

Minutes of CoST Board Meeting No.51

22-25 April 2024, Ghana

| PARTICIPANTS | |
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| Board Chrik Poortman, Chair (CP) Rueben Lifuka (RL) Petter Matthews (PM) Gloria Patricia Rincón Mazo (PRM) Claire Schouten (CS) Eyasu Yimer (EY) | CoST International Secretariat John Hawkins (JH) Evelyn Hernandez (EH) Sean Henderson (SH) (on-line +1hr) Olive Kabatwairwe (OK) George Ofori (GO) Melina San Martin (MSM) |
| Apologies Gavin English (GE) | CoST Sekondi Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly (SMTA) Isaac Aidoo (IA) |
| Observers Snezana Mitrovic (SM) (on-line +4hrs) April Snedeker (AS), (on-line item 7 only) | Azziz Mahmoud (AM) |

| Discussion & Decisions | | Resp. | Deadline |
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| Item 1. Chairman's Welcome and Opening Remarks | | | |
| 1.1 | The Chair welcomed PRM as a new Board member representing government and thanked GO's attendance and contribution to the organisation of the Board Meeting in Ghana. The Chair also welcomed MSM, the new Programme Manager for the IS. | N/A | N/A |
| Item 2. Approval of the minutes & matters arising – Papers A & B | | | |
| 2.1 | The minutes from the 50 th meeting were approved as accurate. | N/A | N/A |
| 2.2 | The Chair introduced the 4-day event agenda. He mentioned pressing items to be discussed, including funding and the challenges to restore pre-COVID core funding levels. He commended the IS team for effectively managing available resources and ensuring sustainability despite the difficulties. | N/A | N/A |

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| 2.3 | <p>It was explained that the purpose of holding the Board meeting in Ghana was to help share the achievements of CoST Sekondi-Takoradi to a wider audience, understand the potential interest in the broader application of CoST tools and standards in Ghana and absorb lessons from Sekondi-Takoradi that will help with supporting CoST members at a sub-national level worldwide.</p> <p>The outreach activities would include a stakeholder event co-hosted with the Presidential Advisor on Open Government and a meeting with the Minister of Roads and Highways.</p> | N/A | N/A |
| 2.4 | <p>AM explained that STMA's impact can be enhanced with improvements to the national legal and policy framework. The current framework allows for the publication of 88% of the CoST IDS but mostly on a reactive basis. He added that as the country aims to attract foreign direct investment, it is putting in place key building blocks including beneficial ownership disclosure and anti-money laundering laws.</p> <p>The Board acknowledged the importance of the national OGP process for potentially improving the current legal and policy requirements for publishing infrastructure data.</p> | N/A | N/A |
| 2.5 | <p>The Board was informed that in Takoradi they would be visiting three buildings each providing an example of how CoST STMA had contributed to improving accessibility for people with physical disabilities. These are the Social Welfare and Community Development Office, the Skills Development Centre and the Takoradi Library. It was also noted that the library was only completed following recommendations in an assurance reported.</p> | N/A | N/A |
| 2.6 | <p>AM demonstrated the CoST Sekondi-Takoradi platform to the Board. He stressed the importance of creating post-completion data points for appropriate project monitoring and highlighted the guidelines on how to interpret the published information reducing the potential for any misunderstanding stressed the importance of creating post-completion data points for appropriate project monitoring and highlighted the guidelines on how to interpret the published information reducing the potential for any misunderstanding.</p> | N/A | N/A |
| 2.7 | <p>AM explained that consultations with local communities informed the design of the analytical dashboard. The dashboard includes information about funding sources to enhance communities' understanding of investments. Additionally, the platform features an analytical graph illustrating how projects may contribute to specific SDGs. He mentioned STMA's aspiration to scale up this tool and facilitate mini-assurance processes.</p> | N/A | N/A |

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| 2.8 | <p>AI added that they are facing constraints to increase the number of disclosed projects, currently at 75 projects. This is due to other assemblies in the region not having mandated public disclosure and a lack of authority to demand the publication of data on national government infrastructure investments in the region.</p> <p>The Chair thanked AI and AM for showcasing the platform. He highlighted the ability of sub-national members to capture important stories of change, but the need to secure national support to scale up impact.</p> | N/A | N/A |
| Item 3. | Financial report – Paper C | | |
| 3.1 | The Board approved the financial report up to 31 st March 2024. | N/A | N/A |
| 3.2 | SH highlighted the continued and generous support from FCDO, and the available funding received from the US State department for 2024. He explained that the current unrestricted reserve is used if necessary for various governance costs, including the annual audit. The high proportion of overheads budgeted in the first quarter of 2024 is due to using the additional FCDO funds that had been approved in December 2023 by 31 March 2024. | N/A | N/A |
| 3.3 | The Chair confirmed that the organisation is in a much better financial shape. However, since core funding is limited, there is less flexibility than in the past. | N/A | N/A |
| Item 4. | Board membership – Paper D | | |
| 4.1 | The Board confirmed the appointment of Kittidej Chantangkul to represent the private sector from the Eurasia region on the CoST board. | OK | May 2024 |
| 4.2 | <p>PM and OK introduced the process, results and lessons from the most recent membership elections. PH gave full confidence on OK to lead the election process in future.</p> <p>The Board agreed that future candidates would only require a single nomination to help increase the number of candidates.</p> | N/A | N/A |
| 4.3 | The Board discussed whether CoST Member managers should be eligible for election to the Board. There is some concern about the potential conflict of interest and the potential dynamics between the manager, the Member MSG and CoST IS. However, we also want to broaden the potential pool of candidates. The Board agreed that CoST Member managers may be considered if justified and free of conflicts of interest. | N/A | N/A |
| 4.4. | The Board discussed recommendations from the Elections report and agreed to reviews of the elections manual to integrate the flexibility of the elections system, remove the | PM/OK | June 2024 |

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| | requirement for a second nominator, provide for a requirement for two nominees from different sectors in the same programme, include a grievance mechanism, and clearly stipulate that members are bound by CoST values and principles. | | |
| 4.5 | PM confirmed that GE wishes to step down from the Board as the International Private Sector representative soon as a replacement is identified. PM has been in discussion with FIDIC who nominate the International Private Sector representative with James Mwangi the preferred candidate. James was until recently a FIDIC Vice President and has chaired their integrity committee. It was agreed that CP would have a call with James before formally writing to FIDIC to confirm him as their nominee. | PM CP | May 2024 |
| 4.6 | PM confirmed that CP will step down as Chair before the end of 2024 but that he has agreed to continue supporting the organisation in different role the details of which have to be agreed. The Board agreed that the role will be advertised and requested that the CoST IS develops a schedule and process for recruiting the chair for discussion at the next meeting. | PM | June 2024 |
| 4.7 | The Board acknowledged the current gender imbalance on the board and discussed how this can be addressed. It requested that the CoST IS develop a plan to broaden the diversity of candidates for board elections and appointments. | TBC | June 2024 |
| Item 5. | Membership performance – Paper H | | |
| 5.1 | EH and OK presented an overview of membership performance based on January 2024 progress reports. There was concern with the slow progress that had been observed in Ethiopia and Guatemala. However, more results are expected from Bogota, Ecuador, Malawi and Mozambique in the coming months. | N/A | N/A |
| 5.2 | Recent progress in Bogota has been slow with no data published on new projects due to the recent change of government within the city administration. This is expected to change in the coming months. | N/A | N/A |
| 5.3 | The Ugandan Ministry of Justice has approved an MoU between the Government of Uganda and the CoST IS. The Ministry of Works and Transport is now waiting for Cabinet support based on a memo before signing the MoU. A signed MoU will lead to the formation of a new MSG. | N/A | N/A |
| 5.4 | The CoST IS has the resources to support a pilot use of its assurance process in the reconstruction of Ukraine. CoST IS to follow-up with Viktor Nestulia and OS for a catch-up call and to understand if there is potential interest. | TBC | June 2024 |

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| 5.5 | The Board confirmed that Honduras's CoST membership is revoked. This is due to the current government not willing to engage with the MSG and CoST IS since it was informed that CoST Honduras is in active. A letter to the relevant Government authority and former MSG members will be sent confirming this decision. | EH | June 2024 |
| 5.6 | The Dominican Republic, a current affiliate, is drafting a letter of application to the Board to join CoST as a member. Puerto Rico is likely to follow suit if they secure further government support. | N/A | N/A |
| 5.7 | EY suggested that disclosure performance indicators should consider project size, as well as number of beneficiaries and project economic importance. It was agreed that this indicator required review. | EH/OK/MSM | Oct 2024 |
| 5.8 | The Board agreed on the need to focus on members that are not performing well to understand the reasons behind their underperformance and explore how the IS can better support to strengthen the programme's footprint and ensure members are financially healthy. | N/A | N/A |
| 5.9 | The Board discussed the relationship between its elected members and their regional constituency. EY indicated that he thought there should be a direct connection with the members that had elected him. PR was supportive of this. There was also interest from Board members in getting involved in supporting member performance. | N/A | N/A |
| 5.10 | PM emphasised the different roles of the IS and the Board, and stressed potential communication disruption if members start communicating directly with Board members. He also explained that some indicators are driven by agreements with donors and not necessarily by the current business plan. | N/A | N/A |
| 5.11 | It was reported that the recent CoST Managers Workshop in Jalisco was very successful with many new managers having the opportunity to learn from each other for the first time in 5 years. It also provided an opportunity to award CoST Panama the second Alfred Cantero Award with CoST Thailand receiving an honourable mention at a reception hosted by the Municipality of Guadalajara. | N/A | N/A |
| 5.12 | There is also a positive response from CoST member managers to the monthly knowledge learning calls where managers can share what they have achieved and learnt. Some of these sessions revealed members' recommended priorities for discussion, particularly focusing on social inclusion and rebuilding trust. | N/A | N/A |
| 5.13 | OK provided a summary of the recently published stories from STMA, Thailand, Uganda, and Panama. The next published case study will be from Guatemala on how they | N/A | N/A |

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| | have improved infrastructure transparency. A case study from Malawi has also been drafted; however, the stories require further verification through a country visit due to insufficient data collection and documenting by the in-country team. | | |
| 5.14 | <p>The following letters will be sent on behalf of the Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congratulate and support MSG and Secretariat efforts to CoST Panama, CoST Jalisco, CoST Sekondi-Takoradi and CoST El Salvador. • Encourage MSG and Secretariat to increase their efforts in CoST Bogota, CoST Malawi, CoST Mozambique and CoST Ecuador. • Inform CoST Guatemala and CoST Ethiopia of a Member review. • Inform Honduras that its CoST status has been revoked. | EH OK MG | May 24 |
| Item 6. | Membership model – Paper I | | |
| 6.1 | A consultation with CoST members indicated that Members preferred to retain the two membership categories. They were also supportive of introducing regular action plans and progress reports that would be published. | N/A | N/A |
| 6.2 | The Board agreed to a single, flexible membership category. This would mean that the affiliate category would be withdrawn as part of the revised membership arrangements. | N/A | N/A |
| 6.3 | The CoST IS informed the Board that whilst the members had indicated support for the two categories there had been little demand for the affiliate category and that current and former affiliates had struggled to make any progress. The two current affiliates only applied for this category as full membership was not available at that time. | N/A | N/A |
| 6.4 | <p>The Board also agreed that members would be required to submit regular action plans and progress reports to the Board as part of their responsibilities. The Board would respond with a formal letter. The Board requested greater clarity on the commitments applicants would be asked to make. Further discussion is also required on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The type of institution who can lead the application process • The frequency of action plans and progress reports. • The balance between free support from the CoST IS and when support is paid for • How CoST IS services are contextualised | N/A | N/A |

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| | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How the CoST brand is used by members and balancing the ownership many MSG members and the local secretariat often have with not crowding out the brand of local partners who are often doing the work. | | |
| 6.5 | <p>The CoST IS will develop a membership policy paper for the Board to consider. RL recommended that the policy paper should address the value proposition of membership while addressing issues such as the number of members whether national or sub-national that CoST is looking to attract.</p> <p>It would also address how multiple sub-national members within a country would be managed and potentially the expectations for new joiners vs the expectations for established members. It would also consider the application process and whether a transition period is required before membership is confirmed. The policy paper would be based on the above decisions and respond to the areas where the Board required greater clarity.</p> | JH EH PM | July 2024 |
| 6.6 | The Board were broadly supportive of the terms implementing partner and knowledge partner as working terms to differentiate the different partnerships and relationships that the CoST IS were developing. The terms will be finalised as the offer under each category is developed. Suggestions for implementing partner included a community of practice. | N/A | N/A |
| 6.7 | The Board expressed concern about potentially unlimited free strategic support with a government or partner especially in a high-income context and the importance of developing criteria and boundaries around this support. | N/A | N/A |
| 6.8 | The CoST IS to further develop the different partnership arrangements for the Board to consider. | JH PM EH | July 2024 |
| Item 7. | Infrastructure Anti-Corruption Toolbox | | |
| 7.1 | The Board expressed their support for CoST's role in the implementation of the Infrastructure Anti-Corruption Toolbox and thanked AS for the US State Departments financial support for the project and her own personal support for CoST. | N/A | N/A |
| Item 8. | SWOT Analysis – Paper J | | |
| 8.1 | Item not discussed | N/A | N/A |
| Item 9. | Any other business | | |
| 9.1 | SM joined the meeting to explain that she is looking into organising event at the time of the World Bank annual meetings which would showcase work from the Global Procurement Partnership including by CoST. She was also | N/A | N/A |

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| | hopeful to be able share information on potential funding in due course. | | |
| 9.2 | The Board discussed re-establishing sub-groups to address specific issues in more depth. A replacement will need for GE who will be stepping down from the governance sub-group. The other two sub-groups concern membership and the business plan. The Board to agree sub-group membership at its next meeting. | All | Next meeting |
| 9.3 | IS to assess the potential for in person board meeting in October and pencil in a date. The next Board call will be the AGM and will be held on Tuesday 26 June. | All | June |
| Item 10. | Chair's closing remarks | | |
| 10.1 | The Chair thanked members for travelling to Ghana. He also thanked all those who had joined the meeting virtually. He remarked that the IS had done a remarkable job in managing the logistical arrangements for the meeting. | N/A | N/A |

These minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.



26 June 2024

Christiaan J. Poortman
Chair

Date