



Malawi

## A win for transparency and citizen engagement

With a rapidly growing population, Malawi still lacks adequate infrastructure particularly in rural areas where an overwhelming 88% of its population reside. Infrastructure development has been marred by the Cashgate Scandal of 2013 in which US\$250 million was lost due to a loop hole in Malawi's Public Finance Management (PFM) system. CoST Malawi has worked with stakeholders at high level and grassroots to strengthen



transparency and accountability in public infrastructure. The Government launched a National Construction Industry Policy in 2015 prioritising good corporate governance, whilst revisions to the Public Procurement Act (2003) are under Parliamentary consideration to institutionalise disclosure in public infrastructure. Highlights from CoST Malawi's impact on the ground are provided here but for all the information, check out [www.costmalawi.org](http://www.costmalawi.org).

## Pioneering technologies to engage citizens in open government



CoST Malawi has created an innovative toll-free SMS platform to provide citizens with a real-time reporting mechanism for infrastructure issues affecting their local areas. Malawians can text details of any infrastructure project, such as roads and schools, where they have concerns with its delivery. All received information is submitted to the relevant authorities, who are provided an opportunity to respond through both radio panel discussions and remedial actions within their institutions. The SMS number provides a lifeline for citizens to ensure that the services their taxes pay for are delivered efficiently and effectively. In addition, CoST Malawi has trained the media to effectively use the data that is disclosed from infrastructure projects and also presented awards to journalists who have used that data in their reports.

## Preventing waste through open contracting



CoST Malawi identified a cost increase of over US\$7.4 million on the Nkhotakota-Msulira Road.

Following **CoST Malawi's assurance report** in 2014 which highlighted that several investments in public infrastructure had wasted billions of Malawi Kwacha, contracts were cancelled and retendered with greater transparency. In one case, CoST Malawi identified a 262% – more than 3 billion Malawi Kwacha (US\$7.4 million) – cost increase on the rehabilitation of the Nkhotakota-Msulira

Road. Following a review ordered by the President, the Ministry of Transport and Public Works subsequently cancelled the contract on the 33km road as well as two other road contracts, due to poor performance and in order to prevent further waste.

***"It is my hope that respective governance structures, project implementing agencies and construction industry stakeholders will take this as an opportunity to demonstrate to the world that Malawi can be a shining example of good governance and prove to ourselves that it is possible to develop our country."***

***Vice President of Malawi and CoST Malawi Champion,  
Dr. Saulos Klaus Chilima***

## CoST Malawi and OGP Malawi, working together to open government

CoST Malawi is a partner in the **2016-2018 OGP Malawi National Action Plan** under the "National Integrity System and Fight Against Corruption."



CoST Malawi



[www.costmalawi.org](http://www.costmalawi.org)



**Honduras**

## A win for transparency and citizen engagement

Prior to joining CoST in August 2014, there was little transparency around public infrastructure investment in Honduras. CoST Honduras has worked together with government, industry and civil society to deliver better value public infrastructure through transparency and accountability. In just two years, transparency in the roads sector has increased from 27% to 82% of the data in the CoST Infrastructure Data Standard (IDS) being disclosed to the public. This has been supported by an Executive Decree from the President of Honduras that established a legal mandate for disclosing data from public infrastructure projects. Highlights from CoST Honduras' impact on the ground are provided here but for all the information, check out [www.costhonduras.hn](http://www.costhonduras.hn).

*"With initiatives like this [CoST], we will not only see money well spent, but also we will transcend the world as a different country."*

*President of the Republic of Honduras, Juan Orlando Hernández*

## Empowering citizens to hold decision makers to account

In conjunction with the World Bank, CoST Honduras supported the creation and development of SISOCS – a subsystem of the national e-procurement portal. SISOCS provides easy access for citizens to data on over 400 road projects, accounting for US\$567 million investment. CoST Honduras is working with 175 municipal Citizen Transparency Commissions to support communities in using this information to demand accountability. Following the training, citizens in three municipalities (Siguatepeque, Jesus de Otoro and La Esperanza) have formed their own monitoring groups to follow up on their local infrastructure projects. Going out onto the roads, they compare the data in theory and in reality to highlight cases where works have either not been done or are insufficient. The citizens are working closely with the CoST Honduras Assurance Team to put pressure on those responsible and demand better value from their public infrastructure.



## Ensuring environmental standards are met for the safety of citizens

As part of the Assurance process, CoST Honduras visits infrastructure project sites to review practices and highlight any issues of concern. Upon review of the Siguatepeque – La Esperanza road maintenance project in Central Honduras, the Assurance Team and the local Citizen Transparency Commission discovered that the construction company was not complying with environmental standards. Asphalt was being burnt in open containers on the roadside, releasing toxic chemicals into the atmosphere that can have harmful side effects for the local community including skin cancer. CoST Honduras worked with the citizens to immediately alert the supervision company to this damaging practice. As a result, the materials were properly managed and there was greater awareness of environmental considerations. CoST Honduras is working with government to increase compliance with environmental regulations.



**Burning of asphalt in open containers during a road maintenance project from Siguatepeque to La Esperanza.**

## CoST Honduras and OGP Honduras, working together to open government

CoST Honduras is endorsed in the **2016-2018 OGP Honduras National Action Plan** under the "Policy for Transparency, Integrity and Ethics in Honduras" and "Open Procurement" commitments.



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[www.costhonduras.hn](http://www.costhonduras.hn)

CoST – the Construction Sector Transparency Initiative – is a multi-stakeholder initiative funded by the UK Government's Department for International Development and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands. CoST works with governments, the private sector and civil society to get better value from public infrastructure investments by increasing transparency and accountability. To find out more, please visit the CoST website.

Company number 8159144, Charity number 1152236.



Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands



[www.constructiontransparency.org](http://www.constructiontransparency.org)