

Open Ownership in Africa

[Open Ownership](#) (OO) is driving the global shift towards transparency over who owns and controls companies. We are working to create a world where governments, businesses, and citizens can readily access and effectively use accurate, complete, and high-quality information on the beneficial owners of companies. As well as improving transparency, this aims to reduce key global and national risks such as corruption and tax evasion, and create a more sustainable business environment.



Group discussions during the regional workshop on BOT and public procurement in Gaborone

We are a globally distributed organisation with team members in Nigeria, South Africa and Zambia, as well as in countries across Asia, Europe and Latin America.

This document provides an overview of Open Ownership's recent and upcoming work to support beneficial ownership transparency in Africa.

Kenya

- During 2021-22 we provided a targeted programme of technical assistance (TA) to leverage beneficial ownership (BO) data in procurement. We provided expert guidance and convened a wide range of stakeholders to advance the use of BO data within public procurement.
- We have provided advice on national BOT reforms, working in partnership with actors including GIZ, FCDO, the World Bank, and civil society actors including the East African Tax and Governance Network, Tax Justice Network Africa.
- We deployed and translated a [technical prototype](#) for connecting BO and procurement data, to evidence the value of connecting these datasets to spot red flags or detect bid rigging in the Kenyan context.
- We are planning to commence the next phase of this work to build the capacity of key agencies (procurement authority, Kenya Revenue Authority) to use beneficial ownership data.

Liberia

- We are providing an in-depth programme of technical assistance to the Government of Liberia to implement its beneficial ownership register in line with EITI and FATF standards.

- Since 2022 we have worked with the Liberia Business Registry to deliver a series of technical capacity-building sessions, provide support on drafting legislative reforms, advise on key issues such as inclusion of non-domestic companies in the maritime sector, and held technical consultations with 40 stakeholders across the public and private sector. These insights will feed into the development of software requirements for Liberia's BO register.

Nigeria

- In 2018 OO was invited by the Nigerian Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) to support its implementation of Nigeria's beneficial ownership register. Working in partnership with the World Bank and Open Government Partnership (OGP), OO supported the CAC to design and deliver an inclusive and purposeful consultation process for BO reforms.
- OO's technologists worked with the CAC and local software contractor to advise on the development and prototype of software for Nigeria's BO register. This aligns with international good practices and uses the [Beneficial Ownership Data Standard](#) to capture usable, structured data. The registry is now live, and will have a public launch in May 2023.
- Our Implementation Team supported the CAC to revise BO data collection forms to capture information about beneficial owners from all existing Nigerian companies as they file their mandatory annual returns, and advised on expanding and aligning Nigeria's regulations with international best practice, resulting in the publication of the new [Persons with Significant Control Regulations 2022](#).

South Africa

- We have provided on-going guidance on the development of BO legislation, participating in the consultation processes for the General Laws Amendment Bill (now Act).
- We produced policy briefings on the BOT of Trusts in South Africa and BOT and Privacy to guide policy and implementation discussions.
- OO's team has provided technical assistance to the Companies and Intellectual Property Commission (CIPC) since 2021, as part of partnership with the Inter-departmental Committee on BO.
- In 2023 we trained 60 law enforcement officers in BO data use, in partnership with UNODC.
- We are continuing to support CIPC in its implementation journey; in response to the recent FATF grey-listing, South Africa has made a commitment to get its registers live. The Trust registry went live on 1 April 2023 and the CIPC register is planned to go live once regulations are finalised.



OO Director Karabo Rajuli at a high-level conference on BOT in South Africa, co-organised with the Department of Public Service and Administration, Financial Intelligence Centre, Open Government Partnership and Corruption Watch.

Zambia

- In 2022 we held workshops to upscale BO data use in Zambia, together with the Mining Cadastre, the Patents and Companies Registration Agency and others. We also trained CSOs and journalists on key BO concepts.
- We recently [published a comprehensive review and analysis](#) of the beneficial ownership laws, regulations and policies in Zambia.
- During the 2023 Summit for Democracy, we held an [event](#) with the Center for International Private Enterprise and partners in Zambia to engage the business community in efforts to improve BOT.

“We believe that the disclosure of beneficial ownership information will lead to good business practice, build confidence and trust and further signal to investors and other stakeholders that transparency and accountability are at the center of mining in Zambia.”

- President Hakainde Hichilema of Zambia

Partnerships and regional events

- Together with the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) we convened representatives from Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, and Zambia in Accra In July 2022 for a three-day peer exchange programme, to promote learning on beneficial ownership disclosures to date.
- Partnering with the UN Office on Drugs and Crime we delivered a [regional workshop on BOT and public procurement](#) in late 2022 with government agencies from over twenty African countries in Gaborone, Botswana.



A regional BOT and public procurement workshop in Gaborone, co-organised with UNODC and CAACC

- We connected with the continent's leading reporters at the [2022 African Investigative Journalism Conference](#) in Johannesburg where we presented our beneficial ownership tools.
- Since 2022 we have collaborated with the African Organisation of English-speaking Supreme Audit Institutions (AFROSAI-E) and Good Governance Africa on beneficial ownership reform and the role of supreme audit institutions.
- A multilateral peer-exchange event will be delivered in June 2023 in Nigeria for representatives from Kenya, Liberia, Namibia, Nigeria and South Africa, in partnership with the Stolen Asset Recovery Initiative (StAR).
- OO and EITI are jointly delivering [Opening Extractives](#), an ambitious five-year global programme to catalyse the availability and use of BO data. The programme combines political and technical engagement with participating countries to implement reforms on beneficial

ownership disclosure in the extractive sector. Within Africa, the programme works with Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal and Zambia. At the event we are delivering with StAR in June 2023, we will launch a Francophone Africa learning hub, drawing on our [French language resources on implementing BOT](#).

Highlights from other countries

- **Botswana** – We are providing technical assistance and aiding legislative review.
- **Cote d'Ivoire** – In 2022 we reviewed draft BO legislation.
- **Madagascar** – We are providing capacity building to government stakeholders in partnership with the Madagascan FIU.
- **Namibia** – We are providing technical assistance, starting with a legislative review.
- **Senegal** – We are providing technical assistance on the harmonisation of the legal framework, and training for law enforcement agencies.
- **Ghana** – We conducted capacity-building and training for Corporate Registry staff, as well as civil society organisations and journalists.

“Our hope is that we can develop clear pathways to ensure that a central register is made publicly available by 2023 and improve and verify the quality of data.”

– **Charles Adu Boahen**,
Deputy Minister of
Finance, Ghana



CSO and media representatives in Ghana are trained to use a beneficial ownership register. Source: Ghana EITI

Further information

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