

Executive Summary

Infrastructure Transparency Index (ITI)

CoST Guatemala 2025

The Infrastructure Transparency Index is a tool developed by the International Infrastructure Transparency Initiative (CoST) that measures the levels of transparency and the quality of processes associated with public works, from planning to execution and accountability. Its purpose is to generate useful information that strengthens public management, promotes transparency, and fosters citizen participation.

In its first edition in Guatemala, corresponding to the year 2025, the ITI evaluated 60 infrastructure projects executed by 30 public institutions selected for their level of investment. These projects cover sectors such as health, education, social development, and municipal infrastructure, and include ministries, central government implementing units, decentralized and autonomous entities, as well as local governments. The analyzed sample covered approximately 80 percent of the national budget allocated to public works during the evaluated period, providing a broad and representative view of the sector.

In the overall result, Guatemala achieved a national score of 65 out of 100, placing it slightly below Costa Rica and above Honduras, Panama, and El Salvador in the Central American context, with a national average of 65 points among the evaluated entities, although with significant differences between the best and worst performing institutions.

The index analyzes four key dimensions: Enabling Environment, Capacities and Processes, Citizen Participation, and Information Disclosure. In the Enabling Environment, the existence of a solid regulatory framework and national digital platforms, such as Guatecompras, which facilitate access to public information, was identified as a strength; however, it was observed that this legal and technological foundation has not yet fully translated into better practical results or effective transparency in project management. In Capacities and Processes, although some institutions have internal

procedures and specialized personnel, significant limitations persist related to a lack of technical staff, high employee turnover, and poor process systematization, which affects the consistent implementation of transparency practices. Citizen Participation proved to be the weakest dimension, since, despite the existence of formal mechanisms that allow it, in practice citizen participation throughout the project lifecycle is very low, with little community feedback.

A notable exception was the Municipality of Huehuetenango, which achieved a perfect score in this dimension, demonstrating that it is possible to actively involve the population when there is the will and appropriate mechanisms. Information Disclosure was the best-performing dimension nationwide, with an average of over 73 points, reflecting a high degree of proactive transparency, as most entities publish key project information throughout their lifecycle. However, gaps persist in the disclosure of more detailed information and in reactive transparency, evidenced by the very low response rate to requests for additional information and the limited availability of data on contract modifications, cost overruns, and extensions of deadlines.

In general terms, the ITI Guatemala 2025 shows significant progress in the proactive publication of information and the use of digital platforms, supported by a robust legal framework, but it also reveals relevant gaps between data availability and its effective use for accountability and improving project outcomes. Information disclosure was the best-rated aspect, while citizen participation showed the lowest results. At the level of specific indicators, high levels of compliance were identified in the publication of mandatory data, contrasting with very limited performance in responding to information requests and documenting contractual changes. The analysis also revealed considerable variation among entities, with some institutions far exceeding the national average and others showing significant lags, indicating that transparency has not been consolidated uniformly across the public sector.

Among the exemplary cases are the Municipality of Guatemala City, which topped the index with more than 81 points thanks to the institutionalization of transparency practices, the existence of a solid technical team, and clear procedures, as well as the Municipality of Huehuetenango, which stood out for its focus on citizen participation. Other national entities, such as the

Ministry of Culture and Sports, The Judicial Branch and the Tax Administration Superintendency also demonstrated outstanding performance, particularly in information disclosure and institutional capacity, suggesting that resource allocation, staff professionalization, and institutional commitment generate concrete results.

Based on these findings, the ITI proposes recommendations aimed at strengthening technical and institutional capacity through the recruitment, training, and retention of qualified personnel; integrating transparency as a cross-cutting principle of public management; promoting effective mechanisms for citizen participation in all phases of projects; ensuring the complete and up-to-date disclosure of information; improving the planning and management of projects with adequate pre-investment studies and sustainability criteria; guaranteeing resources for the operation and maintenance of infrastructure; and promoting periodic monitoring and continuous institutional learning through the recurring application of the index and the exchange of best practices among entities.

The ITI Guatemala 2025 diagnosis shows that the country has made progress and has positive experiences that can be replicated, but it also faces significant challenges in closing the gap between regulations and practice, so that transparency translates into better-planned projects, with lower cost overruns, greater citizen participation, and a sustainable impact for the benefit of the Guatemalan population.