging technologies and stay ahead of market trends. This allows us to offer forward-looking insights and support clients in making informed decisions that accelerate long-term progress.

Our commitment to excellence and a bespoke approach, part of what drives us to be the best every day, ensures that our partners remain closely involved in engagements, delivering trusted, high-quality outcomes for both traditional and international clients across industries.

5. How do you interpret the role of ethical leadership and corporate governance in building trust in Romanian organizations – and how does BDO support clients in strengthening these dimensions?

Ethical leadership and robust corporate governance are essential foundations for trust, especially in Romania, where transparency, predictability, and accountability continue to influence stakeholder confidence. Ethical leaders set the tone for organisational culture, while governance frameworks ensure that values translate into consistent, responsible behavior.

At BDO, integrity and fairness are embedded in the way we work, guiding the advice we provide to clients and supporting them in strengthening trust with employees, investors, clients, and regulators. We assist organisations in developing governance structures that promote transparency, reduce reputational risks, and align decision-making with long-term objectives.

Our commitment to excellence, a core part of what drives us to be the best, means we bring rigorous standards, a distinctive perspective, and a tailored approach to every project. By integrating ethical principles into practical processes, we help clients build



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resilient cultures and governance models that support sustainable growth and long-term credibility.

6. How do global technology market trends influence advisory opportunities for BDO in Romania?

Global technology market trends significantly expand the advisory opportunities for BDO in Romania, primarily by redefining client priorities and accelerating the need for strategic guidance.

The technology sector recorded standout performance globally, with major indices reaching new highs and investor confidence strengthened by advancements in AI and strong deal activity. This momentum influences Romanian companies as they face new pressures to innovate and stay competitive.

Firstly, the accelerated investment in artificial intelligence is elevating valuations in the tech sector and compelling less innovative companies to adapt. This creates opportunities for BDO to support clients through digital transformation, AI readiness assessments, strategic innovation planning, and technology implementation.

Secondly, increased regulatory scrutiny worldwide is generating demand for advisory services in compliance, risk management, and cybersecurity. BDO's expertise in these areas allows it to guide Romanian companies through complex regulatory environments.

Additionally, strong global M&A activity in technology drives the need for due diligence, valuations, transaction structuring, and post-merger integration. With BDO's global network and local insight, the firm is well positioned to assist clients throughout the entire deal lifecycle.

7. Technology is reshaping audit and advisory services – data analytics, automation, AI. What do you believe will be the most important technological shifts for firms like BDO in Romania over the coming 3-5 years?

Data analytics, automation, and AI already became important technological shifts shaping audit and advisory services here in Romania. For us at BDO, these tools are

meant to support our people, not replace them. By automating routine tasks, we free up our teams to focus on what really adds value: understanding our clients' business, providing deeper insights, and helping them make informed strategic decisions.

In practice, this means our auditors and advisors can spend more time analyzing trends, identifying opportunities or risks, and having meaningful conversations with clients, instead of getting bogged down in repetitive processes. It also allows us to collaborate more effectively across service lines, leveraging the full range of BDO's expertise both locally and globally.

Importantly, we are committed to the responsible and compliant use of AI. With the EU AI Act now confirmed for rollout and a strict implementation timeline ahead, we are preparing proactively to align with the new governance, transparency, and oversight requirements for high-risk and general-purpose AI systems. At BDO, we have internal procedures and clear guidelines to ensure AI is applied ethically, securely, and in line with these evolving regulations, always protecting client confidentiality and maintaining the professional standards expected of us.

Ultimately, technology is a partner for our people and it helps them work smarter, enhances the quality of our work, and ensures we continue to deliver personalized, precise and high-value solutions in a rapidly evolving regulatory landscape.

8. What are the areas in which BDO Romania aims to further develop?

BDO has built strong expertise in multiple industries, where we consistently excel thanks to our deep technical understanding and long-standing client relationships. This allows us to combine sector-specific insights with our multidisciplinary capabilities to deliver high-quality, tailored solutions.

At the same time, we are actively expanding our footprint in the financial services sector and risk advisory services (including cybersecurity). These are priorities for us which are in line with the global strategy, and we are investing in strengthening our capabilities, growing our client base, and enhancing specialized expertise with the

support of our network and our business partners.

Overall, our objective is to build on the areas where we already perform exceptionally well, while accelerating our development in financial services sector and risk advisory services are core strategic directions for the coming years.

9. The war for talent is intense in audit/advisory – how does BDO Romania attract and retain top professionals, and how do you ensure continuous learning and career development in a fast-changing world?

The competition for talent in audit and advisory is intense, and at BDO Romania, we approach this challenge by focusing on continuous learning and career development. We combine structured development programs with hands-on experience, giving our people exposure to diverse projects and perspectives. This approach helps them understand the bigger picture of our business and the industries we serve, while building practical skills and confidence.

A key part of this is BDO Academy, our initiative to nurture young professionals. Through workshops, case studies, and interactive sessions, we provide a platform for learning that goes beyond textbooks, preparing participants for real-world challenges and fostering a strong foundation in both technical expertise and professional values.

Our goal is simple: create an environment where people feel valued, challenged, and inspired to grow. By aligning career development with market trends and the realities of a competitive talent landscape, we ensure that our teams don't just keep pace, they lead the way. Ultimately, our strength lies in growing talent from within, supported by active partner involvement and a culture that emphasizes collaboration, innovation, and long-term development.

10. If you were to give advice to young professionals in BDO who aspire to leadership roles in audit, advisory or consulting, what three principles would you emphasize based on your own career?

For young professionals aspiring to leadership roles in audit, advisory, or

consulting, I would say it's important to understand and respect the legacy of BDO Romania. The firm has been built over many years by dedicated people, many of whom are still with us today. This legacy shows the value of long-term commitment, collaboration, and learning from experience.

Equally important is to value the people around you. Strong, lasting relationships with colleagues and mentors are essential for both personal and professional growth. Being part of a team that builds and shapes the firm together creates a real sense of belonging and ownership. In this environment, young professionals can take on meaningful responsibility, learn from experienced leaders, and gradually develop the skills and confidence needed to succeed in leadership roles.

11. Finally, looking ahead: What is your strategic vision for BDO Romania over the next 5–10 years – in terms of growth, service innovation, talent and market positioning – and how do you see the firm's role in shaping Romania's business ecosystem?

Looking ahead, our strategic vision for BDO Romania over the next 5–10 years focuses on sustainable growth, service innovation, and strengthening our position as a trusted advisor for both local and international clients. We aim to leverage digital transformation and AI to deliver smarter, more efficient solutions while maintaining the high quality and integrity our clients expect.

Talent development remains at the core of our strategy. We continue to invest in our people through structured learning programs, mentoring, and initiatives like BDO Academy, ensuring that our teams are equipped to lead in a fast-changing environment. By fostering a culture where partners are directly involved with clients, we ensure decisions are informed, practical, and tailored to local needs, while benefiting from insights across our global network.

BDO Romania will not be only a service provider, but a partner in shaping the Romanian business ecosystem, helping organizations navigate change, embrace sustainability, and achieve long-term success in a complex and competitive market.



Technology is a partner for our people and it helps them work smarter.