

Results of the Inaugural Infrastructure Transparency Index (ITI) in Uganda

Outcome Document Findings and Recommendations

3rd December 2021

Kabira Country Club, Kampala

60 participants representing Government, Private Sector, Civil Society and the Media gathered in Kampala to discuss results from the 1st Infrastructure Transparency Index under the auspices of CoST Uganda Chapter, in collaboration with the Champion Ministry of Works and Transport, CoST International. The engagement was held on 3rd December 2021 to launch the Index in Uganda and seek stakeholders support in the implementation of its recommendations.

Preamble

Noting that the Africa Union's 2063 vision seeks to achieve *an integrated, prosperous and peaceful Africa, driven by its own citizens, representing a dynamic force in the international arena*, **with** infrastructure development identified as critical for the continent's development and transformation **and**;

Recognizing goal nine of the Sustainable Development Goals that aims at building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialization and fostering innovation;

Contributing towards Uganda's 2040 vision which recognizes that there is a weak private sector, inadequate infrastructure and an underdeveloped service sector with nearly US\$300 million per year is lost in inefficient infrastructure spending, underpricing, and project variations (WB) .

Noting that in Uganda, Infrastructure funding currently comprises about 32.8% of the Government's total annual expenditure (Uganda Investments Authority), while Procurement at 55% of the national budget (World Bank). And that, Uganda operates at an infrastructure deficit of about US\$1.4 billion a year.

Appreciating that Uganda has put in place legal and policy mechanisms for transparency, including the Access to Information Act (2005), established the Public Procurement and Disposal

For More Information Contact: Olive Kabatwairwe, Programme Coordinator, CoST Uganda
info@cost.or.ug, Tel: +256 414 533554, Website: www.cost.or.ug

of Public Assets Authority (PPDA), as a dedicated entity for ensuring compliance and improved performance in public contracts, and established various anticorruption institutions and that; **Recognizing** that Uganda in 2014 joined CoST International with an aim of institutionalising transparency in the delivery of public infrastructure projects, through the application of CoST core features of Disclosure, Assurance, Multi-Stakeholder working and Social Accountability;

Underscoring that Government of Uganda has recorded a slow but progressive disclosure and use of infrastructure data as revealed by CoST Uganda's 4th Assurance Report in 2021; and that, the 1st Infrastructure Transparency Index across 30 entities, spanning 60 projects reveals that Uganda's level of Infrastructure Transparency stands at 20.8%;

Stakeholders at the stakeholder forum discussed the results of the Inaugural Infrastructure Transparency Index and acknowledged that, the Index is timely, relevant and challenged them to take urgent action. Stakeholders commended the initiative and agreed that the results represent the challenges the sector is experiencing and also present an opportunity for improvements.

Stakeholders agreed to the conclusions indicated in the Index as follows;

From the scoring

1. The Uganda national ITI score in the year 2021 stands at 20.8%.
2. Uganda's performance in the enabling environment dimension is at 41.4%, information disclosure at 18.4%, citizen participation at 13.8% and capacities and processes at 13.5%.
3. National score for information disclosure is generally low at 18.4%. In this index, Local governments scored least.
4. Best entities include: KCCA, UNRA and OPM with 62%, 58%, and 48%, respectively.

Level of Transparency

1. Most transparent projects were from NSSF at 40.3%, URA at 37.3% and MoFPED at 33.5%. The least transparent projects were from the Ministry of Gender Labour and Social Development at 3.1% and Bukedea district at 2%.
2. Official data platforms had limited information for the period 2017 – 2021. Data was insufficient, unclassified, and unmined.
3. Low levels of responsiveness. Only one in every five entities who received the self-assessment survey completed it; the vast majority (20) did not attempt the survey, while four entities did not complete it.
4. There is a large discrepancy in the level of responsiveness of entities all through the Index. Transparency is not yet a culture across the entities.

For More Information Contact: Olive Kabatwairwe, Programme Coordinator, CoST Uganda
info@cost.or.ug, Tel: +256 414 533554, Website: www.cost.or.ug

Access to Information

1. The access to information law is still loosely known and implemented by public officials at 20%.
2. Disclosure is not yet the norm and culture across entities. Only 5% of the entities have records on requests for information, and 8% record complaints.
3. GPP majorly discloses tendering data but lacks project data. Only one out of five entities proactively discloses infrastructure data.
4. 18.4% of the public accesses information upon request and 11.3% use the disclosed information. Whereas, only 5% of the entities have records on requests for information, and 8% record complaints on infrastructure projects.

Enabling environment

1. Despite the enabling environment for delivering infrastructure projects at 41.2%, its implementation in the infrastructure sector is not visible.
2. Public officials' capacity to implement transparency standards and initiatives enshrined in the law is weak.
3. There are weak capacities and processes for delivering infrastructure projects at 11.23%.
4. Local Governments lack capacity and human resources to enhance transparency in the sector, with most of them understaffed. In addition, interactions with public officials revealed that municipalities do not have information officers.

Citizen Participation

1. Citizen participation in infrastructure projects delivery processes is low and requires strengthening.
2. Although data is disclosed, only a fraction of citizens use it to influence. Most data is complex for the local person to comprehend.
3. Opportunities for citizen participation are deficient at 16.8%.
4. Citizen participation is yet to be institutionalized across entities with the current status at 16.6%
5. Permanent and inclusive citizen participation are weak at 14.67%.

Recommendations from the 1st Infrastructure Transparency Index;

Recognizing the value of transparency in the delivery of public infrastructure projects in Uganda, and in the interest of building an inclusive sector that appreciates and promotes the right of access to information, stakeholder engagement and effective use of public infrastructure investments, and action on recommendations from the first ITI to inform realization of *quality infrastructure, stronger economic and better lives* for all Ugandans, Government is called upon to undertake the following actions:

1. Through the OPM, the government should demonstrate a stronger commitment and actions to enhance infrastructure transparency.
2. OPM should consider making the Baraza approach mandatory across all infrastructure projects to enhance citizens' scrutiny and accountability.
3. The Ministry of Finance and PPDA should strengthen disclosure by issuing a standard disclosure framework/template and training officials on how to publish data. Disclosed data should be analysed, monitored and feedback provided to entities.
4. The Ministry of ICT should strengthen entities' capacity in the implementation of the Access to Information Law, and enforce mechanisms for institutionalizing access to information. The Ministry should monitor performance of entities in this regard and provide status reports for improvement.
5. NITA-U should ensure all entity websites are functional and well maintained.
6. Ministry of Local Government should strengthen monitoring of local governments to ensure compliance with the legal framework and systems in the sector to enhance their levels of transparency.
7. The Ministry of Local Government should lobby for increased financing and strengthen human resources for Local Governments, especially information officers.
8. MoWT should strengthen its oversight role as the lead sector entity in monitoring performance of projects and providing status reports on the infrastructure sector.
9. PDEs should strengthen their internal data management and archiving systems to ease retrieval and sharing. Information on engagements with citizens and public complaints/feedback on infrastructure projects should be well documented.
10. Government through MoFPED, MoWT and OPM should support CoST Uganda to deliver an annual ITI and;
11. Adopt the Index as an annual national performance indicator in the sector in addressing corruption risks.

For More Information Contact: Olive Kabatwairwe, Programme Coordinator, CoST Uganda
info@cost.or.ug, Tel: +256 414 533554, Website: www.cost.or.ug