

**Uganda**

## Delivering better value public infrastructure



### What is CoST?

CoST – the Infrastructure Transparency Initiative – works with governments, industry and local communities around the world to get better value from public infrastructure investment by increasing transparency and accountability.



CoST is a multi-stakeholder initiative with participating countries spanning four continents. CoST promotes transparency by disclosing data from public infrastructure investment, helping to inform and empower citizens, enabling them to hold decision-makers to account.

With a track record of saving money, delivering legal and institutional reforms and building the capacity of stakeholders, the initiative is ideally placed to drive future efforts on increasing transparency, accountability and cost-effectiveness in the delivery of public infrastructure.

### Why do we need CoST?

Without significant improvements in the delivery of public infrastructure, up to US\$5 trillion could be lost annually by 2030. An international effort to improve infrastructure delivery is essential and creates better value for everyone:

- **CoST is better value for governments** because it demonstrates how public money is spent, identifies potential efficiency savings and complements reforms in the management of public finances and the procurement of infrastructure. In addition to developing transparency, CoST helps to increase the flow of direct overseas investment into a country's infrastructure sector.
- **CoST is better value for the private sector** because it ensures a level playing field and reduces the costs and risks of doing business. This means that companies bidding for contracts can be confident that the process is taking place in a fair, open and competitive environment.
- **CoST is better value for communities** because it ensures cost-effective delivery of improved infrastructure that changes lives. Communities gain access to work and markets through improved roads, clean drinking water, education in well-built schools and medical treatment in safe hospitals.

## CoST achievements

Since the launch of CoST in 2012, some of its successes include:

### Disclosure training

National programmes are using enhanced web portals as a mechanism for disclosure in Ethiopia, Guatemala, Honduras and the Philippines, with hundreds of government officials now trained on disclosure procedures.

### Preventing wasted funds

The Malawi national programme highlighted issues of concern to the public, leading to the retendering of two road contracts and preventing the wastage of public resources.

### US\$8 million saved

Action taken on two projects created savings totalling US\$8 million.

## Country focus – CoST Uganda

Like many other countries, Uganda's expenditure on public infrastructure is significant. On a yearly basis, Uganda spends approximately 17% of its Gross Domestic Product (US\$1 billion) on the sector. It is therefore vital to ensure that this expenditure results in quality projects, delivered on time.

Since joining CoST in 2014, Uganda has continually embraced the initiative, committing to its principles of Disclosure, Assurance and Multi-Stakeholder Working. In line with this, Uganda's 'Vision 2040' places emphasis on the expansion and improvement of public infrastructure across many sectors; including tourism, transport, energy and health.

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### The CoST Uganda Scoping Study

In July 2017, CoST Uganda published a Scoping Study which identified that only 30% of the data points in the CoST Infrastructure Data Standard is legally required to be disclosed and that the average amount of data that is actually disclosed by public procuring entities is 34%. The Study also revealed that whilst Uganda has an 'enabling environment' for the implementation of CoST there is still work to be done. It identified challenges concerning a lack of data capacity, a lack of judicial appeal

mechanisms, attitudes of public officials, limited civic engagement, and poor information storage and retrieval systems.

The Study recommended that the Government adopt a Formal Disclosure Requirement to provide a legal mandate for disclosing data throughout the project cycle. Among other things, it recommended that the Ministry of Works and Transport champion the CoST Infrastructure Data Standard within government to build and create

awareness on data disclosure among public officials. The Ministry has stepped into its role as 'Champion', promoting the use and adoption of the Standard and CoST principles within government and to procuring entities and the private sector. Consequently, the number of major procuring entities seeking to embrace CoST in Uganda has increased from three to nine from February-October 2017, including three local governments, two new ministries and the Uganda Bureau of Statistics.

## From transparency to accountability

In February 2017 CoST Uganda facilitated a training event focused on enhancing public access to information so decision-makers can be held to account. The event looked at platforms which the public can use

to access information, such as the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) portal [www.user.ug](http://www.user.ug).

A journalist who attended the event sought to test the reactivity of the KCCA portal. He uploaded photographs from a road in a suburb of Kampala, known to be in poor condition and ridden with potholes. The condition of the road often caused cars to slow and resulted in frequent car hijackings. Within two days the journalist was contacted by the KCCA to request further details and, just a week later, repair work on the road began. By the end of March, all of the potholes were filled and work began on upgrading the road from murrum to tarmac. Following the road's repair, the instances of hijackings reported to the police have significantly decreased.





# The core features of CoST

CoST comprises three core features which provide a global standard for transparency and accountability in the delivery of public infrastructure. This standard is flexible, allowing it to be applied in different political, economic, regulatory and social contexts. The core features of CoST are:



## Disclosure

CoST increases transparency by disclosing data on public infrastructure projects. Forty data points are disclosed at key stages throughout a project cycle, as set out in the CoST Infrastructure Data Standard (IDS). Ultimately, a national programme establishes a disclosure process for public infrastructure that is viable, sustainable and appropriate to local conditions and that can achieve a credible and substantial level of compliance. For further information on disclosure, see **Guidance Note 6: Designing a Disclosure Process**.



## Assurance

CoST promotes accountability through an independent review of the disclosed data. Through this assurance process, CoST validates technical data, interprets it into plain language and identifies issues of concern. This helps stakeholders to understand the main issues and acts as a basis for holding decision-makers accountable. For further information on assurance, see **Guidance Note 7: Designing an Assurance Process**.



## Multi-stakeholder working

In each country, CoST is directed by a Multi-Stakeholder Group (MSG) that comprises representatives of government, the private sector and civil society. By providing a neutral forum, CoST helps these key stakeholders pursue shared objectives to improve the value, efficiency and effectiveness of investment in public infrastructure. For further information on multi-stakeholder working, see **Guidance Note 4: Establishing a Multi-Stakeholder Group and National Secretariat**.

## The CoST Uganda Assurance Report

In August 2017 CoST Uganda published its first Assurance Report which assesses data disclosure from five major road sector projects in Uganda. The Report revealed that the procuring entities of the projects disclosed a low level of data across all stages of the project cycle and highlighted a number of shortfalls in the delivery of the projects. These shortfalls included: exceeded budgets and schedules; difficulty in obtaining land acquisition authorisation; and a lack of quality assurance and control processes.

***“The Assurance Report is an excellent start to help enhance infrastructure transparency and accountability in Uganda”***

Mr Giles Odongo  
Ministry of Works and Transport

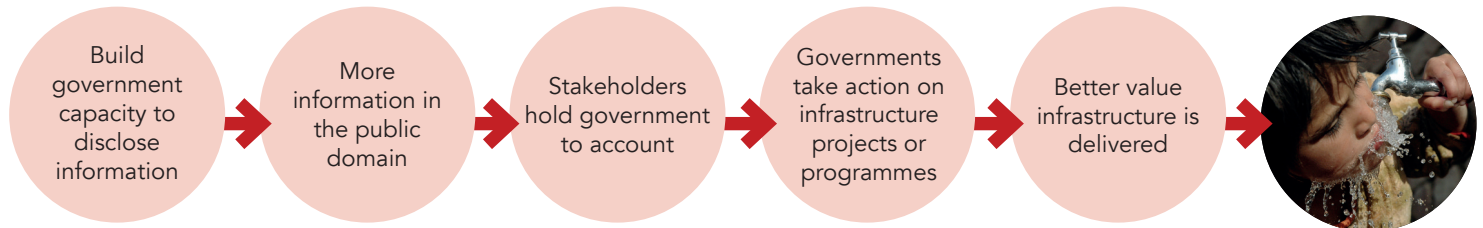
## The report makes recommendations to:

- **The Government of Uganda to adopt the CoST Infrastructure Data Standard**, preferably subsumed within Uganda’s Public Procurement Act.
- **Improve the legal framework relating to infrastructure transparency**, through policies which address compensation challenges, and by enforcing health and safety measures on construction sites including by providing gloves, first aid, drinking water and washrooms.
- **Procuring entities** to enhance quality assurance and control procedures so that infrastructure is delivered to specified standards and to promote a better understanding on the economic benefits of projects to the community.



# Achieving impact

CoST achieves its impact by strengthening social accountability. This is realised through a series of actions that together form a 'results chain', as highlighted below.



## Governance of CoST Uganda

At the national level, CoST Uganda has a National Annual General Assembly which elects its Multi-Stakeholder Group to oversee the implementation of the programme and a Secretariat to run day-to-day activities.

As with all the national programmes, CoST Uganda ensures that a wide range of stakeholders are involved in the initiative. It has a Multi-Stakeholder Group comprising nine individuals who represent government, the private sector and civil society. Together, these representatives provide considerable knowledge and expertise to help guide the initiative in Uganda.



## How can you get involved?

Are you a representative from government, the private sector, civil society or the media interested in joining CoST Uganda? If so, please contact [info@cost.or.ug](mailto:info@cost.or.ug).

If you represent government, the private sector and civil society from other countries or a donor supporter interested in seeing the full benefits of CoST in action please contact [CoST@constructiontransparency.org](mailto:CoST@constructiontransparency.org).

## CoST Uganda enhances compliance in Wakiso District

One project assessed by the Uganda Assurance Process concerned flood prevention on the 'Namasuba – Ndejje – Kitiko' road in Wakiso District. The road provides direct access to fishing and tourism trades off the shores of Lake Victoria. When subject to flooding, the road becomes unusable, cutting off access to livelihoods and causing a number of residents to relocate.

The Assurance Process looked at the project's design and how the contractor hired on the project had complied with procurement regulations. The CoST Uganda Assurance Team found that the district had not submitted an updated project design to the Ministry of Works and Transport in order for them to provide technical support and that insufficient human resources had been allocated to supervising the project. The assessment also revealed the need for greater citizenship engagement in infrastructure projects – for example – the District had not paid any compensation to citizens to acquire the land necessary for the project, but instead, citizens had offered the land. Following the recommendations, the District procured a consultant and began organising citizen participation events to ensure that the public are sufficiently informed of project plans and to allow their voice to be heard.



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Construction Sector Transparency Initiative (CoST)

[www.constructiontransparency.org](http://www.constructiontransparency.org) | [www.cost.or.ug](http://www.cost.or.ug)

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