

New transparency platform launched for city projects

By Betty Amamukirori

A new web-based platform has been launched to provide public, government agencies, civil society and contractors access to information on infrastructural development projects in the city.

The platform, dubbed the Uganda System for Electronic Open Data Records (USER), also provides an avenue for the users to monitor the progress of ongoing government construction projects, monitor already finished projects, get information on new projects and give feedback.

USER has eight components which include the dashboard, home page, the projects being undertaken in the city and their costs, section for comments, maps of the projects, reports made, resources and frequently asked questions.

It was launched on Friday by Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) in partnership with the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), Anti-Corruption Coalition Uganda (ACCU) and United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The event took place in the OPM.

According to Sam Sserunkuma, the deputy executive director of KCCA, they will be able to respond to the questions from the general public within 48 hours. Questions from the public will also be copied to ACCU so that it puts KCCA to task to respond to questions.

Maron Agaba, an official from KCCU, said they got inspiration from South Korea whose clean construction system has so far paid off, making the country a technology powerhouse.

He said South Korea faced a series of construction challenges until when it came up with the system to help improve efficiency in public administration and transparency in construction management.



***"The platform is a clear demonstration of the government's effort in promoting transparency and accountability in all its operations and projects."** Kamya*

"We had a team that went there and benchmarked and brought the Ugandan system that does the same work to enable citizens

to get information, monitor and provide feedback on shoddy work," he said.

He also said several engagements were held with different stakeholders through which they got feedback and came up with the final design of the system.

He said the project management information system will be housed at KCCA where information will be entered into it and only those appropriate to the public will be picked and displayed through an application programming interface. For the start, the system will be updated periodically.

Thomas Ole-Kuyan, the UNDP deputy country director, said the system was designed by South Korea in 2013 as an anti-corruption innovation to enhance transparency, protect right of contractors and construction workers and promote citizens' right to know what is happening in government's construction projects in Kampala.

Ole-Kuyan said the platform will promote the citizens' right to know and empower them to engage with the government in monitoring construction projects.

"It will strengthen the crusade against corruption, promote accountability and ensure efficiency in service delivery," he said.

The Minister for Kampala, Beti Kamya, said the platform is a clear demonstration of the Government's effort in promoting transparency and accountability in all its operations and projects.

Cissy Kagaba, the executive director ACCU, said the platform will help rid the construction sector of unscrupulous people who take advantage of the technicalities and secrecy surrounding it to steal government money.

She said the platform is a critical tool in fighting corruption and will help the public to develop trust and confidence in the country's leadership.

Ruganda donated sh200