

Diagnosis driving reform: The Infrastructure Transparency Index

A selection of case studies across Latin America, Africa and Asia

Globally, trillions of dollars are invested in public infrastructure annually, yet up to 30% of this investment is lost to corruption and mismanagement. Systematic measurement is critical to addressing this challenge: it enables governments, investors, and citizens to identify vulnerabilities, assess risks, and strengthen accountability.

The **Infrastructure Transparency Index (ITI)**, developed by CoST, responds to this need by providing a holistic assessment of how transparently public infrastructure is planned, procured, and delivered down to a procuring entity level. Beyond measurement, the ITI identifies gaps and provides practical recommendations for improvement; ensuring ITI findings are not only diagnostic – but also drive action.

The ITI provides evidence-based analysis that enables civil society, media and governments to:

- hold procuring entities accountable;
- benchmark performance over time,
- facilitate peer learning, and
- identify concrete priorities for transparency reforms.

In every country where it has been applied, ITI findings have been translated into reform through multi-stakeholder collaboration.

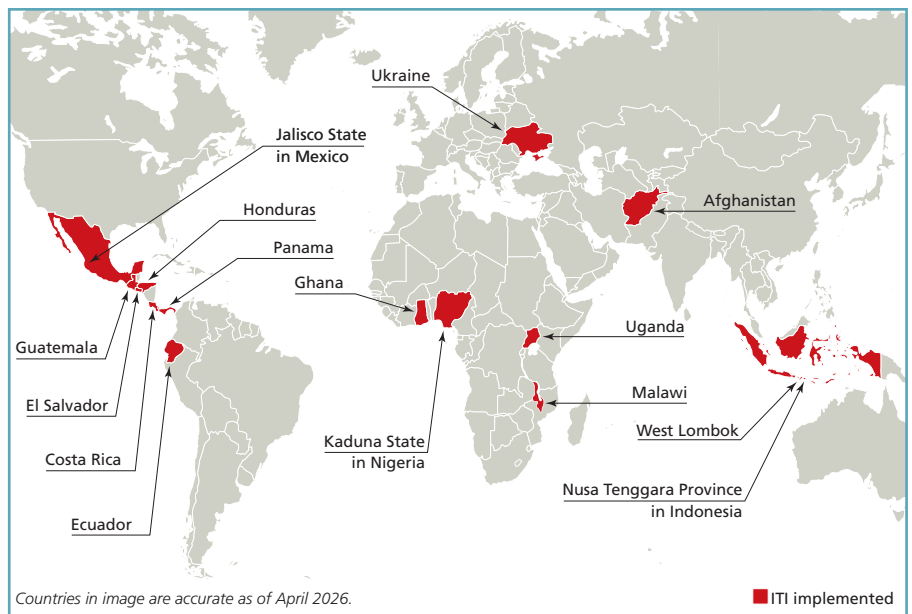
CoST – the Infrastructure Transparency Initiative – is a leading global non-profit that works with governments, civil society, and the private sector to help ensure that when governments spend money on infrastructure, the process is transparent, money is used efficiently, and the infrastructure built meets community needs.

“One of the ITI’s greatest benefits is that it provides clear, evidence-based recommendations that governments can directly implement to improve transparency and public trust.”

Aida Martínez Mórtoła, CoST Panama Country Manager.

The ITI assesses infrastructure data against:

- ✓ data publication
- ✓ enabling environment
- ✓ capacities and processes
- ✓ citizen participation



Lessons learned:

Experiences across countries show that the Infrastructure Transparency Index (ITI) can support reform in diverse contexts, with several common lessons emerging:

1. Diagnosis is a roadmap for reform

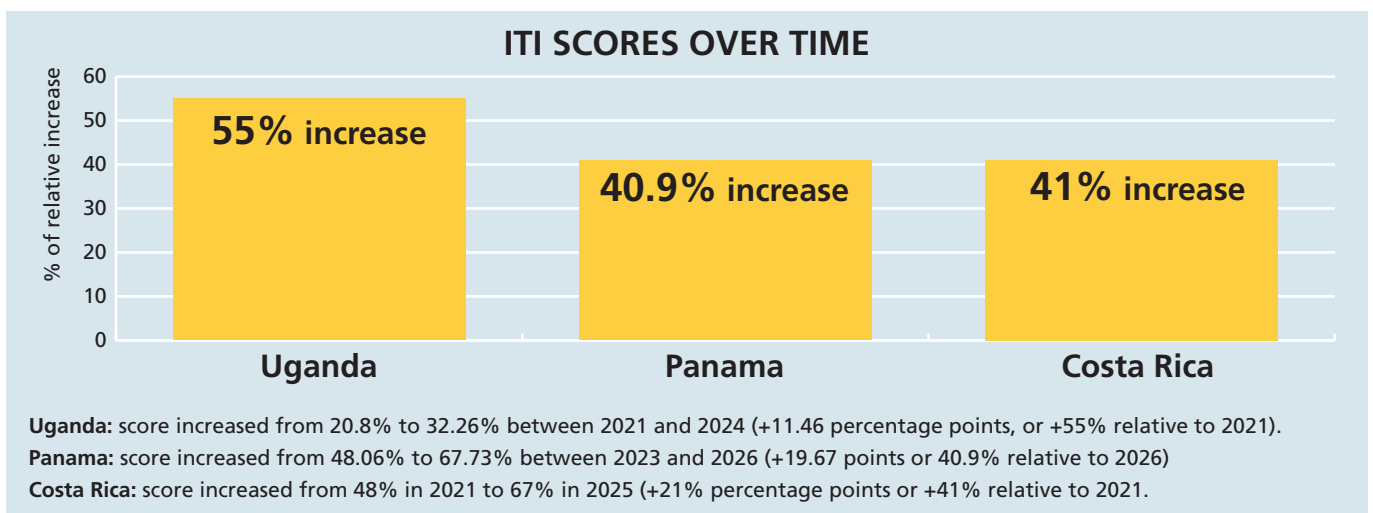
The ITI does more than measure transparency - it helps governments identify concrete priorities for action by highlighting gaps in regulatory frameworks, institutional capacity, data publication practices and public participation. This equips local leaders with the evidence needed to convene informed policy discussions and build consensus around reform. In countries such as Ecuador and Costa Rica, these insights have shaped national policy debates and contributed to legislative reforms.

2. Gaps persist between data publication frameworks and practice

Many countries have strong data frameworks on paper, but the ITI reveals gaps in how data is published in practice which leaders can use to prioritise and drive improvements. In Panama, this led to the integration of national transparency platforms and automated monitoring of project data publication. While in West Lombok, Indonesia, the ITI supported the development of a centralised, locally owned infrastructure data portal and analytics dashboard.

3. Measuring progress sustains reform momentum

Repeating the ITI allows governments to track improvements and assess whether reforms are delivering results. By benchmarking performance over time, in Uganda, Costa Rica and Panama, the ITI helped sustain reform momentum and accountability, whilst also generating new ideas for strengthening transparency.



These lessons learned are illustrated across the case studies, where the ITI is driving reform through different but complementary pathways. In **Ecuador** and **Panama**, it is strengthening system-level transparency by improving visibility of infrastructure data and integrating platforms to enable more consistent and enforceable practices, which in turn is beginning to surface new risks and questions. In **West Lombok**,

Indonesia the focus has been on building local ownership and enabling more active use of data in planning and oversight. While in **Uganda** and **Costa Rica**, repeated application of the ITI is reinforcing accountability, citizen engagement, and cross-government adoption by supporting more responsive delivery and sustained, iterative reform over time.



Ecuador

The Infrastructure

Transparency Initiative (ITI) assessment of Ecuador

observed inconsistencies in information publication, along with limited alignment with international standards and

challenges in inter-institutional coordination.

In response, to strengthen how infrastructure information is published, used, and governed, Ecuador is:

1. Strengthening infrastructure data publication using CoST tools: Ecuador developed [the CoST Ecuador public data platform](#) aligned with CoST's international data standard (OC4IDS), improving how project information is published, accessed, and understood.

Ecuador's infrastructure data platform includes data on more than **32,000** public infrastructure projects, representing **USD \$9.3 billion** in investment since **2020**

By integrating standardised data and geospatial tools, this is helping to make market activity - including where public money is being spent and who is winning contracts - more visible to both technical and non-technical users.

This in turn is raising new questions about who ultimately owns and controls some of these companies, especially where there may be hidden political links or conflicts of interest. While a beneficial ownership register has been introduced, it is not yet widely used. As a result, the data now being published following the ITI is beginning to highlight where further transparency is needed to better understand risks such as collusion or conflicts of interest. To take reform forward to the next level, Ecuador plans to work with CoST to develop a public beneficial ownership register.

“The ITI has been instrumental in helping Ecuador move from isolated transparency efforts toward a more structured and evidence-based approach.”

Andrés Altamirano, Coordinator of the Public Procurement Observatory of Ecuador – Fundación Ciudadanía y Desarrollo and CoST Ecuador Manager.

2. Embedding open data in procurement and national governance frameworks:

Reforms to the Organic Law of Public Procurement has integrated open data principles into Ecuador's centralised e-procurement system, establishing open contracting as a guiding policy. CoST Ecuador's role has also been formalised within the [National Integrity and Anti-Corruption Plan 2024–2028](#), led by the government's Transparency and Social Control Function (FTCS).

Taken together these reforms mark a shift towards a more institutionalised, whole-of-government approach, which reduces fragmentation and is beginning to reveal how the market operates in practice which supports better identification of risks and targeted future reforms.





West Lombok, Indonesia

In West Lombok, the ITI identified gaps in the availability of infrastructure information across the project lifecycle, limited use of open data

standards, and recommended improvements to the data publication portal alongside stronger institutional capacity for data publication and management.

In response, the CoST West Lombok Multi-Stakeholder Group prioritised reforms to improve data systems and institutional capacity, including:

1. Strengthening the use of infrastructure data:

Around 2,000 pieces of project information were consolidated into the [INTRAS portal](#), creating a more comprehensive and accessible source of infrastructure data. Government officials were trained on data entry and data standards, improving the quality and consistency of published information, while an [analytical dashboard](#) was introduced to help institutions better interpret and use data for planning and oversight. Together, these changes are beginning to support more systematic use of infrastructure data in decision-making and improving the ability of institutions and communities to monitor projects more effectively.

2. Institutionalising and sustaining data publication:

The INTRAS portal was moved from a third-party server to being fully owned and hosted by West Lombok's Government Communications Agency, strengthening institutional ownership. This is reinforced by Regent Law No. 19 of 2023, which mandates the publication of infrastructure data through INTRAS using CoST's international data standard.

Together, these reforms are helping move West Lombok towards a more locally owned and consistently managed system, with stronger use of infrastructure data for planning and oversight.

“The Infrastructure Transparency Index (ITI) helps regional government agencies (OPD) in West Lombok raise awareness and reach out to the community regarding public infrastructure development.”

H. Akhmad Saikhu, Regional Secretary of West Lombok and Former Head of West Lombok's Multi-Stakeholder Group.





Costa Rica

Costa Rica's first ITI was completed in 2021 and highlighted key gaps in the availability of infrastructure data across the project lifecycle, and mechanisms for citizen participation. In response

to findings from successive ITI assessments, CoST Costa Rica and its partners implemented a series of reforms focusing on strengthening institutional capacity, systems and processes, and the legal framework, including:

■ Developing a national infrastructure data platform:

Building on gaps identified through the ITI process, a [national infrastructure data platform](#) based on CoST's international data standard (OC4IDS) has been launched. By bringing data across the whole project lifecycle together in one place, it is improving how information on infrastructure works can be accessed and used by both government and external stakeholders.

■ Strengthening institutional capacity:

Through ITI-linked engagements, stakeholders were trained on

CoST's international data standard (OC4IDS) and shared good practice, leading to improved transparency across procuring entities: The **National Emergency Commission** enhanced data publication and monitoring, the **State Distance University** strengthened document management and internal procedures to improve dissemination and access to information, and the **Poder Judicial** introduced transparency training and are currently working on an OC4IDS open data platform. Together, these actions demonstrate how government are using ITI findings to drive practical improvements in how infrastructure data is published and used for decision-making.

■ Strengthening the legal and regulatory framework:

Findings from the ITI have been discussed in national policy discussions, contributing to reforms of the General Law on Public Procurement (No. 9986) in 2022 and the Framework Law on Access to Public Information (No. 10554) in 2024. These reforms strengthened the enabling environment for infrastructure transparency and ensured momentum despite changes in leadership.

■ Using public engagement to drive momentum:

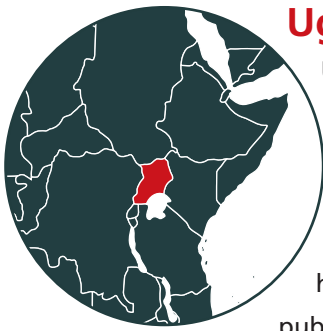
ITI findings have also been disseminated through media, public forums, and stakeholder dialogues. This helps maintain pressure on institutions to improve how infrastructure information is published.

As a result, Costa Rica improved the enabling environment for greater publication and use of data, seen by their relative ITI score increasing by **41%** in four years.



“ The ITI has helped identify key gaps in infrastructure transparency while supporting institutions to improve how data is managed and published. This creates the conditions for more informed decision-making, both within institutions and by the public.”

Estibaliz Pérez Pérez, Public Policy and Innovation Specialist and CoST Costa Rica Manager.



Uganda

Uganda conducted its first ITI assessment in 2021 and repeated the exercise three years later to track progress. The initial ITI highlighted gaps in data publication, citizen

participation, and institutional capacity. Following reforms, Uganda's second ITI score saw a 55% relative increase demonstrating the value of the ITI in identifying opportunities for improvement, embedding transparency more systematically across sectors, and securing buy-in from decision makers.

In response to recommendations from both ITIs, the Government of Uganda, working with stakeholders like the Champion's office, the Ministry of Works and Transport, and the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA), implemented a range of reforms, including:

1. Strengthening performance monitoring and accountability:

New systems were introduced to track which agencies are publishing infrastructure project information, and to highlight those that are not. The Ministry of Works and Transport under its National Roads Department (formerly Uganda National Roads Agency) began publishing quarterly performance updates on road projects, increasing visibility of project delivery to increase accountability.

“ No one grows without a rhythm of accountability. CoST's ITI is a great monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning tool to expand sustainability for infrastructure information publication.”

Violet Jolly, Africa Freedom of Information Centre (AFIC) and Project Assistant, CoST Uganda.

2. Enhancing public engagement and feedback mechanisms:

The National Roads Department also established two-way mechanisms to collect and respond to public infrastructure complaints, including Grievance Management Committees across road projects. Strengthening communication between government and the public in this way is helping to create more structured feedback loops, improve responsiveness to citizen concerns, and better align infrastructure delivery with local needs.

The ITI in Uganda is helping to translate diagnosis into practical improvements on the ground, including how projects are delivered.

In Kampala, findings from the first ITI highlighted safety risks linked to open manholes in flood-prone areas. In response, the City Authority installed warning signs and information boards in high-risk locations in Nakawa and Bugolobi – also leading to similar measures being rolled out across other divisions.

By strengthening accountability mechanisms, enabling citizen participation, and tracking whether agencies are publishing project information, this is creating more consistent oversight and responsiveness across institutions.





Panama

The ITI in Panama helped identify opportunities to strengthen the regulatory framework, increase the availability of project information during the construction phase, and improve

citizen participation. In addition, the ITI found that data on the transparency platform [Panama en Obras](#) was being uploaded manually, creating inefficiencies, and that there were significant discrepancies between [Panama en Obras](#) and [PanamaCompra](#), the public procurement platform.

“The ITI has been a key tool for identifying concrete gaps in Panama’s infrastructure transparency ecosystem and turning them into actionable reforms. The ITI has not only improved the availability and quality of data but also strengthened coordination between institutions and increased accountability.”

Aída Martínez Mórtola, CoST Panama Country Manager.

In response, the General Directorate of Public Procurement worked with CoST Panama to implement a series of reforms to strengthen infrastructure data systems, improve co-ordination, and build institutional capacity:

1. Strengthening the regulatory framework:

[Resolution No. DGCP-758-2023](#) established that infrastructure project data on [Panama en Obras](#) should be published in line with CoST’s international data standard (IDS). This provides a clearer and more consistent basis for data publication and enables the General Directorate of Public Procurement to systematically monitor and hold procuring entities accountable.

2. Improving data integration across procurement platforms:

The infrastructure data platform [Panama en Obras](#) has been interconnected with the public procurement platform [PanamaCompra](#), automating the transfer of project data and reducing discrepancies between systems. This is improving the consistency of published data while reducing reliance on manual entry; making it easier for authorities to manage and monitor information across the project lifecycle.

Bringing this data together is also providing a clearer picture of how the infrastructure market operates. This is beginning to raise questions about who ultimately owns and controls winning firms, particularly where there may be hidden political links or risks of collusion. While Panama has established a legal framework for a beneficial ownership register under Law 129 (2020), it is not yet publicly accessible. As a result, the data is starting to highlight where further transparency is needed, and Panama plans to work with CoST to better connect infrastructure and beneficial ownership data.



3. Building a culture of data transparency across government:

Infrastructure-delivering entities and municipalities, in partnership with the Association of Mayors of Panama, were trained on the CoST international data standard and how to manage project information. An automated monitoring system in Panama en Obras now allows the General Directorate of Public Procurement to identify which entities are not updating project data which helps hold entities to account.

4. Supporting implementation and awareness:

Joint workshops and one-to-one meetings with procuring entities were conducted to communicate ITI findings and raise awareness of broader transparency reforms, helping to build shared understanding, improve communication across institutions, and support stronger buy-in for implementation across government.

In Panama, the ITI has helped turn identified gaps into practical reforms that are changing how infrastructure data is managed. By linking platforms and introducing automated monitoring, institutions are now better able to track, verify, and act on project information. The results speak for themselves with a 40.9% relative increase in their ITI score within three years.



Looking ahead

The case studies in this report show how the Infrastructure Transparency Index (ITI) is being used not only to diagnose gaps, but to drive practical reforms in how infrastructure is planned, delivered, and overseen. Building on this experience, the ITI can be applied by any government or region using [CoST's open-access tools and guidance](#).

CoST is now supporting the expansion of the ITI through coordinated regional and global efforts, enabling countries to benchmark performance, learn from each other, and accelerate reform. The [ITI website](#) is making it easier to compare results and track progress over time, strengthening its value as a tool for accountability and decision-making.

Over time, the changes set in motion by ITI recommendations contribute to better outcomes: infrastructure that is more effectively delivered, services that better meet public needs, and greater trust in how public resources are used.

If you are interested in applying the ITI or finding out more information contact:

CoST@infrastructuretransparency.org
