



# CoST- Bridging The Infrastructure Transparency Gap

The Infrastructure Transparency Initiative is the leading global initiative improving transparency and accountability in public infrastructure. CoST works with government, industry and civil society to promote the disclosure, validation and interpretation of data from infrastructure projects. This helps to inform and empower citizens and enables them to hold decision-makers to account. Our experience is that informed citizens and responsive public institutions help drive reforms that reduce mismanagement, inefficiency, corruption risks posed to the public from poor quality infrastructure. CoST is currently being implemented in a range of countries worldwide at the core of a growing membership. Member countries in Africa include Uganda, Malawi, Ethiopia and Tanzania.

Better Lives from Better Infrastructure

**Disclose, validate and interpret infrastructure data to hold stakeholders to account.** CoST has four core features including Disclosure, Assurance, Multi-stakeholder working and Social Accountability.

**Availability of data:** CoST promotes disclosure of information using an internationally acceptable Infrastructure Data Standard which provides for 40 proactively disclosable data points. Of these data points, Uganda recognises 12 as revealed by the 2017 Uganda Scoping Study; only 20% of the 12 data points are disclosed. Disclosure of information is important in promoting transparency.

**Interpretation:** Data by itself is meaningless without any value added and only gets useful once it is turned into information. And the Assurance Process does this. Assurance promotes transparency and accountability through conducting an independent review of project data. Through this process, technical data is validated,

interpreted into plain language and issues of concern, areas of good practice are identified to help stakeholders understand the main issues that act as a basis for engagement and or project improvement.

**Multi-stakeholder Working Group (MSG):** Championed by the Ministry of Works and Transport, CoST Uganda is led by a 12 person MSG comprising of democratically elected representatives of the Government, Private Sector and Civil Society. The MSG works together to pursue shared objectives to improve the value, efficiency and effectiveness of investments in public infrastructure.

**Social Accountability:** CoST builds the capacity of stakeholders to use disclosed information on infrastructure projects to strengthen accountability, and deliver practical project improvements. CoST promotes usage of tools, approaches and platforms for project performance such as the Infrastructure Monitoring Tool accessed via <https://www.cost.or.ug/download/cost-uganda-infrastructure-monitoring-tool-imt/> to enable stakeholder participation.

## Impact

❖ **Enhanced citizen participation;** CoST work has strengthened citizens' engagement platforms such as Barazas to focus on infrastructure projects performance. The Barazas for instance in Wakiso district have become a model of engagement between the Procurement Entity and citizens to enable right of way for ongoing and new projects.

❖ **Increased Access to Information;** CoST engagements with Procurement Entities such as KCCA, UNRA and MoES among others have helped the Government institutions to enhance disclosure of information and an appreciation of stakeholders on the relevance of opening up of infrastructure projects using the Infrastructure Data Standard. KCCA has aligned their USER portal to consider more data points. The initiative has also continued to create awareness of the existing projects, and encouraging stakeholders to demand for basic project information.

❖ **Promoted transparency and accountability;** CoST engagements with Procurement Entities on transparency and accountability have encouraged entities to disclose information and embrace a citizen led approach to project implementation. For instance, more Procurement Entities such as Ministry of Education and Sports, Ministry of Works and Transport, Wakiso district among others have continued to recommend projects for independent assurance processes using the CoST approach and are learning these experiences to replicate in other projects.

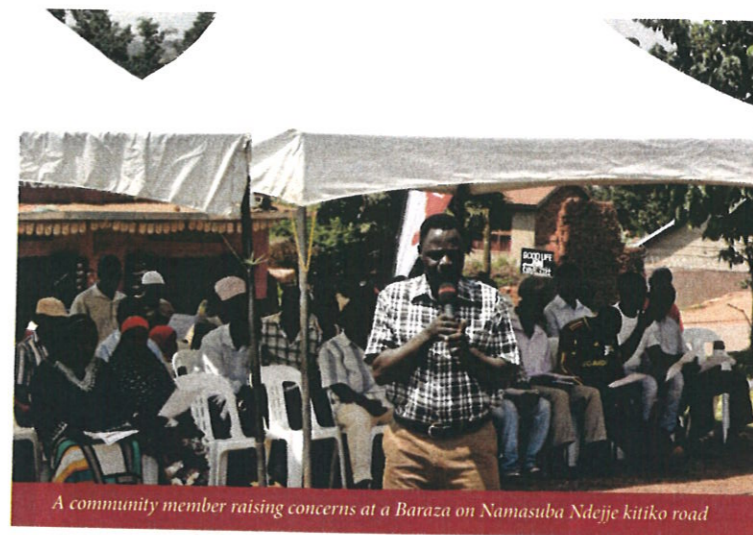
❖ **Increased change of perception and trust in government projects;** CoST Multi-Stakeholder arrangement has brought together stakeholders to identify areas of concern and identified measures for addressing them. Case in point was when Wakiso citizens raised concerns about the road accidents, floods, lack of information, pedestrian safety among others on a project, the Multi-stakeholder group engaged the district to address these concerns and district introduced street lights, erected four information walls, and strengthened awareness meetings with the communities both physical and on radios.

## Key emerging issues

Across the infrastructure sector, CoST identified a number of issues, these include;

1. Limited stakeholder participation and lack of transparency approaches across the entire value chain of projects.
2. Limited project and contract information disclosed to the general public that affects participation majorly resulting from the weak legal framework on disclosure of infrastructure data.
3. Lack of tools and skills to monitor project performance, besides the Ministry of Finance budget tracking tool.
4. Compensation challenges in most sections of projects. Local Governments also have concerns on the available unit cost for projects which is small compared to the volume of works to deliver.

5. Delayed delivery of funds from Central Government and influence peddling amongst key stakeholders
6. There is limited capacity of the private sector institutions to take on infrastructure projects such as local contractors and consultants.



## Recommendations

The Infrastructure Transparency Initiative recommends:

- ❖ The Ministries of MoWT, MoFED, MoICT and PPDA should integrate disclosure requirements within the reviews in the Procurement Policy, Access to Information Law, guidelines and the Uganda Construction Industry Commission Bill to enable stakeholder access to and use of basic project information. In addition, there should be policy measures to enforce disclosure of information by Procurement Entities.
- ❖ The Ministry of Works and Transport should work with CoST Multi-Stakeholder Group to establish a national online platform for disclosure of infrastructure data and establish an enabling policy environment for the implementation of disclosure requirements to international standards.
- ❖ Ministries, Agencies and Departments need to enhance collaboration with accountability mechanisms and structures to integrate assurance process findings in the engagement of citizens. This empowers citizens with information to appreciate government works.
- ❖ Ministry of Works and Transport should adopt and promote use of disclosure, performance monitoring tools and standards such as the Infrastructure Data Standard for stakeholders to ably participate in overseeing project performance.
- ❖ The Office of the Prime Minister should strengthen physical platforms for engagement and awareness such as Barazas with focus on infrastructure transparency.

**CoST Uganda Hosted by:**  
Africa Freedom of Information Centre (AFIC)  
Plot 436/437, Mawanda Road  
Suite A4 Corner House - Kampala  
+256 414 533 554  
Tel: info@cost.or.ug Website: www.cost.or.ug