

Transparency report faults UNRA, energy

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The report assessed sectors such as education, water and environment, health, energy, roads, buildings, and bridges.

The 13 projects that were subjected to the CoST Assurance assessment were worth sh246.3b.

The key findings from the report indicated that all the assured projects experienced low levels of disclosure, cost and time overruns, mainly attributed to scope changes, lack of documentation and data retrieval systems.

The disclosure process ensures that information about the purpose, scope costs and execution of infrastructure projects is open and accessible to the public and that it is disclosed in a timely manner.

Key to the process is disclosure of procuring and disposing entities in accordance with the CoST infrastructure data.

CoST Uganda is a global infrastructure transparency initiative that aims at improving transparency and accountability in public infrastructure projects.

The report highlighted limited local content, poor and in some instances lack of evidence of procurement files, poor planning and construction site management challenges.

“Some of the challenges included poor drainage management, dust, littering, poor waste disposal and lack of attention to environmental protection,” the report read.

Although there was progressive stakeholder engagement in implementation of projects by water and environment ministry and that of health, findings revealed that for most of the projects, citizen and stakeholder engagement was not enough.



Katumba Wamala hands an award to Byanyima in recognition for his role in championing transparency. Courtesy photo



A dilapidated road in Gulu district. Despite getting a big budget allocation, Uganda's road network is still poor

Wamala expressed concern that UNRA, which falls under his ministry, was denying people information on public infrastructure projects.

“I am so embarrassed that

UNRA, which falls under my ministry, is a culprit in regard to failure to release information. I will ensure this stops,” Katumba said.

The report put pro-active



The Mulago Maternal and Neonatal Hospital. The health ministry was also faulted for hiding data on such projects

disclosure of information at 43% and reactive disclosure at 42%. The overall disclosure was at 43%.

Low disclosure was attributed to delays in data

retrieval and refusal to disclose data by some of the procuring entities.

The education and sports ministry initially declined to disclose information reactively

13 Projects

The 3rd assurance report process focused on 13 projects from five procuring entities recommended by the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA).

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but later reconsidered and granted access to records, days after the compilation of the report.

The report called on the entities to appreciate the relevance of timely data disclosure to stakeholders.

In the same regard, 42% of the reactive data was accessed from the Ministry of Water and Environment and the Ministry of Health.

UNRA and the energy ministry declined to reactively disclose project information despite various engagements.

The report recommended that procuring entities designate officials to constantly update their online and offline platforms with correct information on various projects.

It also proposed that Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA) includes guidelines under which procuring and disposing entities can disclose project and contract information.

MORE FUNDING, NO IMPROVEMENT

Despite the Government's big allocation of resources towards infrastructure development, the quality Uganda's transport, health and energy services remains poor. The cost of doing business has increased. The transport sector is characterised by poor road quality and network, resulting in weak connectivity with markets and basic social services.

The CoST study revealed continued public outcry over the lack of involvement in public infrastructure planning and implementation.

Lack of involvement in monitoring public projects, according to the study, often leads to mismanagement, site abandonment, substandard infrastructure, time and cost overruns and theft of materials,

which put the citizens at risk due to poor constructed infrastructure.

According to the 2018 Global competitiveness report, Uganda is ranked 125th out of 141 countries. The 2018 Africa infrastructure development index puts Uganda at the 27th position out of 53 countries, in terms of transparency and accountability in infrastructure development.

Nathan Byanyima, the chairperson of CoST Uganda, said the report revealed the need for procuring and disposing entities to use existing disclosure platforms to proactively disclose information the public needs to know.

He asked the government to take action against concerns raised in the report, for improved service delivery.



A worker filling up a pothole on a road in Kampala. The 2018 Africa infrastructure development index puts Uganda at the 27th position out of 53 countries