

Strengthening integrity in the water sector

Evidence from CoST Assurance

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Outline

1. Introduction to CoST
Who, What and How
2. Common integrity issues in water infrastructure
Our sample of water projects
Common integrity issues
Impacts
3. How change can happen
4. Recommendations

Introduction to CoST

Who we are and what we do

A global initiative



Spaces for
participation and
inclusion



A multi-stakeholder
approach

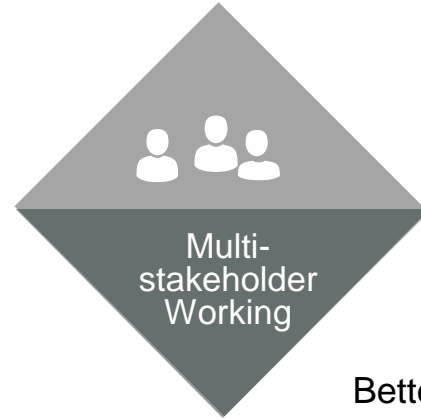


Infrastructure that is
resilient, inclusive,
sustainable and
leaves no-one behind

How do we do it?

Multi-stakeholder Working

Government, industry and civil society work together.



Disclosure

Disclosure of information using the CoST Infrastructure Data Standard (CoST IDS) and OC4IDS format.

Social Accountability

Use of information by civil society for accountability.



Assurance

Independent third-party review of projects to assess quantity and quality of disclosure, and identify red flags.

Better value for
money
&
better quality
services

Common integrity issues in water infrastructure

Our sample of water projects

- 46 projects between 2016 and 2021 (11% of the total projects) \$430m.
- Afghanistan, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Malawi, Thailand, Uganda.
- Improvement of sewage systems, expanding water supply, construction of water facilities & water kiosks, drilling wells & boreholes, flood relief systems, developing dams & reservoirs.
- Procuring entities: Federal Entities (76%), Municipalities (17%) and State Development Agencies/Funds (7%).

Common integrity issues

Transparency

50% of CoST IDS

Lowest Uganda (7.5%)
highest Thailand (90%)

Afghanistan: transparency
level depends on the PE

Trend: less transparency as
the project evolves

Accountability

Scattered information not
systematically disclosed

A data environment with
accessibility challenges

Risks for accountability

Common integrity issues

Planning

30 out of 46 projects.

- No feasibility studies
- Additional works due to inadequate preparation

Tender

- Irregularities
- Inconsistencies
- Questionable decisions

Impacts



Flood Relief Project, Songkhla Province, Thailand

- Project to improve reservoir capacity and increase water storage for agriculture
- EIA not available – questions if it was developed
- Community not consulted or informed
- Social conflicts related to fair amount of land compensation

- Issues also identified:
 - ecosystem destruction
 - extinction of wildlife
 - road collapse
 - severe dust
 - vibration
- Villagers can't use the water from the canal
- Project not finalised - impact on expected delivery/operation
- Impact on water availability

Impacts



Construction of Water Supply Network in Faizabad, Afghanistan

- Project to build a drinking water supply network
- Design problems: inappropriate location of val boxes and reservoirs by the mountains
- Lack of protective walls exposing the structure to water flood and rock fall risks

- Incomplete survey and environmental assessments
- Assurance also identified lack of maintenance
- ‘Blind’ design + no adequate assessments + no public consultation + no maintenance + climate change =

Risks for project operation

Risks for water availability

How change can happen

A sea change

- CoST approach prompted the National Water Authority (NWARA) in Afghanistan to establish a 'backup unit'
- In less than one year:
 - 302 projects surveyed
 - 215 projects designed
- Less room for malpractices in planning, tender and delivery
- Lower risks of non-operational projects

A bit closer to achieving SDG 6



Senior engineers from the design unit and backup unit discuss NWARA projects

Recommendations

Improve transparency of water infrastructure, applying CoST internationally recognised standards where information is disclosed systematically, on a consolidated manner and throughout the project cycle

Leverage stakeholder participation to help identify risks and grey areas in the planning and delivery of water infrastructure



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