

FOCUS OF THIS GUIDANCE

This document is intended for use by those involved in the formulation and implementation of OGP commitments, whether through Action Plans or the [Open Gov Challenge](#), who would like to engage with and draw on CoST expertise. Details of CoST's pillars of: multi-stakeholder working; publication of data; independent reviews; and social accountability - as applied to the planning and delivery of public infrastructure - are described in separate Guidance Notes.

There are strong natural synergies between CoST and OGP. Fundamentally, both aim to make governments more transparent, accountable, and responsive to the current and future needs of citizens.

Prepared in consultation with OGP, this Guidance Note outlines how the CoST approach to transparency, accountability, and participation aligns to varying degrees with each of [OGP's policy areas](#)¹. This serves to inform the process of looking at public infrastructure through the Open Government "lens" and include some or all elements of the CoST approach in OGP commitments, in a manner that can be tailored to any specific context.

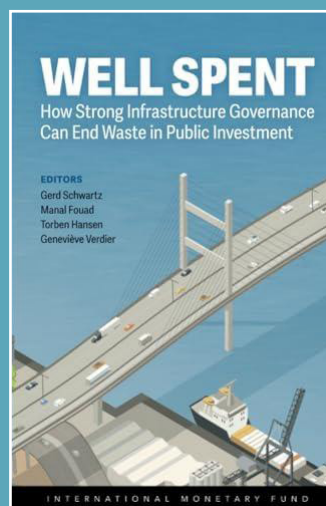


Aidan Eyakuze, Chief Executive Officer of the Open Government Partnership and Mukhtar Ahmed Monrovia, Commissioner of Planning and Budget, Kaduna State.

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1. The importance of infrastructure transparency and accountability



Globally, infrastructure investment accounts for about 20% of public expenditure. According to a major 2020 IMF report, about one-third of such spending is wasted through a combination of mismanagement, cost overruns, delays, poor maintenance, and corruption. Given the importance of infrastructure for human development, and the growing associated financing gap, it is vitally important to identify ways of reducing such inefficiencies.

Such chronic inefficiencies in the planning and delivery of public infrastructure do not simply waste money. They are also associated with quality shortcomings that erode trust between governments and citizens by undermining the relevance of the infrastructure to user needs, increasing maintenance costs, and giving rise to health and safety risks, particularly in earthquake-prone areas.

By enabling informed stakeholders to work together to improve sector performance, close collaboration between OGP and CoST can serve to improve efficiency and address such a trust deficit in a highly practical manner.

¹ OGP has nine thematic policy areas: Anti-Corruption; Civic Space; Climate and Environment; Digital Governance; Fiscal Openness; Inclusion; Justice; Public Participation and Right to Information. The Open Government Challenge areas broadly correspond to these, with the addition of Media Freedom.

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2. Collaboration between OGP and CoST

Launched respectively in 2011 and 2012, OGP and CoST have pursued similar objectives through different approaches. The details set out in **Table 1** highlight areas of synergy.

These reflect the fact that:

- The **OGP approach** is based on governments and civil society co-creating reforms to make government more accessible, responsive, and accountable to citizens at national or sub-national level; while
- The **CoST approach** is based on governments, civil society, and the private sector working together to improve performance in the planning and delivering public infrastructure by making it more transparent and accountable. Operating at the national, subnational, or mega-project level, CoST tools and standards can be applied flexibly to publish data on infrastructure projects, validate it via an independent review process, and promote its use by various stakeholders, implementing the social accountability pillar.

TABLE 1: SYNERGY AREAS BETWEEN OGP AND COST

SYNERGY AREA	CONTRIBUTION OF OGP	CONTRIBUTION OF COST
Stakeholder Engagement	Government and Civil Society	Government, Civil Society, and the Private Sector
Policy Commitment	High-level political commitment to Open Government, with concrete reforms in OGP Action Plans and the Open Gov Challenge.	Deep expertise in infrastructure transparency (including in relation to sustainability and climate finance), accountability, and participation, aimed at enhanced trust and improved socio-economic outcomes.
Key Tools	Co-creation Standards Action Plans and Commitments Open Gov Challenge	The Infrastructure Data Standards The Infrastructure Transparency Index The Independent Review Process The Social Accountability Tools
Capacity Building	Peer learning, multi-stakeholder processes	Training and inter-member peer learning in all aspects of the CoST approach
Public Participation	Every reform commitment must be co-created with civil society.	Civil Society's voice in member oversight Enhanced social accountability
Monitoring & Accountability	The Independent Reporting Mechanism assesses each Action Plan during its cycle, reviewing co-creation and measuring progress on commitments.	MSG oversight at the member level Monitoring by the International Secretariat

THE COMPLEMENTARITY OF OGP AND CoST CAN BE SUMMARISED AS:

- OGP is focused on governments and civil society together achieving transparent, participatory, inclusive and accountable governance
- By also engaging closely with the private sector and professional bodies, CoST helps add a practical and proven vehicle for realising open government reforms in a specific sector.



Clara Feng - CoST Advisor for Asia at the Asia Pacific OGP Regional Meeting 2025

3. Including CoST tools and standards in OGP action frameworks

Every OGP commitment is expected to advance reform in one or more of OGP's defined policy areas, whether they are adopted as part of a member's National Action Plan or as an ambitious, standalone Open Gov Challenge commitment. The degree to which CoST can contribute to an OGP commitment in a specific policy area varies according to any particular context, but can broadly be grouped into three tiers of potential impact (characterised as **Gold**, **Silver**, and **Bronze**) as follows:



GOLD: STRONG AND DIRECT CONTRIBUTION MADE BY CoST

OGP POLICY AREA	CoST Contribution
Anti-Corruption	Infrastructure is a high-value, high-risk sector. By highlighting the underlying drivers of corruption risks and their symptoms, CoST's approach, based on collaboration and transparency, reduces opportunities for corruption while helping improve broader sector governance.
Public Participation	Public participation is central to CoST's approach, with civil society having an equal voice in a multi-stakeholder group overseeing the implementation of tools and standards at the national or subnational level. The social accountability pillar also promotes the use of published data by civil society, media, academia, and other stakeholders.
Right to Information	CoST directly advances the right to information by requiring the publication of infrastructure project data following infrastructure data standards.

THE CoST DATA STANDARDS CAN BE SUMMARISED AS:

- The Infrastructure Data Standard (IDS) provides a framework to guide publication of data about infrastructure projects during their complete life cycle
- The Open Contracting for Infrastructure Data Standard (OC4IDS) draws on the CoST IDS and the Open Contracting Data Standard (OCDS), guiding the publication of data related to infrastructure projects and their contracts in an open format.



SILVER: STRONG BUT INDIRECT CONTRIBUTION MADE BY CoST

OGP POLICY AREA	CoST contribution
Climate and Environment	Through the established OC4IDS, CoST already facilitates and uses transparency in the planning and delivery of infrastructure projects. It has tools to help monitor the extent to which environment-related measures are evident. The OC4IDS integrates new modules that help monitor infrastructure sustainability or track climate finance investments.
Fiscal Openness	CoST contributes to fiscal openness by promoting the publication of financial and procurement data on infrastructure investments and analysing it during the Independent Review process leading to strong synergies for fiscal openness reforms (budget planning, execution, and oversight).
Digital Governance	CoST supports developing and using digital tools, open data platforms, and associated analytical dashboards that use published open data.
Inclusion	CoST's participatory processes support inclusion and the promotion of equitable service delivery.



BRONZE: POTENTIAL CONTRIBUTION MADE BY CoST

OGP POLICY AREA	RATIONALE
Civic Space	CoST helps strengthen civic space by enabling civil society to participate in oversight of infrastructure projects and advocate for accountability. Because infrastructure can have major implications for livelihoods, land, settlement, and the environment, meaningful citizen engagement and free expression are critical.
Justice	CoST transparency can help reduce opportunities for elite capture and strengthen existing accountability mechanisms. CoST's collaborative approach to enhanced infrastructure governance can indirectly build trust and strengthen the rule of law.

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IMPROVING SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC INCLUSION IN SEKONDI-TAKORADI, GHANA

A member of OGP Local since 2016, the Sekondi-Takoradi Metropolitan Assembly (STMA) in Ghana in 2019 became the first sub-national government to join CoST, together with partners from civil society and the private sector.

The first independent review report commissioned by the CoST Sekondi-Takoradi MSG highlighted the fact that the national Persons with Disability Act, 2016 (Act 715) was not being followed by most local government authorities in the Western Region of Ghana. This meant that disabled people were unable to access many public buildings.

Civil society organisations and journalists trained by CoST Sekondi-Takoradi used the report to successfully advocate for inclusion and compliance with the Disability Act.

“Nothing was done to enable persons with disability to access public buildings until CoST came to Takoradi”

Richard Asare, regional president, Ghana Federation of Disability (GFD)



CoST Sekondi Takoradi Secretariat team verifying stories of change in STMA Ghana

4. Using CoST tools and standards in OGP commitments

The following scenarios illustrate how CoST tools and standards can contribute to strengthened infrastructure governance in various contexts.

SCENARIO	APPLICABLE COST TOOLS AND STANDARDS
1. Corruption levels are generally high, transparency is low, and oversight institutions are weak in your country or sub-national authority.	Structured and standardised publication of information and data about concrete projects has proven effective in identifying and mitigating corruption risks and improving infrastructure delivery. The CoST Infrastructure Transparency Index is another helpful tool for advancing a transparency agenda.
2. Your country is affected by climate change, and your government has secured climate finance inflows from international funds. However, it is unclear how the investments will be managed, and which projects will be selected and prioritised.	CoST tools and standards can bolster OGP commitments on climate finance. The OC4IDS's sustainability and climate finance modules are particularly relevant in identifying relevant data points to be published and monitored.
3. Oversight institutions are generally quite strong in your country. Still, you often hear about major infrastructure projects that have become much more costly than envisaged initially and have been significantly delayed.	The CoST Independent Review process can help review and validate published data on infrastructure projects, culminating in a report that meets the information needs most stakeholders and strongly complements the work of oversight and audit institutions. This would draw on the insights and perspectives of government, private sector, and civil society stakeholders.
4. A sub-national government has announced a public hearing about the planned new transport infrastructure. Some aspects of the plan are concerning, and no meaningful participatory processes are in place.	OGP co-creation principles combined with CoST social accountability tools represent powerful approaches to facilitating meaningful stakeholder engagement in this type of project.

5. Examples of OGP commitments involving CoST

OGP has a longstanding and growing relationship with CoST. This is most notable at the sub-national level, where commitments to Open Government practices tend to find expression through specific sectoral initiatives. Some specific cases of connections between OGP and CoST are included in the table below.

The Infrastructure Transparency Initiative (CoST) and the Open Government Partnership (OGP)



Africa & MENA OGP regional meeting panel on Financial Transparency & Integrity in Nairobi, Kenya

REGION	SELECTED EXAMPLES OF SPECIFIC CONNECTIONS BETWEEN OGP AND COST
Latin America	Guatemala: Since 2014, OGP Guatemala has integrated references to CoST in successive OGP Action Plans, with a specific focus on strengthening transparency and accountability in social infrastructure. Panama: An OGP commitment in the 2015-2017 Action Plan led to a legal mandate for the publication of infrastructure data in line with the CoST standard, and the development of an information platform. OGP's Independent Review Mechanism found this to have strong potential for further impact, and CoST-related commitments were carried over into the following two Action Plans. Brazil: As an Open Gov Challenge commitment under its Action Plan (2023-2027), Brazil is applying open contracting principles to federal infrastructure projects. CoST supports related commitments, including mapping and assessing transparency and accountability practices at the federal level, open data systems, and infrastructure policies. Santiago de Cali, Colombia: An OGP commitment in the 2023-25 Action Plan is focused on transparency of Public Works in Santiago de Cali. As described in this OGP blog, the City's efforts in this regard were bolstered in 2025 by joining CoST as a sub-national member. This initiative gained momentum through Cali's participation in Colombia's Open State Challenge.
Africa	Kaduna State, Nigeria: In its third OGP Action Plan (2024-2025), Kaduna State committed to implementing the OC4IDS, following the CoST approach, tools, and guidance. Malawi: Malawi's OGP Action Plan (2025-2028) is being supported by CoST Malawi through improving anti-corruption and integrity-building measures. Sekondi Takoradi, Ghana: As part of its first OGP action plan (2018-2020), the STMA developed an open data portal where data were published using the OC4IDS. Further developments in partnership with CoST have included an Infrastructure Analytical Dashboard and an Electronic Infrastructure Monitoring Tool.
Europe	Ukraine: An OGP commitment in the 2020-2022 Action Plan included a specific engagement with CoST Ukraine. This led to the submission of an Open Gov Challenge commitment around Ukraine's "Digital Restoration Ecosystem for Accountable Management" or DREAM platform, which incorporates the OC4IDS. Scotland: An OGP commitment in its 2021-25 OGP Action Plan, included a core commitment to fiscal openness and explicit reference to adopting data standards. CoST was invited to join the fiscal commitment advisory group in the write-up phase of the Action Plan and provided advice and support for the formulation of sub-commitments and indicators. CoST was then invited to join the Action Plan implementation oversight group and continued to provide advice and assistance throughout its delivery. Kosovo: The IRM of Kosovo's 2023–2025 Action Plan identified a fully open public procurement system as a Promising Commitment. While amendments to the Law on Public Procurement aim to improve access to data, the IRM recommended also working with CoST to adopt the Open Contracting for Infrastructure Data Standard (OC4IDS), which sets best practices for open data and disclosure in infrastructure procurement.

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6. Conclusion

The CoST approach is tried and tested, and has proved effective in delivering reform and impact in diverse political and economic environments. It is available to OGP members as a cost-effective approach that can be incorporated into OGP commitments to help meet national and sub-national reform ambitions.



Maria Prado - Lead research and policy advisor of CoST at the Open America, receives OGP Challenge certificate with TI Brazil

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- Infrastructure Transparency Initiative (CoST)

Further information about CoST is readily available from:

The CoST website: <https://infrastructuretransparency.org>.

Available in French, Portuguese, and Spanish as well as English, this provides access to a wealth of further information and resources, including tools, guidance notes, and manuals.



CoST Regional Managers: CoST Regional Managers for Africa, Asia, and Latin America are familiar with the synergies between OGP and CoST, and are well placed to advise on how OGP Action Plans could potentially draw on CoST experience and tools. They can also facilitate access to relevant CoST members in the region.

CoST International Secretariat: Based in London, the Secretariat plays a pivotal supporting role in advancing CoST's mission to enhance transparency, accountability, and public participation in infrastructure projects worldwide. Such support includes technical support, training, the development of tools and standards, research and policy advocacy, and monitoring & evaluation.

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