Engagement Agreement between the Open Contracting Partnership and the Construction Sector Transparency Initiative

This is an engagement agreement which outlines how the [Open Contracting Partnership (OCP)](#) *and the* [Construction Sector Transparency Initiative (CoST)](#) *will collaborate together. Finalised by the two initiatives on 15th January 2016, this is version **1.0**. It is not intended to be a binding agreement. Rather, it is an understanding between friends to collaborate in order to maximise impacts and add the most sustained value to the field of transparency and accountability.*

About the Open Contracting Partnership (OCP)

The OCP opens up public contracting through disclosure, data and engagement so that the huge sums of money involved are spent honestly, fairly, and effectively.

The OCP does this by:
- Creating a compelling learning and evidence base to show what open contracting can achieve.
- Supporting a network of partners to deliver results on the ground and, where necessary, leading specific demonstration projects.
- Smart, targeted advocacy to challenge vested interests and drive global change.

The OCP is designed to be:
- A lever. The OCP links up and leverages global transparency efforts such as the Open Government Partnership, and designs interventions to support existing processes rather than creating new ones.
- A silo-buster. The OCP brings unique expertise to other organisations to add value to their existing efforts to follow the money from governments to citizens.
- Data-focused. The OCP uses the power of data to expose, understand, and fix problems in contracting, with an open data standard at the heart of its work.
- Business-savvy. The OCP can do something *with* business, rather than *to* business. The OCP can help create a level playing field for companies competing for government contracts.
- User-friendly. The OCP makes contracting accessible and interesting; the OCP is technically sound without sounding technical.
- Multi-stakeholder in spirit but not in structure. The OCP has a multi-stakeholder board, and is multi-stakeholder in approach, but doesn't have formalised constituencies.
- A learning organisation. Learning and evidence are at the heart of everything the OCP does and reinforces its other activities.

Working with and through partners is key to the OCP's theory of change. The challenge of transforming government contracting through data and engagement cannot be solved by one organisation alone. The OCP aims to collaborate with key partners to advance the open contracting agenda and wants to build a field of organisations trying to be the field itself. It wants to support its partners to deliver on the contracting dimensions of their programs and projects.

CoST is a key partner for the OCP. Infrastructure, CoST's sector focus, is a priority engagement area for the OCP. Some of the largest deals are made in the construction industry. The implications for the quality of life of citizens is immediate. The cost and quality of constructions of roads, bridges and buildings affects everyone. Together, the OCP and CoST aim to have significant impact on opening up the construction sector.

About the Construction Sector Transparency (CoST) Initiative

CoST works with government, industry and civil society to promote transparency and accountability in publicly financed infrastructure. It achieves this by disclosing information routinely and periodically over the whole project lifecycle. This information is designed to inform and empower stakeholders and enable them to hold decision-makers to account. CoST can be adapted to the local context with 15 national programmes in Afghanistan, Botswana, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Honduras, Guatemala, Malawi, Philippines, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom, Vietnam and Zambia.

Each CoST national programme is overseen by a multi-stakeholder group (MSG) comprising representatives from government, industry and civil society. A new programme might start on a 'voluntary' basis where there is no legal requirement to disclose information, but eventually disclosure is institutionalised through the establishment of a mandatory 'Formal Disclosure Requirement'. Improvements in transparency and accountability create a business environment in which corruption is less likely to occur and help strengthen management and efficiency.

Ultimately, improvements in transparency and accountability contribute to better value for money and better quality infrastructure and services. This helps to change lives by enabling more people to use roads, drink from clean water sources and access well-built schools and hospitals.

Areas of collaboration

We have inputted into each other's strategy development. Our missions and objectives complement each other, with disclosure, use of information and multi-stakeholder collaboration at their hearts. We support partners in several of the same countries, such as: Mexico, Vietnam, Ukraine, the United Kingdom and Zambia.

Our respective programmes are dynamic and constantly growing. This means that the areas of collaboration that we choose to prioritise are likely to change over time. Both partners will therefore remain flexible and respond to shifting priorities. We agree to the following areas of initial collaboration:

Coordinating Open Contracting Data Standard requirements for infrastructure with CoST's Infrastructure Data Standard

High priority	**Medium investment**	**Medium timeframe**

The Open Contracting Data Standard (OCDS) is an open standard for sharing structured information on all stages of the contracting process. The CoST 'Infrastructure Data Standard' (IDS) is a systematic list of data by which to measure proactive disclosure over the lifecycle of a public infrastructure project. The two are thus highly complementary and mutually reinforcing.

The OCDS can inform the disclosure components of the CoST process in a country, as it relates to infrastructure. In selected countries, the OCP will be able to provide light assistance from the OCDS help-desk or work with local stakeholders on more in-depth technical support. This will add value to CoST country processes and ensure that CoST data is as shareable and useable as possible.

The IDS has been developed over a seven-year period and tested to varying degrees on projects in 15 countries. There are several examples of the IDS having directly contributed to institutional reforms and money savings. This experience has valuable lessons for the OCDS in terms of what works (and what does not work) and the reasons for success (or the lack of it) in very diverse settings.

The OCP is planning to develop an infrastructure sector extension for the OCDS. CoST and its partners in priority countries can be a key collaborator in shaping and developing this extension to make sure that it aligns with and is complimentary to the IDS. CoST has multi-stakeholder groups (MSGs) at a national level that oversee the disclosure of information, analysing data and transforming it into results.

The OCP will involve CoST as a key stakeholder in its extension research. Assuming that there is a successful alignment of the OCDS Infrastructure Extension to the CoST IDS, we will pilot the use of OCDS data within a country in which both organisations are working. We aim to deliver the extension by the end of 2016. This process will involve formulating the pilot and exploring whether an OCDS extension forms a ready-made data schema for the project and contracting elements and their meta-data in CoST's IDS. This will be directly informed by the OCP's Mexico City Airport project pilot; this project is being led by the World Bank, which inputs into both initiatives.

Joint Advocacy and Outreach

High priority **Low investment** **Short-long timeframe**

At the global level, the OCP and CoST are trying to educate and influence some of the same global discussions including those of the Group of 20 (G20), the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), the Open Government Partnership (OGP) and others. Both the OCP and CoST are reaching out more to the private sector, especially large global companies. The OCP and CoST also believe it is crucial to clearly communicate to their audiences how the disclosure of information impacts upon the lives of people. At local level, both initiatives often engage similar actors, such as procuring entities or sector ministries, and try to educate them about the benefits of opening up information and engaging civil society and business in their activities.

The OCP and CoST will coordinate their advocacy activities where appropriate and reinforce each other's key messages. The OCP has an active international advocacy component that CoST could benefit from, whilst CoST has embedded advocates at a local level that can strengthen the OCP's efforts.

We will explore specific advocacy activities around the following key opportunities:
- Relevant national and global frameworks for implementation of the SDGs, including through the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development Data given the vast scale up in infrastructure funding that is predicted.
- The planned global Anti-Corruption Summit in the UK on 12th May 2016.
- The Open Data Charter, including its Anti-Corruption data advisory given that both procurement and infrastructure are priority datasets.
- OGP Action Plans, including where OCDS and CoST implementation may overlap and/or support each other.
- Other countries where CoST and the OCP are potentially active.

CoST can help the OCP with private sector links, including with the Business 20 (B20) and through its embedded local level collaborations. We have agreed to coordinate on shared presentations to relevant fora showing how we are seamlessly linked.

Joint learning

| Medium priority | Low investment | Long timeframe |

The OCP and CoST are trying to strengthen their understanding around some of the same issues, such as:

- How can we best frame our efforts in terms of the potential impact that transparency can have on the lives of people?
- What are effective ways of ensuring the use of information and data?
- How can we effectively engage business in making government more open and accountable?
- Which information really needs to be confidential in a contract and why?
- What makes multi-stakeholder reform efforts in countries work?
- How do political economy factors impact on open government reforms?
- How can open data help drive improvements in the efficiency of public investment?

The OCP and CoST can share learning around these and other questions. Furthermore, both initiatives can be more reflective practitioners in terms of each other's websites and social media activities. The OCP can cross-post blogs, reports and other materials that CoST develops which are relevant to the open contracting field. The OCP and CoST will engage in regular shared learning activities and seek to reach out jointly to other transparency and accountability initiatives.

CoST is also developing a strategic partnership with an academic institution to strengthen analysis of CoST's knowledge and experience of local implementation. The OCP may be able to support this process, contributing to and benefiting from the results.

Joint capacity building

| Medium priority | High investment | Long timeframe |

Both the OCP and CoST aim to strengthen capacities of their partners and stakeholders across sectors. Specifically, these efforts focus on accessing and using information, developing and utilising tools to monitor disclosure and having meaningful dialogue and collaboration between government agencies, businesses and civil society organisations. To develop these capacities, both initiatives organise events and provide technical assistance at the global level and within specific counties.

The OCP and CoST can collaborate in organising joint events, such as workshops, conferences and trainings. They can also work together in supporting partners to develop tools and resources. Finally they can share references and contacts of good partner organisations and consultants.

The OCP and CoST can work together in CoST countries that are especially interested in the open procurement dimension of CoST. The OCP can provide technical support and advice in these countries.

Open Contracting Partnership

Shared fundraising and/or a shared results framework

Low priority

High investment

Medium timeframe

As our other collaborations reach fruition and we learn how best to work together, we see this as a natural development. Over the medium term, we should seek to identify one project or collaboration activity for fundraising under which a joint approach is likely to be more successful and impactful than separate applications.

The OCP and CoST will also explore how we can jointly capture and harvest results from our work. We will share information on funders and coordinate our advocacy for each other. The OCP can help CoST with private foundations whilst CoST can help the OCP with government contacts and supporters. Finally, we have also agreed to collaborate on mutual invitations to events of interest.

Collaboration Process

The OCP and CoST will have regular check-in and coordination calls (minimum every two months). When possible, members of the two teams will meet in person.

In these meetings, the teams will agree on specific next steps, timeframes and, if necessary, resources to implement the collaborations outlined in this agreement. Actions agreed during the meetings will be recorded.

Country overlaps

We have mapped some potential country overlaps where we have agreed to keep each other regularly updated and to share contacts and discussion points.

As identified on the map, the countries are:
- Afghanistan
- Guatemala
- Honduras
- Mexico
- Philippines
- Ukraine
- United Kingdom
- Zambia