

The CoST champion

Background

1. The CoST Initiative is designed to address two linked problems through the application of transparency:

- The construction sector is one of the most corrupt sectors of economic activity in many countries. This undermines the rule of law and damages economic development.
- In many cases, procuring entities contribute to the problem by lack of proper cost control and procedures for monitoring progress within a project.

2. The central focus of CoST is the National Multi-stakeholder Group (MSG). The MSG will use expert support to assess indications of waste or loss within a construction project that may have been the result of lack of transparency or ineffective procedures. The MSG will be responsible for how that information is used. An International Advisory Group, including country representatives and academics, construction experts and representatives of civil society and donors provides strategic advice on CoST global policies and process. An International Secretariat supports the IAG and the national MSGs with technical, financial and administrative assistance.

3. The initiative will inevitably raise political and procedural, even legal, issues in the participating countries, because it will reveal possible shortcomings procuring entities do not currently control well, for example costs, tender processes, contract awards and possible wrongdoing by contractors. This is likely to create media and political interest and political and institutional pressure. It is also likely to lead to institutions taking a defensive attitude even if the shortcomings are a result of low capacity or lack of due process, and not the result of mistakes or dishonesty by individuals.

4. Proper implementation of the CoST Initiative will therefore require strong, senior and experienced leadership in each participating country. The initiative cannot be meaningful without the real commitment of multiple key stakeholders; but some stakeholders may misunderstand, object to or even resent the CoST objectives and what is required of them.

5. It is therefore necessary that a high profile “CoST Champion” is found within each participating country. This person will be of Ministerial or high official rank, with good political credentials and public image, and a commitment to the greater efficiency and increased quality that CoST should bring to the construction sector.

The Role of the Champion: Leadership

6. The primary role of the Champion will be to give leadership to the Initiative in his or her country giving CoST activities high visibility, spreading knowledge of CoST at senior levels,

encouraging media and other interest and support, and helping to open doors when necessary. He or she will be the national point of contact on CoST for Ministerial colleagues and other key governance bodies (eg Parliament, the Presidency, the Prime Minister's Office etc) foreign Ambassadors and ranking members of relevant regional and international organisations such as the African Union and the World Bank, as well as UK DFID and others. The champion will represent his or her country at high-level international Ministerial meetings, where diaries permit. Perhaps the most important contribution of the Champion will be to use his or her strategic position to help overcome challenges at key moments.

Support for the Champion

7. The primary support for the CoST champion will be provided by the MSG. The MSG should therefore ensure that regular reports are made to the Champion on national progress, issues and opportunities. The country representative on the IAG will be responsible for ensuring that the MSG and Champion are properly briefed on IAG discussions. The CoST International Secretariat will report to the national Champions and MSGs on progress within CoST overall and on lessons learned through a quarterly letter, agreed with the Chairman of the IAG, communicating programme developments. The Chairman of the International Secretariat will respond to any specific request from a Champion for advice or technical assistance. Champions may also wish to have direct access to and support from fellow Champions. The International Secretariat Chairman will help facilitate such relationships as necessary.