Call for submissions

Research symposium:
Evidence and impact of beneficial ownership transparency

Date: 26 to 27 February 2026

Location: Hybrid and University of Sussex, Brighton, United Kingdom (see University of Sussex website for directions)

Deadline: 23:59 GMT, 16 November 2025

Contact: research@openownership.org

About the Symposium

Open Ownership, the World Bank Group's Beneficial Ownership Transparency Thematic Working Group (BOT TWG), and the Centre for the Study of Corruption at the University of Sussex invite submissions to the 2026 Research symposium: Evidence and impact of beneficial ownership transparency. After a decade of rapid progress, beneficial ownership transparency (BOT) reforms are set to deliver concrete outcomes in public financial management, including in revenue mobilisation, public spending, and the fight against corruption and financial crime. Globally, there is a high demand for effective digital delivery of BOT, and for this to translate into measurable policy impacts.

This research symposium will take place over one and a half days in February 2026, and aims to support evidence-based policymaking, implementation, and advocacy of BOT. We invite submissions of research projects from researchers, advocates, and practitioners. The Symposium will be designed as a generative dialogue and connection space among researchers and academic experts in the field, as well as hosting a diversity of individuals from academia, multilateral agencies, civil society, and the public sector.

The main purpose of the event is to share and promote novel empirical research on topics related to policy design, effective implementation, use, and impact measurement of BOT for legal vehicles and assets. It also seeks to elevate the topic of BOT on academic research agendas internationally, and to deepen our collective understanding of the field. This includes considering how the disclosure and use of beneficial ownership information of legal vehicles and assets contributes to broader policy goals, such as fairer and more effective taxation, robust public procurement, and broader public policy and economic outcomes.

Themes of interest

We welcome submissions of **published research**, **works in progress**, and **planned research.** Submissions should explore one of the following themes as they relate to BOT: policy design and implementation; impact measurement and data use; and BOT of assets and other horizon issues that push the boundaries of the current BOT paradigm.

1. Policy design and implementation

Submissions could address questions such as:

- Which policy drivers are more likely to make BOT reforms for legal vehicles work in practice?

- How do legal and institutional frameworks, design, and implementation aspects of BOT affect the use of beneficial ownership information and reform outcomes?

- What roles do stakeholders such as governments, civil society, and the private sector play in the policy design and implementation of BOT?

2. Impact measurement and data use

Submissions could address questions such as:

- How, and to what extent, is beneficial ownership information about legal vehicles being used within and outside of government?

- What tools and methods are being or can be applied to assess how effective BOT reforms are at promoting data use? What impact are these tools and methods having?

- What measurable impacts is BOT having in areas such as public procurement, taxation, anti-corruption, and illicit financial flows?

3. Beneficial ownership transparency of assets and horizon issues

Submissions could address questions such as:

- What are the technical and legal mechanisms for having increased BOT of assets at the national level?

- What are the challenges and opportunities for tracking ownership and control of high-value assets across borders?

- What are alternatives to declaration-based collection of information about beneficial ownership?

Submission guidelines

Please submit your application by 16 November 2025 by email to research@openownership.org with the subject line "Research Symposium Submission". Questions can also be sent to this email address.

Please include:

- Title and abstract (max. 300 words)

- Author(s) and institutional affiliation(s)

- Which authors will attend and whether they plan to attend in person (preferrable) or remotely

- A brief explanation as to whether the work is published, in progress, or planned; if in progress or planned, please indicate what you expect will be ready to submit and present in time for the Symposium (max. 100 words)

Please note that selected applicants will be expected to submit their published paper or an unpublished working paper, dataset, or similar substantive output that reflects their work in progress by early February. Failure to demonstrate progress may result in being removed from the agenda.

Funding

We want to include a diversity of participants in the Symposium, including historically underrepresented voices, and are offering a small number of bursaries to support travel and accommodation costs for selected presenters. Examples of criteria for this could include being an early career researcher (e.g. PhD student or post-doc), a researcher from a community that is historically underrepresented in these kinds of fora, or a researcher representing an institution with limited financial resources to support travel.

To apply for a bursary, please include with your submission a brief statement of up to 200 words describing the basis of your funding need and qualification, the amount of funding required, and what you hope to achieve by attending the Symposium. Please note that the relevance of the research project will be a primary consideration for the selection of applicants for bursaries.

Symposium format

The Symposium will be hybrid; however, presenters are strongly encouraged to attend in person. We may offer spaces for both **full presentations** (approximately 15–20 minutes) and **lightning talks** (approximately 5-7 minutes) at the organisers' discretion. A final agenda and further information about logistics and registration will be shared closer to the event.

Beyond presentations, the event will include facilitated discussions that seek to build on the research presented to explore questions such as:

- How can research findings be translated into policy, reform design and implementation, and advocacy agendas?

- What future areas of research could be prioritised to sustain momentum for reforms, shed light on emerging issues, and enhance novel impact studies?

- How can we grow collaboration between researchers, policymakers, and practitioners?

Outcomes

Selected submissions will help shape the agenda for the Symposium and be featured in a **published summary report** highlighting key evidence and findings, as well as insights from the discussion. These could include questions for future research and actionable insights for policymakers and advocates.