Opening Extractives

Unlocking the benefits
of ownership data

Why is structured beneficial ownership data important, and how can you use it?

Learn about beneficial ownership data, and discover tools from Open Ownership that let you connect, visualise and analyse data.

October / November 2022

Background

Structured data improves the functionality of beneficial ownership (BO) information, reduces the cost of producing, using and maintaining BO information, and has a greater chance of meeting beneficial ownership transparency (BOT) policy goals than unstructured data.

Since 2019, Open Ownership has developed a series of tools that help collect, publish and analyse BO data:

- ❖ A global Register with BO data on 8M+ companies and 22.5M+ connections explaining how people own or control companies, from four jurisdictions (the United Kingdom, Ukraine, Denmark and Slovakia), enhanced using OpenCorporates data;

- ❖ The Beneficial Ownership Data Standard (BODS), an open standard to help government implementers and data users collect, publish and use high-quality structured BO data;

- ❖ A range of tech tools to convert BODS data into other formats for further analysis (csv, various SQL formats);

- ❖ Datasette, a tool to search, filter and investigate all of the data held in the Open Ownership Register;

- ❖ The BODS data review tool to check if the data is structured correctly, identify what mistakes have occurred and explain how to fix them;

- ❖ A BODS data visualiser that converts a JSON file into a company ownership diagram for better understanding;

- ❖ The BODS data generator, a spreadsheet template that allows anyone to convert BO information into BODS, in order to examine or visualise it;

- ❖ A prototype tool called Bluetail to show how beneficial ownership and open contracting data can be combined to raise red flags on corruption risks in public procurement.

Some of these tools have been used by government implementers, such as in Armenia, which has used Open Ownership's visualisation tools in their Business e-Register in order to visualise data on company ownership.

Use cases

Other groups have also created free tools which provide interesting examples of how to use BO data:

➢ The **Offshore Leaks database** from the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) contains open beneficial ownership data on 810,000 offshore companies, foundations and trusts from the Panama Papers, Pandora Papers and other leaks;

➢ **Truintel** by Blue Anvil, which combines UK BO data with open contracting data, Coronavirus grant data, parliamentary data, environmental data and sanctions data;

➢ **OpenScreening** by OpenSanctions and Linkurious which maps leaked BO data from the ICIJ's research to sanctions data, in order to let anyone visualise, investigate and analyse connections;

➢ **Politikus from the Sinar Project** which tracks positions held by Malaysian politically exposed persons or elected representatives, senior public officials and their known associates;

➢ The **Global Legal Entity Identifier Foundation (GLEIF)** publishes open data on "who owns whom" from some companies which have a Legal Entity Identifier. This is not BO data but instead reveals which companies own other companies.

❖ **We are running these free workshops because we want more organisations and individuals to promote the publication of structured, open, BO data, to be able to understand it, and to use these tools in their work.**

Workshop objectives

This series of three, free online workshops is targeted at data users to help them understand the importance of structured data for comparison and analysis, to explore how the Beneficial Ownership Data Standard (BODS) works, and to showcase the use of tools for further analysis.

We will:

❖ Introduce the importance of structured data and what BODS is;
❖ Test how the technical tools Open Ownership have developed can be used, and gather use cases based on participants' interests;
❖ Build a data analysis community of practice for people interested in learning more about the technological side of BO data, in order to increase their understanding, creation and use of structured BO data.

By the end of these workshops, we expect participants to be able to:

❖ Create their own BODS data;
❖ Compare it with international data sources; and
❖ Be capable of using a variety of the different tools available for increasing their data use and understanding.

Who should apply?

We would like to invite data journalists, data analysts, civil society representatives, advocates, academics and anyone interested in learning how to build their own BODS data, and cross-reference it with international sources to sign up for these workshops.

Selected participants should be based, or work with data from Argentina, Armenia, Ghana, Indonesia, Liberia, Mexico, Mongolia, Nigeria, Senegal, or Zambia[1].

No previous knowledge in programming or working with large datasets is required. However, we encourage those who work on data analysis, technology or research using datasets to participate, as they will be in an ideal situation to put their new knowledge into practice.

All three workshops will be run in English, and most materials will be also available only in English (although the Beneficial Ownership Data Standard is also translated into Spanish and Russian). There will not be simultaneous interpretation, so participants should be fluent in English in order to follow the workshops.

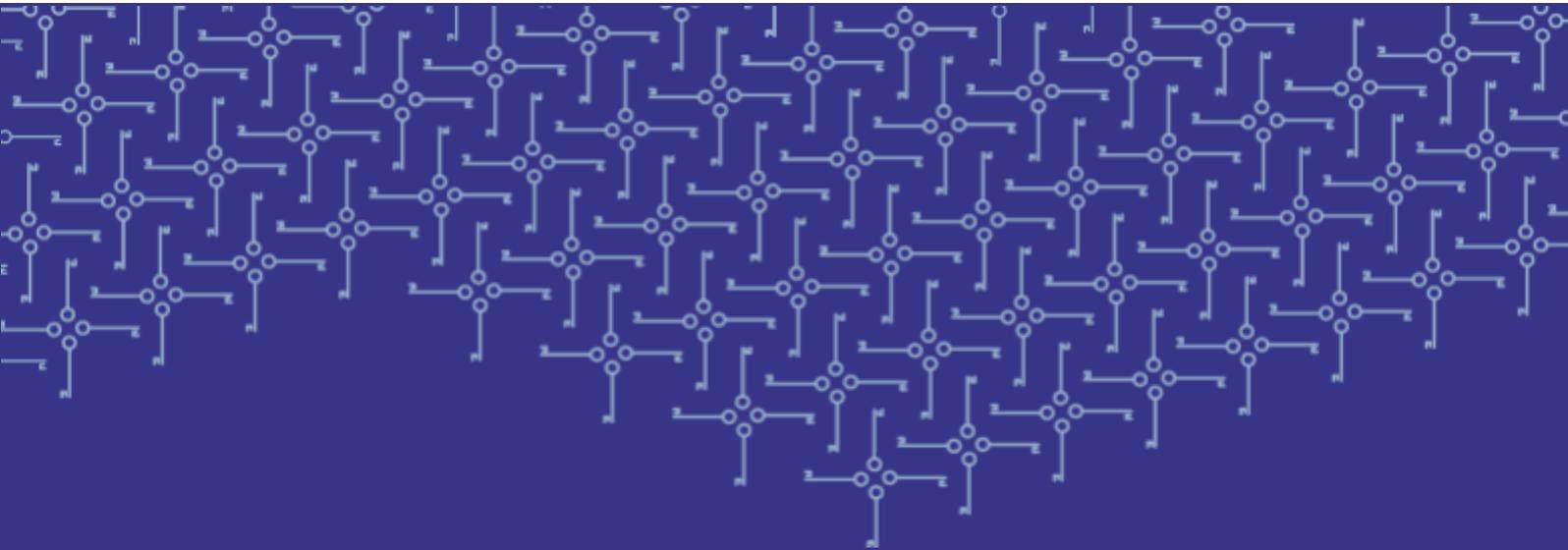[1] Country selection is based on the Opening Extractives programme's target countries: https://eiti.org/opening-extractives

Workshop overview

Workshop No. 1	Workshop No. 2	Workshop No. 3
The benefits and advantages of structured and interoperable beneficial ownership data	**The Open Ownership Register and tools to work with its data**	**Visualising and telling stories with beneficial ownership data**
6 October 2022	27 October 2022	17 November 2022
14:00 BST	14:00 BST	14:00 GMT (please note that the clocks will have gone back by one hour, i.e. be one hour earlier)
Duration: 2 hours	Duration: 2 hours	Duration: 2 hours
We will introduce the global landscape and BO data availability, why we need structured data and common identifiers. We will discuss how BODS works, its key components and fields, and hold a series of exercises to build your own BODS data through the BODS data generator.	We will reflect on Workshop No. 1 and share common errors for building BODS. We will introduce the Open Ownership Register, how it is structured, what data sources it contains and how it can be used. We will use Datasette and other tools to analyse the Register's bulk data, including how to pull beneficial ownership data into a simple spreadsheet (demo here).	We will introduce the data review tool, and how to convert JSON data to xlsx or csv, and use the BODS data visualiser to draw ownership chains based on group work. We will showcase use cases such as OpenScreening, Politikus and Truintel, in order to explore how to build stories from the data used. Finally, we will reflect collectively on what data sources it would be useful to obtain and connect to BO data, and what further projects could be developed.

How to apply

If you would like to take part in these workshops, please **complete this short online form by 15th September**. We will get back to all applicants by 20th September 2022. If you are successful in your application, we will send you further details for joining the online workshops, and preparatory materials.

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