

Terms of reference for the CoST International Advisory Group (IAG)

These Terms of Reference apply to the CoST pilot phase only

Background

1. The Construction Sector Transparency Initiative (CoST) has been established in order to promote transparency and accountability in publicly-financed infrastructure projects around the world. The International Advisory Group (IAG) is central to the governance of the initiative.
2. This document seeks to define the role and responsibilities, functions, and authority of the IAG during the pilot phase of CoST.

Governing values and principles

3. The IAG must serve the overall objectives of the CoST initiative and conduct itself in a manner that is consistent with the values and principles that underpin CoST itself.
4. The IAG should be broadly representative and inclusive of the main interests that are at stake in the CoST initiative. This means that each pilot country MSG, civil society, the supporting donors and industry experts are represented.
5. The IAG must itself strive for maximum transparency in the way it reaches decisions and goes about its business. It should promote an inclusive, participatory process and encourage consensus.
6. The IAG country representatives must ensure close collaboration and cooperation with the relevant MSGs. The MSGs need to be informed about the work of the IAG in a timely and adequate form.

Membership

7. The international secretariat appointed an initial Chairperson of the IAG. This is a paid, part-time position. The IAG membership is responsible for the appointment of a Deputy Chairperson from among the members. The Deputy Chairperson position is a volunteer position.
8. The CoST pilot country MSGs must each nominate one representative to serve on the IAG. This person has the obligation to bring issues from the MSG to the attention of the IAG; and to carry back to the MSG the decisions, recommendations and messages of the IAG. The country representatives are volunteers.

DRAFT for discussion – applicable to the pilot phase only

9. Additional experts (maximum four) will be appointed to the IAG by the IAG Chairperson in consultation with the pilot country members. In selecting candidates, the Chairperson shall seek to ensure that there is:

- Broad and balanced representation of the main interests and stakeholders in CoST, including civil society.
- Independence of outlook and thought leadership in the functional areas most important to the success and impact of the CoST initiative;
- Geographical diversity, especially in terms of the balance between the global North and South;
- Willingness and availability to serve the IAG on an expenses-only basis (no fees are provided to IAG members).

All four positions for experts are volunteer positions.

10. The donors supporting the CoST initiative (DFID and World Bank) will each nominate one IAG member.

11. It is a condition of continued service on the IAG that each member must enjoy the full confidence of their IAG colleagues and (where appropriate) their national MSGs.

The role and responsibilities of the IAG

12. The IAG is an oversight and advisory rather than executive body. The primary role of the IAG is to offer independent advice and guidance to the CoST donors (DFID and World Bank), the International Secretariat, and the pilot country MSGs. The main executive function within the CoST initiative rests with the national MSGs, who draw their mandate and authority from their own separate terms of reference. The CoST International Secretariat is charged with the effective functioning of the initiative, including support to the IAG.

13. Through the eminence and leadership skills of its members, the IAG should aim to set policy and strategic objectives for the CoST initiative as a whole and to exercise oversight over the attainment or otherwise of those objectives.

14. Pursuant to this, the IAG shall provide the International Secretariat and the MSGs, as appropriate or on request, with formal recommendations on CoST policy issues.

15. The IAG will receive reports every two months from the international secretariat on the overall progress of CoST, highlighting especially any challenges to the success of the initiative and the remedial action that may be necessary.

16. The IAG country representatives will ensure that they collaborate with the relevant MSGs as IAG advice needs to be grounded in knowledge of needs and experiences.

17. The IAG Chairperson is responsible for i) chairing the IAG meetings and facilitating IAG dialogue; ii) representing the IAG and CoST and iii) disseminating lessons learned. The IAG Chairperson derives his/ her mandate from IAG decisions and follows IAG decisions and recommendations. The IAG Chairperson is supported by the International Secretariat.

Meetings and procedure

18. Subject to budgetary constraints, the IAG will aim to meet at least twice in each year, once in the UK and once in another pilot country. These two or three day meetings will be organised by the International Secretariat. IAG members are ultimately responsible for ensuring their travel and visa requirements are met in order to attend.
19. Shorter meetings of three hours will also be convened at least twice per year by video conference, using facilities provided by the World Bank or DFID offices in the pilot countries.
20. IAG members are expected to attend every meeting, including all separate sessions of the proceedings. In the case that a pilot country member is unable to attend a meeting, he or she should inform the International Secretariat at least one month in advance; and must make arrangements to send a replacement representative. IAG members are also expected to have read all related background documents before arriving at the meetings; and to read the minutes before they are finalised.
21. The agenda for IAG meetings will be drawn up by the Chairperson in consultation with the IAG members and the International Secretariat, which will be responsible for producing minutes of IAG meetings and a record of its decision making. The record of the IAG decisions will be prepared by the International Secretariat in collaboration with the IAG Chair. The International Secretariat will also disseminate information about IAG outputs or decisions as agreed with the IAG Chairperson.
22. It shall be the responsibility of the Chairperson and the IAG membership to try to reach consensus. If no consensus is possible and a decision is essential, then a vote shall be taken and the decision referred to DFID with information on the strength of feeling among the different composite groups of the IAG.
23. The IAG may be required to issue recommendations in between formal meetings. In this case, email communication between the group leading to a clear outcome will be facilitated by the Chairperson.