



WHITE PAPER · EU DELIVERY CENTRE ADVISORY

Build-Operate-Transfer: Your Own EU Delivery Centre — Without the Captive Build Risk

A practical guide for CTOs, COOs, and CFOs in Mittelstand and Scale-Up companies considering a Global Capability Centre in Romania.



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The case for owned delivery capacity – and the smarter path to it

There is a moment in the growth of an ambitious Mittelstand company or a scaling venture when the outsourcing model stops working as well as it once did. Vendor margins accumulate. Knowledge stays on the vendor side. The renewal conversation is asymmetric.

The logical response is to build your own delivery capacity in Central and Eastern Europe. The challenge is that building from scratch – entity registration, employer branding from zero, Romanian labour law compliance, payroll infrastructure – takes twelve to eighteen months and absorbs far more leadership energy than most organisations budget for. The Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) model addresses this gap directly. A contracted operator builds your delivery centre in Romania, runs it to agreed performance standards, and transfers complete legal and operational ownership to you. The exit is written into the contract from the first day.

50%

of new GCCs now established with a provider partner rather than DIY – share roughly doubled in five years (Everest Group, 2025)¹

300+

Shared Services Centres and GCCs in Romania; Bucharest and Cluj-Napoca the principal destinations (2025)³

40–60%

cost reduction vs. DACH/UK senior developer rates – a structural gap driven by PPP and living-cost differentials (HighCircl / Index.dev, 2026)⁷

24–36+ mo

typical BOT engagement to full ownership transfer; first hire typically within 3–6 months of engagement start (IValuePlus, 2025)⁹

What this paper covers

- Why companies want their own delivery centre and the GCC growth wave reaching CEE.
- Why DIY captive builds often stall – and what goes wrong in practice.
- How the BOT model works across its three phases, with illustrative timelines.
- A structured decision framework comparing staff augmentation, dedicated teams, DIY captive, and BOT.
- Commercial principles, transfer mechanics, and honest counterarguments a sceptical board will raise.
- Why Asteyo and why Cluj-Napoca.

Why companies want their own delivery centre

The strategic logic is consistent across industries. A captive delivery centre gives a company things that third-party outsourcing does not: IP and data sovereignty, retained institutional knowledge, long-run cost efficiency, a talent base aligned with your engineering culture, and strategic depth for work that cannot be shared externally. *Note: as an EU-jurisdiction nearshore provider, Asteyo handles EU people and delivery – not data hosting. Cloud and data residency decisions remain with you and your chosen infrastructure partners.*

200k–250k

IT professionals in Romania – a large absolute pool with ~10,000 STEM graduates annually (ANIS, 2025)⁵

6.67%

of Romanian GDP from IT&C (2024) – one of the highest ratios in the EU (ANIS / ZF English, 2025)⁴

20k–23k

active IT professionals in Cluj-Napoca metro; BMW TechWorks Romania launched there 2024 targeting 1,000+ specialists (CEEhire, 2025)⁶

Stable gap

40–60% cost differential vs. DACH – driven by PPP, stable for over a decade; not a temporary dislocation (HighCircl, 2026)⁷

These reasons are driving measurable expansion in Global Capability Centres globally and in CEE specifically. Everest Group's 2025 research confirms a sustained growth trajectory, with roughly half of new GCCs now being established with a provider partner rather than fully DIY – a share that has roughly doubled over the past five years.¹ Deloitte identifies the current wave of BOT interest as driven primarily by access to talent in AI, cloud, and cybersecurity, with companies viewing BOT as a route to strategic capability rather than pure cost arbitrage.²



Romania's IT&C sector contributed 6.67% of GDP in 2024 (ANIS). Cluj-Napoca and Bucharest are the primary enterprise delivery hubs.⁴

The execution gap between intent and delivery

Romanian SRL registration takes five to ten working days and costs under EUR 500 in government fees.⁸ In practice, a foreign company without local knowledge faces a sequence of dependencies that stretches the real timeline to three to six months: identifying a registered-address provider, appointing a local administrator, opening a local bank account for share capital, navigating Trade Registry documentation requirements, and establishing local payroll and social-contribution accounts before the first hire.

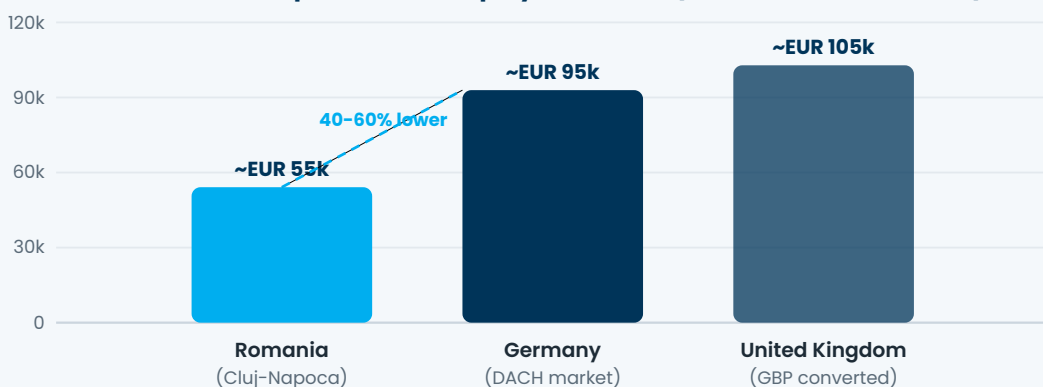
Employer branding from zero. Cluj’s senior talent pipeline tightens significantly at architect and engineering-management level – over 60% of Romanian companies report failing to hire qualified developers within three months.⁶ Competing as an unknown foreign employer means competing at a systematic disadvantage against established names including BMW, HP, and Accenture.

Labour and HR law complexity. Romania’s Labour Code covers fixed-term contracts, notice periods, mandatory benefits, collective bargaining thresholds, working-time rules, and termination procedures. Payroll requires monthly submissions to ANAF and social insurance bodies. Well-intentioned mistakes carry financial penalties.

Management bandwidth and the sunk-cost trap. Building a delivery centre to productive steady state under direct management takes twelve to eighteen months.⁹ For a Mittelstand company whose leadership is simultaneously running core operations, that sustained attention is rarely available. The common pattern: the centre is established, initial hires are made, leadership attention shifts, morale declines, attrition rises. The sunk-cost dynamic sets in.

The cost differential is structural, not temporary. Senior developers in Romania cost 40–60% less than equivalents in Germany, reflecting real differences in purchasing-power parity and living costs rather than a temporary dislocation.⁷ Romanian IT wages grew 7.5–10.5% nominally in 2025 but real wages fell as inflation outpaced nominal growth – the structural gap is compressing slowly.¹⁰

Senior Developer Annual Employment Cost (EUR, 2026 benchmarks)



Source: Index.dev / HighCircl Cost to Hire a Senior Developer in Europe (2026). Figures are total annual employment cost benchmarks.

Senior developer total annual employment cost benchmarks. Source: Index.dev / HighCircl (2026).⁷ Romania delivers a structural 40–60% cost advantage vs. DACH/UK.

Three phases, with ownership and risk allocated at each

Phase 1 – Build (approx. months 1–6)

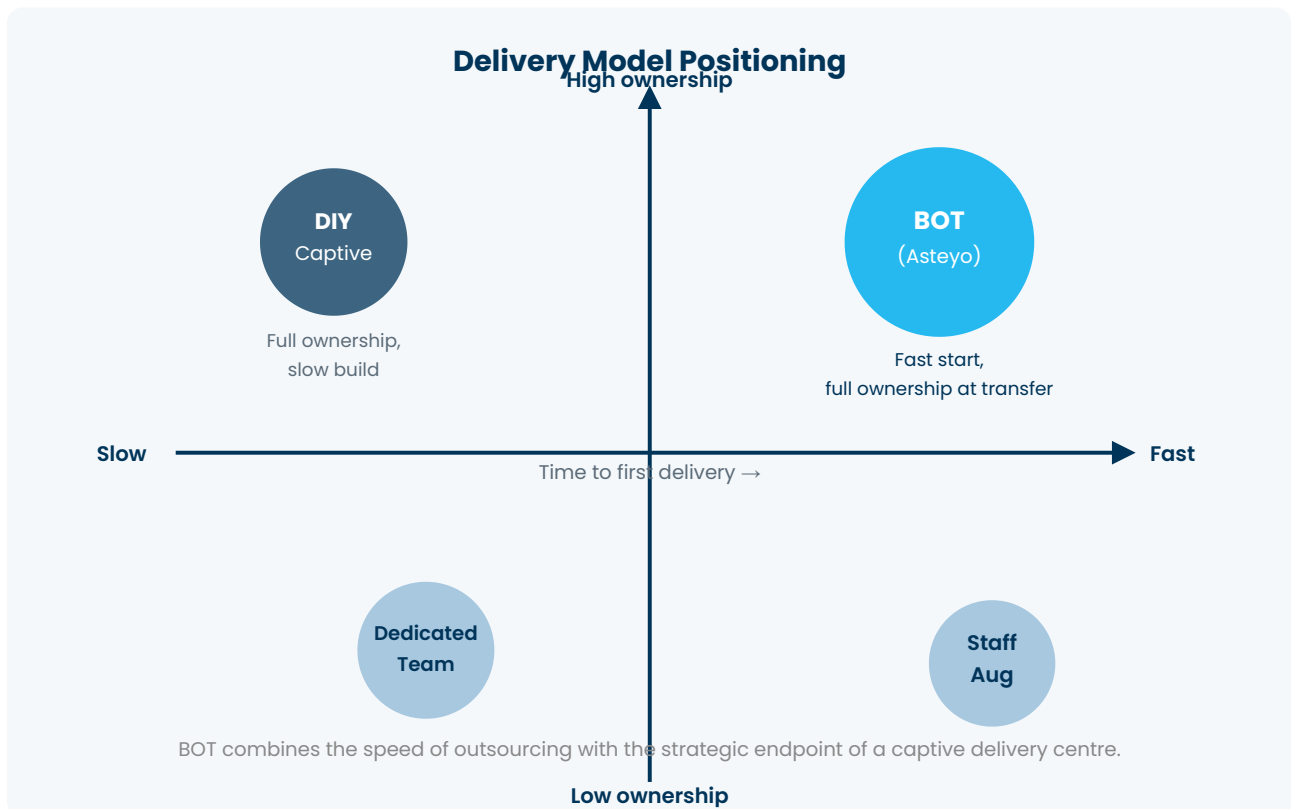
Asteyo establishes the operational foundations: legal entity or dedicated contractual structure within Asteyo’s existing Romanian SRL, recruiting from Cluj’s talent pool using Asteyo’s local employer brand, HR and payroll configuration, office space, IT equipment, toolchain setup, and integration with your workflows. During this phase, risk sits primarily with Asteyo. You are not yet an employer of record in Romania. Your outlay is the contracted service fee – a known, bounded number.

Phase 2 – Operate (approx. months 6–30)

Asteyo continues to manage the operational layer – HR, payroll, facilities, local compliance, and growth recruiting – while your technical or functional leadership directs the team’s output. The talent is yours in substance: directed by you, aligned with your brand, working on your systems, even though the HR and legal wrapper remains with Asteyo during this phase. The operate phase length varies: clients with strong existing offshore-management capability can reach transfer readiness in 18 months; complex, multi-team setups may run 3–4 years.

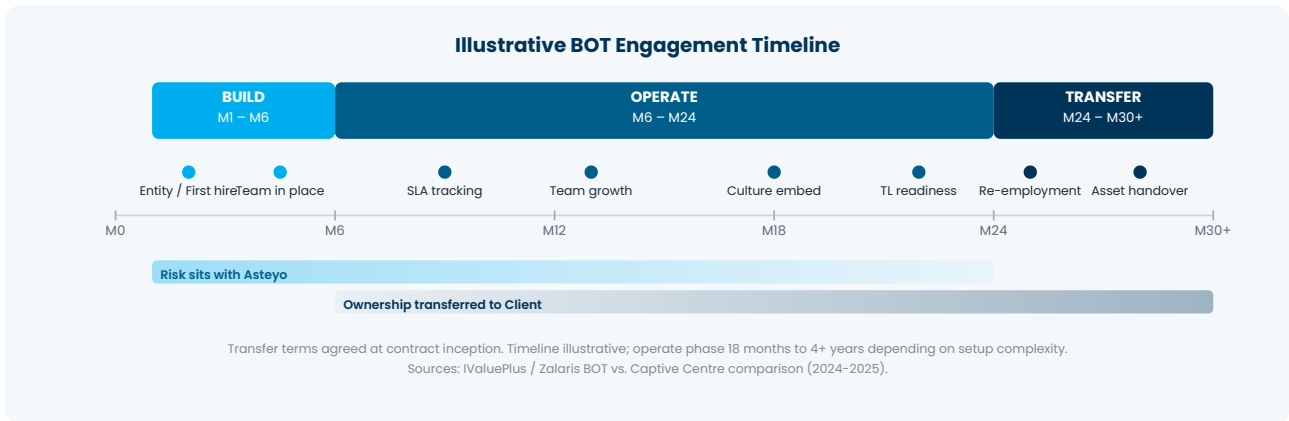
Phase 3 – Transfer (approx. months 24–36+)

A clean handover of the complete operational unit: employees re-sign contracts with your Romanian entity; office lease, IT assets, and facilities transfer to you; payroll, HR administration, and compliance move to your nominated local provider; Asteyo provides a defined transition-support period to ensure continuity. Transfer terms – valuation approach, handover timeline, knowledge-transfer obligations – are agreed at contract inception. There are no surprises at the handover gate.

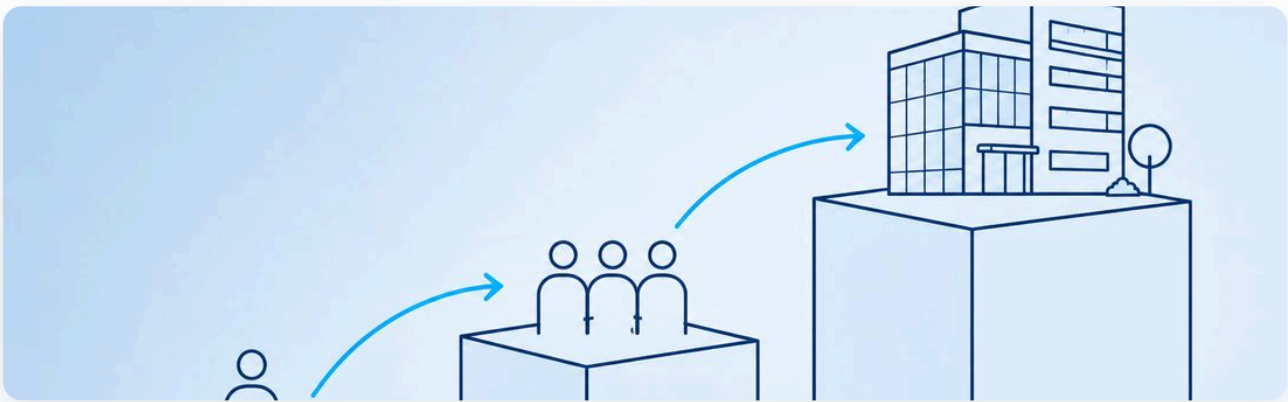


Strategic positioning: BOT combines fast start with the strategic endpoint of a captive delivery centre.

Illustrative engagement timeline



Timeline is illustrative. Operate phase 18 months to 4+ years depending on setup complexity and client readiness.⁹



Asteyo's three-stage engagement model maps directly onto the Build-Operate-Transfer phases.

Choosing the right delivery model

The right delivery model depends on your current scale, risk tolerance, time horizon, and strategic intent. The table below provides a structured comparison across four models.

Dimension	Staff Aug	Dedicated Team	DIY Captive	BOT (Asteyo)
Setup time	2–6 weeks	6–12 weeks	12–18 months to first real output	First hire 3–6 months; full transfer 24–36+ months
Upfront cost	Low	Low–medium	High (legal, HR, office, mgmt time)	Medium (service fee; capex deferred to transfer)
IP / data ownership	Contractual only	Contractual; cleaner	Full	Full on output; legal entity transfer at handover
Knowledge retention	Low — exits with contract	Medium	High	High — employees transfer to you
Local HR complexity	Carried by vendor	Carried by vendor	Carried by you	Carried by Asteyo until transfer
Exit / optionality	End contract	End contract	Wind-down costs; sunk-cost risk	Pre-agreed transfer terms; no lock-in
Honest minimum size	1 FTE, any horizon	3–8 FTE, 12+ months	25+ FTE, 3+ year commitment	10+ FTE with scaling intent, 2–4 year horizon
Best for	Specific skill gaps, project peaks	Team extension, medium-term, no ownership intent	Companies with prior CEE presence or local HR capability	Mittelstand / Scale-Ups targeting ownership without the build risk

The honest trade-off in the BOT model: the transition period when you direct the team but Asteyo holds the employment wrapper requires clear governance. Technical direction must be genuinely yours. Companies that blur this and delegate strategy as well as HR administration to the operator end up with a managed service, not a pre-captive.

How the commercial structure works

Asteyo does not publish a rate card in a white paper, because the right commercial structure depends on team size, seniority profile, technology stack, and target transfer timeline. The structural principles apply consistently.

Low-commitment entry. The engagement typically begins at Stage 1 — one to three specialists with Asteyo as employer of record. This is the lowest-risk entry: evaluate real individuals working on real tasks before committing to a dedicated-team or BOT path.

Pre-agreed transfer terms. Transfer valuation is agreed at contract inception and negotiated per case. The specific mechanic — whether cost-recovery based, a fixed fee, or another structure — is discussed transparently in direct conversations. Asteyo's objective is a sensible solution for both sides, not a premium at the handover gate. The framework is fixed before the engagement begins, not renegotiated when you are operationally dependent.

Knowledge-transfer obligations. Minimum documentation standard, handover period, and process-certification deliverables Asteyo must complete before transfer qualifies. These are contractual, not best-effort. An illustrative 5-year total-cost-of-ownership model comparing all four delivery models is available on request.

Tax and structuring advantages. Romania's corporate tax rate for standard SRLs is 16%.⁸ EU parent company structures benefit from the EU Parent-Subsidiary Directive — no withholding tax on dividends between EU-resident entities in standard configurations. GDPR compliance is native. Post-Brexit UK transfers require standard contractual clauses.

The Asteyo three-stage model lets you enter at the right level and progress when you are confident. Stage 1 (one to three specialists) has no BOT overhead and makes sense purely on staff-augmentation economics. Stage 2 (a dedicated team of 5–20) is the typical preparation phase. BOT entry at Stage 3 is targeted at 10+ FTE with a clear scaling intent — below that threshold, Stage 2 or continued staff augmentation is the more honest recommendation.



Transfer terms are agreed at contract inception — before the engagement begins, not at the handover gate.

What a sceptical board will ask

"BOT vendors overpromise the transfer — the handover is where they lock you in."

This is the most valid concern. The mitigation is structural: transfer terms must be written into the initial contract before the engagement begins — specific trigger (elapsed time plus team-size threshold), valuation approach agreed at inception, knowledge-transfer obligations with measurable deliverables, and post-transfer support commitment with a time limit. At Asteyo, the transfer is the stated endpoint from the first conversation. Ask to see the transfer clause before you sign anything else.

"A captive only pays off above a certain headcount."

Arithmetically correct. For teams below 8–10 people with no firm long-term commitment, staff augmentation or a dedicated-team arrangement delivers better economics. The BOT path starts to make sense at 10+ FTE with a concrete plan to grow. A permanent own structure for a team of ten without growth intent is usually not worthwhile — the fixed overhead of a captive entity eats into the efficiency advantage.

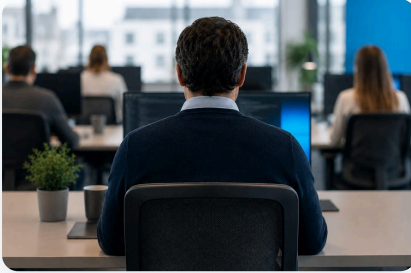
"Romania's wage inflation erodes the cost case."

Romania's IT sector nominal wages grew 7.5–10.5% in 2025.¹⁰ Real wages fell due to inflation outpacing nominal growth. The 40–60% gap versus Germany reflects real differences in living costs and PPP that adjust slowly. Model the cost case with conservative salary escalation assumptions (8–10% nominal annually) and the business case remains positive. The structural advantages — EU jurisdiction, GDPR-native, EET time zone, university pipeline — do not erode with wages.

"Can a company founded in 2025 credibly build and transfer a delivery centre?"

The founders bring more than twenty years of enterprise IT delivery experience across major industrial and automotive OEM managed-service environments. CEO Alexandru Bereczki leads operations from Cluj and built Asteyo's recruiting infrastructure from scratch. CSO Thomas Wolenski holds IPMA Level B and ITIL Expert certifications. The three-stage model means BOT is the end of a proven relationship, not the beginning of an unverified one. No client enters a BOT engagement cold. If your organisation requires a completed large-scale BOT reference case before engaging, you should work with a more established operator.

Operator capability and delivery hub



Stage 1 – Specialist

One to three individual contributors, Asteyo as employer of record. Low risk, fast start. A genuine evaluation phase, not a commitment.



Stage 2 – Dedicated Team

A self-contained team of 5–20 engineers, managed operationally by Asteyo, directed technically by you. Consistent people, aligned tooling.



Stage 3 – BOT

Asteyo builds and runs the entity, then transfers ownership. Entry at 10+ FTE; transfer terms defined at contract inception, not negotiated at the end.

The founders bring more than twenty years of enterprise IT delivery experience across major industrial and automotive OEM managed-service environments — including building and running complex multi-team delivery operations under performance contracts. Active client delivery is underway, including a major German automotive OEM programme (2025–). Asteyo holds ISO/IEC 27001:2022 and ISO 9001:2015 certification (SYSTEMA, IAS/IAF-accredited, valid to December 2028); the certified scope is custom, client-oriented software development, extended as operations grow.

- **Talent density** — 20,000–23,000 active IT professionals in the metro area; BMW TechWorks Romania (JV with NTT DATA) launched there in 2024 targeting 1,000+ specialists⁶
- **University pipeline** — Babeş-Bolyai University and the Technical University of Cluj-Napoca produce engineering graduates at scale; Cluj ranks among the EU’s highest per-capita STEM-output cities
- **Cost position** — senior developer total employment cost 40–60% below German market rates, structurally stable for over a decade⁷
- **Infrastructure** — modern office stock, reliable connectivity, direct flights to Frankfurt, Munich, Vienna, and London; EET sits one hour ahead of Berlin (maximum ~1 hour offset)
- **EU legal framework** — GDPR, EU employment law, and standard EU commercial contracting apply throughout



The transfer is the entire point. Build-Operate-Transfer means nothing if the transfer terms are a renegotiation at the end. At Asteyo, the transfer clause comes first.

ASTEYO BOT ADVISORY POSITION

Start the conversation

If you are a Mittelstand company or Scale-Up weighing a GCC or delivery centre in Romania – or if your current outsourcing arrangement is consuming vendor margin without building you a lasting asset – the practical starting point is a focused conversation about your current situation.

Asteyo offers an initial scoping engagement: a working session to map your technology landscape, identify the right team profile, model the BOT timeline against your strategic horizon, and produce a plain-language term sheet covering the three stages and transfer conditions. No commitment beyond the conversation.



ARRANGE A SCOPING CONVERSATION

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EU · GDPR

CET/CES

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