Achieving infrastructure transparency
in cities and regions

In 2019, CoST opened its membership to include members and affiliates from cities and regions. This reflected the growing responsibility sub-national governments have for providing infrastructure services. Since then, the cities of Sekondi-Takoradi in Ghana and Bogota in Colombia, the region of Jalisco in Mexico and the Regency of West Lombok in Indonesia have all joined CoST as members and have utilised its core features of multi-stakeholder working, disclosure, assurance and social accountability. This has enabled them to enhance existing multi-stakeholder forums, deliver open government commitments, increase infrastructure transparency including on megaprojects and improve access to essential services including for people with disabilities.

Enhancing institutional multi-stakeholder forums

The Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly (STMA) was the first sub-national government to join CoST as a member in March 2019.

What proved attractive in their application was how they intended to use their Open Government Partnership (OPG) Civil Society Coalition as a basis for their CoST Multi-Stakeholder Group (MSG). The STMA MSG consists of 12 members with civil society members, including the Ghana News Agency, and government members, including a Presiding Member of the Assembly who was also represented in the Coalition. Private sector representatives, including from the Sekondi-Takoradi Chamber of Commerce, were co-opted to ensure a fully multi-stakeholder approach was adopted.

The coordinator for the OGP Civil Society Coalition also manages the CoST STMA programme. This has allowed communities to be engaged on both initiatives avoiding potential duplication of effort. This approach has been underpinned by strong political leadership from the Mayor of STMA. The STMA programme has constituted one of

the strongest MSGs in the region and this has enabled them to strengthen their partnership on social accountability and citizen engagement.

The Regency of West Lombok followed a similar path with their CoST programme led by the Road Traffic and Transport Forum (RTTF), which was specifically established to respond to issues raised by citizens. The RTTF includes participants from across government, academia, the private sector, traffic police and journalists all with an interest in resolving problems with the local road network. The CoST West Lombok programme is now a formal part of their monthly meetings that enhances their existing work that responds to citizens' needs.

Delivering on Open Government commitments

Sekondi Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly (STMA) and Jalisco State both used the OGP process to make a commitment to improving infrastructure transparency as part of their respective action plans. In Jalisco, the three municipalities of Guadalajara, Tonalá and Zapopan formed CoST Jalisco under the leadership of the Institute for Access to Information. They cited their interest in CoST as stemming directly from their involvement in OGP and as a means of complying with their open government commitments. This is an excellent example of the synergy between CoST and OGP principles, working in tandem to encourage and support openness in service delivery.

STMA achieved its OGP commitment by developing an open data portal where data would be disclosed on infrastructure projects in a consistent format, using the Open Contracting for Infrastructure Data Standard (OC4IDS). One of the achievements of CoST STMA has been convincing eight neighbouring local governments and other government entities within the Western Region of Ghana to publish data on their infrastructure investments on the portal. The portal hosts data on 49 projects from 15 sectors including education, health, transport, water and waste.

A similar portal developed by CoST Jalisco has had 6,536 visits since it went live in May 2021. CoST Jalisco then trained citizens in seven areas of the municipality of Guadalajara to use the platform, helping them to recognize construction works that are planned and implemented in their neighbourhoods. From their experience, CoST Jalisco has learnt that training citizens on data use fosters better rapprochement between the citizens and government institutions on the disclosure and use of infrastructure data.

The platform itself currently contains data published by the State of Jalisco and the Municipalities of Guadalajara, Zapopan and Tlajomulco de Zuñiga on 333 community infrastructure projects including roads, sports facilities, schools, public parks and footpaths that have benefited over 25 million people.

Infrastructure transparency was further institutionalized by both CoST STMA and CoST Jalisco. STMA established a legal provision to mandate disclosure based on the OC4IDS on the portal with a disclosure handbook designed

Infrastructure
Transparency
Initiative

to help officials publish good quality data. Similarly, in December 2022 the Municipal Government of Guadalajara introduced government code and regulations that mandates data disclosure at each stage of the infrastructure project cycle on the CoST Jalisco platform using the OC4IDS.

Enabling transparency on megaprojects

In 2022, the City of Bogota enhanced its website by integrating an open data platform that publishes data on its infrastructure investments based on the OC4IDS. The website design draws on lessons from the CoST Jalisco platform and includes a chat function where questions can be submitted, allowing citizens to engage with a public official regarding their infrastructure project of interest.

To date, data on 42 infrastructure projects spanning housing, cultural buildings, transport, and healthcare sectors with a total value of USD $7.347bn has been published. The data highlights that over 200,000 jobs have been created from these investments. The open data platform includes data from the initial phase of the City's first metro line valued at US$5.2bn. The delivery of the new metro line reflects the complexity of a megaproject, further highlighting the importance of transparency. The metro line requires the construction of a 24km line with 16 stations that will eventually transport 23 trains and up to 72,000 passengers per hour in each direction.

A strong legal and policy framework which mandates disclosure based on the CoST Infrastructure Data Standard was used for the platform. CoST Bogota has also established a high-level MSG of 15 members from the government, private sector and civil society. They have also secured the much needed local financial and strong

CITY OF BOGOTA METRO LINE:

US$5.2bn
Cost of project

24km
Length of line

16
Stations

23
Trains

72,000
Passengers per hour

political support from the City Mayor and the support of a Transparency Committee focused on promoting integrity. Having political and financial support with the legal and policy framework has provided CoST Bogota with a strong basis for addressing the complex governance challenges of high value infrastructure projects.

Using data to improve the quality and accessibility of infrastructure

CoST STMA's first Assurance Report published in 2019 highlighted how citizens had not been extensively consulted in the construction of three market projects of Mpintsin, Diabene and Kojokrom leading to lack of essential facilities like access to clean water.

CoST STMA adopted the community engagement approach successfully implemented in Uganda and across the Africa region, to raise awareness and for citizens to voice their concerns. This approach included the government participating in three community meetings and making conscious efforts to engage market vendors and solicit input into project design processes. By December 2020, the entity had extended water supply to all three community markets to help provide sanitation facilities such as toilets and enhance access to clean drinking water.

CoST STMA was able to establish a platform at community levels for local leadership to interact with citizens and provide residents with vital infrastructure services. This then enabled it to persuade the STMA government to respond to the evidence in the assurance report by introducing measures that improved the quality and accessibility of infrastructure including:

- **Working with the districts of Shama and Wassa East to revise project designs for district offices and schools to ensure disability friendly access including erecting guard railings, staircases and disability ramps.**

- **Changing the design standards for basic school infrastructure to include sanitation facilities and changing rooms for female students in the Mpohor District Assembly.**

- **Completing the building of a cassava processing factory which had stalled for 24 months, helping the business to open and contribute to the local economy. The preliminary works also had a leaking roof which was fixed based on the evidence from the assurance report.**

- **Furnishing and providing equipment for the Takoradi library complex that had been built earlier but was not used due to a lack of computers and books.**

- **Correcting misaligned culverts and cleaning major drains along a 1.6km road in Effia-Kwesimintsim municipal assembly**

- **Instituting quality assessment tests and an internal policy providing for pre-site meetings with stakeholders before site handover to ensure proper housekeeping and promote safety on construction sites in the Tarkwa Nsuaem Municipal Assembly.**

- **SMTA and Wassa East District Assembly (WEDA) made provisions for elevated staircases and disability ramps to be created in a health facility, to support the needs of people with disabilities.**

STMA is building on its engagement with local communities by drawing on an infrastructure monitoring system developed by CoST Uganda, with support from the EU.

Embedding transparency into a roads sector programme

Prior to joining CoST, the Regency of West Lombok had already made good progress in advancing the principles of transparency, multi-stakeholder working and social accountability through the Provincial Road Improvement and Maintenance (PRIM) pilot as part of the Indonesia-Australia Infrastructure Partnership. Under this pilot, the Regency published data based on the CoST IDS with some support for verifying the data based on the CoST assurance process.

West Lombok joined CoST in 2019 with a plan to build on this experience, by developing a data portal based on SISOCS on which data is disclosed according to the ODC4IDS. In July 2021, CoST West Lombok launched a brand-new infrastructure data portal called INTRAS with support from the UNDP FairBiz programme. Data on an initial 32 projects was disclosed on INTRAS, facilitating citizens' access to information on from the transport sector. Data on a further 2000 projects covering transport, water and other sectors will be shortly published.

ENHANCING COST ASSURANCE

CoST assurance is an independent review that turns infrastructure data into compelling information, highlighting key issues of concern for the public. Historically, it highlighted key performance issues with the delivering of the infrastructure. The process was subsequently enhanced to ensure that it identifies health, safety and social safeguards and whether projects considers inclusion, such as the needs of people with disabilities.
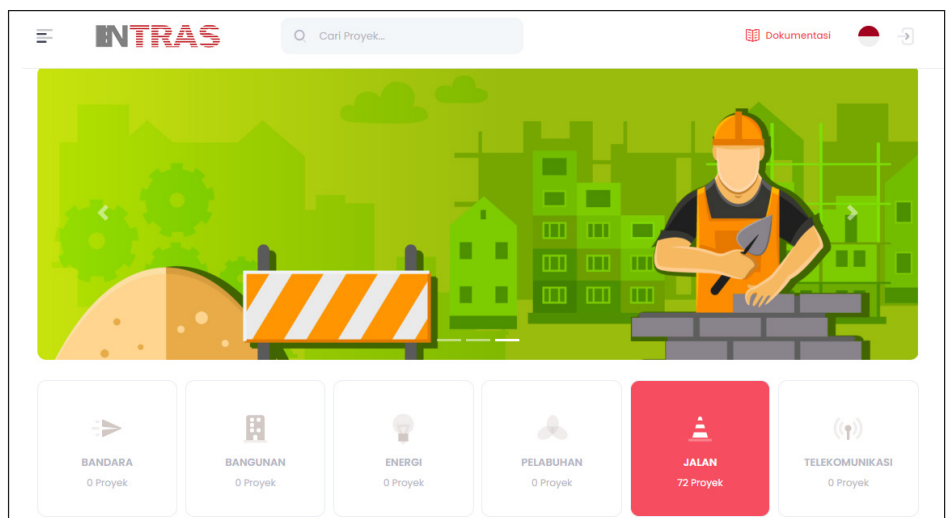
As part of a process of ensuring that better use is made of available data, CoST West Lombok has recently piloted an Assurance Process, whereby an objective analysis of available data has led to recommendations aimed at improving sector performance.

The successor to PRIM, Program Hibah Jalan Daerah (PHJD) focuses on developing sub-national roads in 21 sub-national entities consisting of 7 provinces and 14 regencies, thereby contributing to the development of tourism in 9 regions. To date, the programme has maintained 6,300km, with each province and regency required to publish data on its website, based on the CoST IDS. Critical to this approach was building in the CoST IDS into the programme design along with 300 other governance mechanisms. There is considerable interest within Indonesia in INTRAS and whether other provinces and regencies can follow their lead and institutionalise transparency into their infrastructure investments.