BRELA
BUSINESS REGISTRATIONS AND LICENSING AGENCY

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# CONGRATULATION PRESIDENT DR. SAMIA SULUHU HASSAN

CONGRATULATION PRESIDENT
DR. HUSSEIN ALI MWINYI

# CONGRATULATIONS

**on her election as President of the United Republic of Tanzania; His Excellency**

TheMinisterial Advisory Board (MAB), Management and Staff of the Business Registrations and Licensing Agency (BRELA) congratulate Her Excellency President **Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan** on her election as President of the United Republic of Tanzania; His Excellency **Ambassador Dr. Emmanuel John Nchimbi** as Vice President; His Excellency Dr. Hussein Ali Mwinyi on his election as President of Zanzibar and Chairman of the Revolutionary Council; and His Excellency **Dr. Mwigulu Lameck Nchemba** on his appointment as Prime Minister.

# EDITORIAL

## Godfrey Nyaisa

*Chief Executive Officer*

Welcome to the 13th edition of our newsletter.Dear readers, this edition continues our commitment to educating the public on business formalization while providing insights into key initiatives and strategic activities undertaken by institutions across Tanzania.

As we present this edition for the 2025/2026 financial year, I take this opportunity to congratulate Her Excellency President Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan on her election as President of the United Republic of Tanzania; His Excellency Ambassador Dr. Emmanuel John Nchimbi as Vice President; His Excellency Dr. Hussein Ali Mwinyi on his election as President of Zanzibar and Chairman of the Revolutionary Council; and His Excellency Dr. Mwigulu Lameck Nchemba on his appointment as Prime Minister. Their leadership marks a critical phase for advancing Tanzania's development agenda.

In her address during the official opening of the 13th Parliament in Dodoma on November 14, 2025, President Dr. SamiaSuluhu Hassan highlighted the need to accelerate industrial sector growth from 4.8% to 9% annually by 2030.

Early successes have emerged from reforms that established large-scale industrial clusters, which have attracted substantial domestic and international investment.

The President also emphasized the importance of reviewing national trade policies and laws to create a more enabling environment for business and investment. By engaging with international investment platforms across Africa and globally, Tanzania aims to position itself as a prime destination for investors while unlocking the country's abundant resources.

The Business Registrations and Licensing Agency (BRELA), as the gateway to business success for entrepreneurs and investors, plays a central role in this vision. BRELA facilitates the registration of companies, business names, trademarks, industrial licenses, and other essential services.

Under the current administration, the Agency is enhancing online registration systems, streamlining business formalization, and eliminating bureaucratic barriers to contribute meaningfully to national economic growth.

This edition also introduces BRELA's new motto, "BRELA – A Gateway to Business Success," launched by the Minister of Industry and Trade on June 30, 2025. The motto reflects the Agency's commitment to encouraging businesses to formalize operations and leverage BRELA's services to strengthen their enterprises, ensuring transparency, accountability, and operational efficiency.

Throughout this newsletter, readers will find educational content on intellectual property, post-registration services, and other critical areas that enable businesses to fully benefit from formalization. BRELA remains dedicated to supporting entrepreneurs and investors in building a robust, transparent, and investor-friendly business ecosystem in Tanzania.

# HON. KAPINGA COMMENDS BRELA FOR STRENGTHENING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT AND DIGITAL EFFICIENCY

**By Theresa Chilambo**

The Minister for Industry and Trade, Hon Judith Kapinga (Mp), has praised the Business Registration and Licensing Agency (BRELA) for its improved operational performance and its role in creating an enabling environment for starting and running businesses in Tanzania. Speaking after an internal meeting with the agency, Hon Kapinga said she was impressed by the progress made so far and the commitment shown by the institution.

"I have held internal discussions with BRELA, and I sincerely commend them. We spoke extensively about improving their operational efficiency so that the institution can fully achieve the goals outlined by Her Excellency the president" she said.

Over the years, BRELA has evolved into a national gateway for business development within the industrial and trade sectors.

It stands out as a leading Agency operating with more than 90 percent digital achievement, which positions it as a model for modern public service delivery.

In the past five years, the Agency has contributed TZs. 85 billion in dividends to the government, reflecting

*Minister for Industry and Trade, Hon. Judith Kapinga, greets BRELA's Directors and Heads of Departments upon her arrival for an official visit to the Business Registrations and Licensing Agency (BRELA).*

its growing financial performance and strengthening role in economic development.

Hon Kapinga's visit focused on reinforcing key targets, including innovation, efficiency, professionalism, work ethics, and integrity within the institution.

The BRELA's Chief Executive Officer, Godfrey Nyaisa, expressed appreciation for the visit, noting the positive impact it has had on the agency and the entire industrial and trade sector.

"The visit has been highly motivating, especially in emphasizing the need for continuous improvement and operational excellence," he said.

He added that BRELA remains committed to implementing all directives issued by Minister Kapinga to ensure the government's goals of delivering seamless services to citizens are met.

"Our operational systems are integrated with Agencies such as TRA, NIDA, RITA, and others. These interconnections have reduced unnecessary bureaucracy, improved workflow, and significantly enhanced service delivery, he added.

# UNDERSTANDING BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP CONCEPT: PROMOTING TRANSPARENCY IN BUSINESS

*By Jessy Kalinjuna*

**Beneficial ownership:** The key to transparency and trust in Tanzanian business

In today's fast-evolving business environment, transparency is no longer just a regulatory requirement it is a critical driver of trust, investment, and sustainable growth.

In Tanzania, the government, through the Business Registration and Licensing Agency (BRELA), is leading efforts to enhance transparency through the implementation of the Beneficial Ownership (BO) framework. A beneficial owner is the real person behind a company the individual who ultimately controls or benefits from a business, even if his or her name does not appear in official records.

Recognizing the true owners of companies is not merely a legal technicality; it is a powerful tool to prevent misuse of corporate structures for illicit activities such as money laundering, corruption, and tax evasion.

The Companies (BO) Regulations, 2021, require all registered companies to identify their beneficial owners, submit this information through the BO Portal System, and update it whenever changes occur.

A person qualifies as a beneficial owner if they hold at least 5% of shares or voting rights, can appoint or remove directors, or exercise significant influence over company decisions.

“Transparency in ownership strengthens investor confidence, promotes accountability, and ensures that Tanzanian businesses operate with integrity,” BRELA emphasizes.

By disclosing the real people behind companies, we create a business ecosystem that is secure, predictable, and aligned with international best practices, including standards set by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), a global intergovernmental organization that develops policies and recommendations to combat money laundering, terrorist financing, and other threats to the integrity of the international financial system, and the Eastern and Southern Africa Anti-Money Laundering Group (ESAAMLG), a regional body established to support countries in implementing international standards and strengthening measures against money laundering and other financial crimes within the Eastern and Southern Africa region.

Beyond compliance, beneficial ownership disclosure has practical implications. Companies that maintain accurate ownership records reduce the risk of legal disputes, safeguard their reputations, and demonstrate commitment to ethical business conduct. Investors and partners are more likely to engage with companies that are transparent about who truly benefits from their operations.

Failure to comply with BO regulations carries legal and administrative penalties, yet the broader cost is reputational. Companies that fail to maintain transparency may lose trust among investors, business partners, and the public, affecting their credibility and long-term sustainability.

Beyond compliance, beneficial ownership disclosure has practical implications. Companies that maintain accurate ownership records reduce the risk of legal disputes, safeguard their reputations, and demonstrate commitment to ethical business conduct. Investors and partners are more likely to engage with companies that are transparent about who truly benefits from their operations.

Failure to comply with BO regulations carries legal and administrative penalties, yet the broader cost is reputational.

Companies that conceal their true ownership not only jeopardize their operations but also undermine trust in the Tanzanian business environment. In contrast, those that embrace transparency position themselves as leaders in corporate governance and accountability.

BRELA remains committed to supporting businesses in meeting these requirements. Sensitization, guidance, and the BO Portal System ensure that companies can comply effectively without unnecessary burden.

Yet, compliance must be seen not as a formality but as a strategic advantage a way to build credibility, attract investment, and contribute to a transparent economy.

The Beneficial Ownership framework is more than a regulatory measure it is a pathway to a stronger, safer, and more trustworthy business environment in Tanzania.

Companies that recognize this and act accordingly will not only avoid penalties but also gain a competitive edge in an increasingly discerning global market.

# HON. KATAMBI CALLS ON BRELA TO BOOST YOUTH BUSINESS FORMALIZATION EDUCATION

***By Theresa Chilambo***

Deputy Minister for Industry and Trade, Hon. Patrobas Katambi (MP), has urged the Business Registrations and Licensing Agency (BRELA) to strengthen public education, especially for young entrepreneurs, on how to formalize their businesses and secure proper licenses.
Katambi made the call during a visit to BRELA Headquater Office, where he met with the Agency's Management.

He emphasized that the government is focusing heavily on empowering youth, and proper education on business registration is critical to achieving this goal.
"Education is crucial in company
ny registration and licensing. It is important that Tanzanians, particularly young people, are informed about service changes, new initiatives, and challenges that businesses face during registration so that solutions can be provided," he said.

The Deputy Minister highlighted that the government has allocated 30 percent of all tenders to youth-owned companies and introduced a system providing 10 percent of council-level loans for young entrepreneurs.

These measures have encouraged many young people to start businesses and join cooperatives.

"With the right support, guidance, and advice from BRELA, young entrepreneurs can strengthen their businesses, formalize operations, and contribute to national revenue. Those in agriculture, for example, can benefit from agribusiness opportunities," he added.

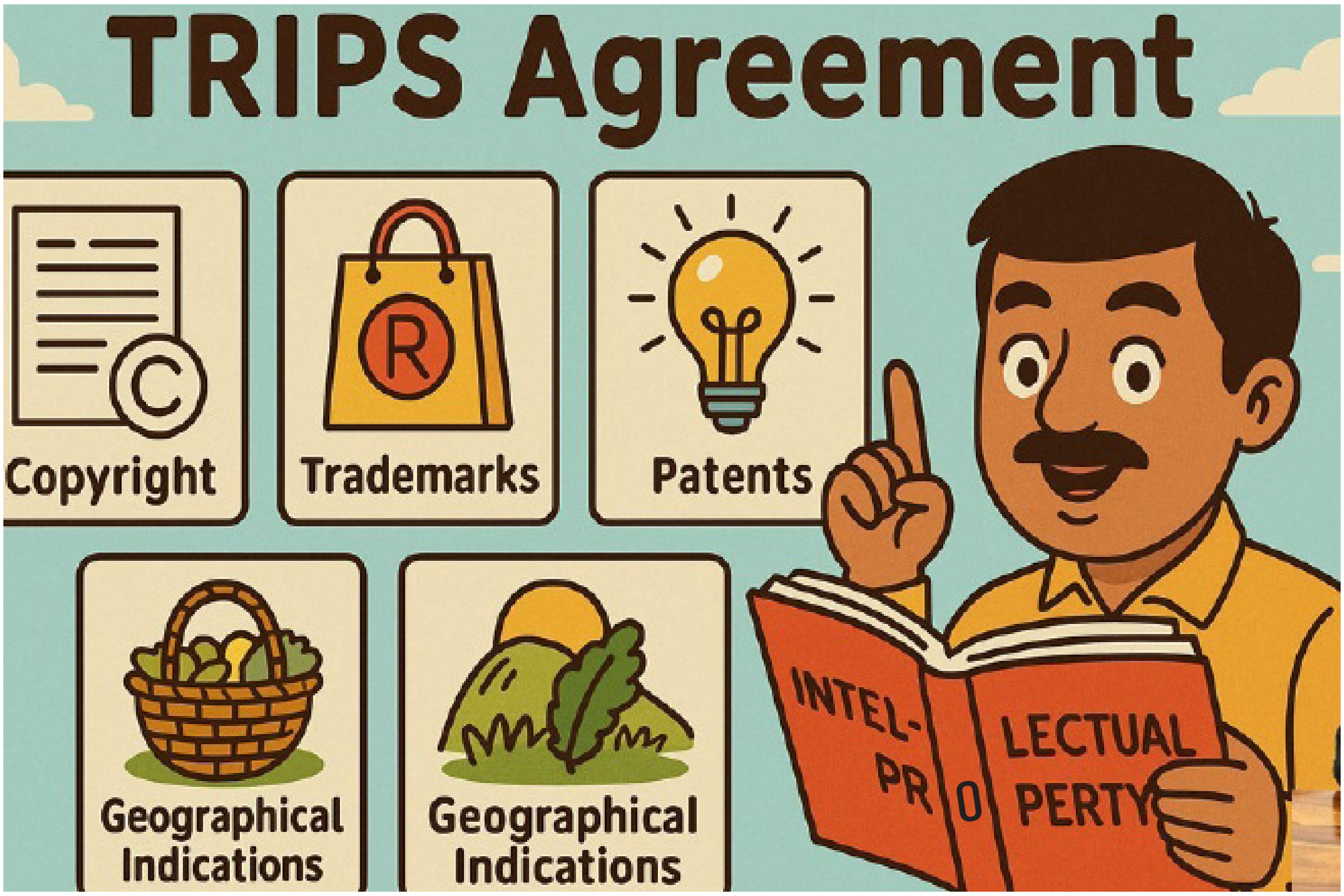
Katambi stressed that there should be no delays or barriers in business registration. "BRELA must act as a bridge, not a barrier, in facilitating business and company registration to keep pace with development," he said.

Speaking on behalf of  Chief Executive Officer of BRELA Mr. Godfrey Nyaisa, Ms. Loy Mhando, Director of Intellectual Property, assured that the Agency will implement the Deputy Minister's directives while continuing to serve citizens efficiently and professionally.
She added that BRELA remains committed to improving its systems to ensure fast and effective services for all Tanzanians.

# GLOBAL POLITICS OF INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY UNDER THE TRIPS AGREEMENT: CHALLENGES FOR AFRICA

*By Stanislaus Kigosi*

The Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS), signed in 1994 and enforced from January 1, 1995, has become one of the most influential international frameworks shaping global trade. Administered by the World Trade Organization (WTO), TRIPS aims to harmonize and enforce intellectual property (IP) rights among member states while minimizing non-tariff barriers that could disrupt the flow of international commerce.




Unlike the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), which sets minimum standards for IP protection, TRIPS seeks to integrate IP into global trade rules, compelling countries to structure their IP regimes in ways that facilitate cross-border economic activity.Of Africa's 54 countries, 44 are WTO members and therefore bound by TRIPS.

Yet, the continent's engagement with global trade has historically been constrained by structural imbalances.

Many African economies entered the WTO era unprepared to fully leverage the opportunities such frameworks presented, often relying on the goodwill of major economic powers.

In today's knowledge-driven economy, intellectual property is a key driver of competitiveness and innovation.

While TRIPS establishes stringent rules to standardize IP protection, compliance can disproportionately burden African countries, positioning them as passive participants in global trade networks.

To mitigate these challenges, TRIPS incorporates flexibilities for developing and least-developed countries (LDCs), allowing them to adjust national IP laws to accommodate public health, technology transfer, and development objectives.

However, these provisions require robust legal and institutional frameworks to be effective.

Many African nations have yet to fully exploit these flexibilities. TRIPS recognizes that rigid IP rules can impede development in LDCs most of which are in Africa and provides transitional periods to strengthen legal infrastructure and access essential technologies, including pharmaceuticals.

Despite extensions from 1995, the primary beneficiaries of these flexibilities have largely been non-African LDCs that have now graduated.

Currently, the transition period for pharmaceutical patents in LDCs extends to 2033. Beyond that, countries will lose these exemptions.

Yet, few African nations have established the necessary legal or policy frameworks to maximize these opportunities, highlighting ongoing gaps in preparedness and coordination.

Africa's limited utilization of TRIPS flexibilities is not due to a lack of interest but reflects systemic weaknesses in policy design, institutional capacity, and private sector engagement.

Without robust IP laws and strategies, countries risk losing access to technologies that could accelerate industrialization and economic transformation.

Tanzania, like many other African states, has yet to fully capitalize on these global opportunities.

Strengthening national IP infrastructure, aligning private sector innovation with policy goals, and fostering legal and institutional readiness are essential for translating TRIPS provisions into tangible development gains.

The continent possesses significant potential to benefit from technology transfer and knowledge exchange under TRIPS but only if African countries act decisively to protect, manage, and leverage intellectual property effectively.


# Trips Agreement

# BRELA PUSHES TANZANIA'S INNOVATION AGENDA THROUGH ARIPO AND WIPO PROTOCOLS

***By Gerald Nyang'ali***

Tanzania is moving to strengthen its intellectual property (IP) ecosystem as a strategic lever for economic growth, with the Business Registrations and Licensing Agency (BRELA) taking center stage in aligning national frameworks with regional and global standards.

On November 26, 2025, BRELA convened a high-level stakeholder meeting at the National College of Tourism in Dar es Salaam to review and solicit feedback on the preliminary proposals for ratifying four key IP protocols under the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO) and the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). The meeting drew representatives from government ministries, public agencies, and the private sector, reflecting the multi-stakeholder nature of IP governance.

Speaking at the opening session, BRELA Chief Executive Officer Godfrey Nyaisa  emphasised that adopting these protocols would not only strengthen legal protection for innovators but also enhance the global competitiveness of Tanzanian products and services.

"Intellectual property is no longer peripheral it is the engine of today's economy. Ratifying these protocols lays a foundation for a stronger IP system that benefits innovators, entrepreneurs, researchers, and our youth," Mr. Nyaisa said, noting that robust IP protection is critical to attracting investment and stimulating business growth.

BRELA's Director of Intellectual Property, Loy Mhando, added that the initiative ensures Tanzania keeps pace with global shifts in innovation and IP protection.

"Our goal is to create an enabling business environment while recognising the critical role of innovation in social and economic development. These protocols will strengthen IP frameworks and give our innovators the opportunity to compete in international markets," she said.

The four protocols under review cover key areas of intellectual property.
The Banjul Protocol on Marks governs trademark protection across ARIPO member states, ensuring that brands are legally recognised and safeguarded regionally.
The Madrid Protocol on International Registration of Marks facilitates cross-border brand protection, allowing Tanzanian

businesses to secure their trademarks beyond national borders.
The Arusha Protocol on the Protection of New Plant Varieties safeguards breeders' rights while promoting agricultural innovation, a critical sector for the country's economic growth.
Lastly, the Kampala Protocol on the Registration of Lay and Non-Shared Copyrights expands protections for creative works, giving artists and creators the legal tools to secure and commercialise their intellectual property.
The steps position Tanzania to fully integrate with regional and global IP systems, boosting investor confidence and creating new opportunities for startups and creative industries.
By aligning national laws with internationally recognised standards, the country strengthens its innovation-driven growth strategy and lays a foundation for long-term competitiveness.
For Tanzania, the meeting marks more than a procedural milestone it signals a deliberate effort to harness intellectual property as a driver of entrepreneurship, industrial growth, and economic transformation.

# HON. KAPINGA COMMENDS BRELA FOR STRENGTHENING BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT AND DIGITAL EFFICIENCY

**By Theresa Chilambo**


The Minister for Industry and Trade, Hon Judith Kapinga, has called on companies across Tanzania to ensure their information is up-to-date with the Business Registrations and Licensing Agency (BRELA).

She emphasized that accurate company records are essential for improving the business environment and making it easier for businesses to access government services.

Speaking to journalists at the Information Services Department (MAELEZO) offices in Dar es Salaam, Kapinga said that updated company data allows government institutions, including local authorities and regulatory bodies, to serve businesses more efficiently, especially now that their systems are interconnected.

“BRELA has successfully integrated its Online Registration System (ORS) with 29 government and private institutions. This ensures that critical company information is accessible whenever it is needed for official processes,” she said.

Kapinga explained that all registration and licensing services are now available online through the Online Registration System(ORS), Tanzania National Business Portal (TNBP), and Beneficial Ownership Portal (BO).

She said these digital platforms have streamlined services, allowing businesses to complete registration and licensing quickly and conveniently.

The Minister also highlighted the important role of youth in Tanzania’s industrialisation journey.

She noted that the government has laid the groundwork by improving infrastructure, opening markets, easing access to credit, and simplifying business registration. Now, it is the responsibility of young entrepreneurs to take advantage of these opportunities.

“The Sixth Phase Government, under the leadership of President Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, is committed to supporting youth initiatives and helping them succeed, which in turn contributes to national development,” she added.

Kapinga also shared BRELA’s achievements over the past four years, noting that the number of registered companies has grown from 9,630 to 23,365, while business names increased from 17,200 to 31,123.

Registrations of trademarks and service marks rose from 2,406 to 3,148, Class A business licences grew from 11,726 to 22,718, and industrial licences increased from 236 to 991. The issuance of patents also rose from 36 to 76 per year.

She attributed this growth to improved service delivery, enhanced digital systems, and reforms aimed at creating a more business-friendly environment in Tanzania.

This development reflects the government’s commitment to supporting businesses, encouraging entrepreneurship, and strengthening the country’s industrial and economic growth.

# EMPOWERING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS THROUGH BUSINESS REGISTRATION AND TRADEMARK PROTECTION

**By Gerald Nyang'ali**

In recent years, Tanzania has witnessed a remarkable rise in women engaging in entrepreneurial activities.

The surge is driven by greater access to business education, technology, and government initiatives promoting an inclusive economy—efforts that have significantly contributed to national growth, job creation, and social development.

Data shows that many women are entering small and medium-sized enterprises, often leveraging technology and innovation as key pillars of success.

In response, the Business Registrations and Licensing Agency (BRELA) has strengthened legal and digital frameworks to make it easier for women entrepreneurs to register their businesses through the Online Registration System (ORS) and the upgraded Tanzania National Business Portal (TNBP).

Registering a business name with BRELA provides entrepreneurs with legal recognition, enhances customer trust, and opens wider business opportunities. Without registration, many entrepreneurs remain vulnerable to name theft, limitation of products, and unauthorized use of their brands. Business formalization represents the first legal step in establishing a company's identity, granting entrepreneurs exclusive rights to use their business names.

BRELA has become a critical enabler in this process, offering online registration systems that safeguard registered business names, thereby reducing the risk of others exploiting them.

Industry experts note that women entrepreneurs frequently face challenges such as having their products copied, their brand names used without consent, or new businesses being opened with similar names.

The issues occur most often when a business name is not officially registered as a trademark.

Through trademark registration, entrepreneurs gain exclusive rights to their brand and legal recourse against infringement.

This protection allows women to expand their markets both locally and internationally, creating opportunities for growth while securing their intellectual property. Formalizing businesses also enables entrepreneurs to participate in the economy through the official tax system, providing the government with accurate data to inform development planning and policy decisions.

With the rapid advancement of technology and innovation, experts predict that the number of women entering the formal business sector will continue to rise, provided there is sufficient awareness and encouragement regarding business registration and trademark protection.

BRELA continues to educate and empower women entrepreneurs through seminars, workshops, exhibitions, and outreach programs.

The initiatives aim to ensure that women the backbone of productive enterprise receive accurate information on the importance of formalizing their businesses and protecting their brands.

By bridging the gap between legal protection and business opportunity, BRELA is not only safeguarding women entrepreneurs but also strengthening Tanzania's broader economic ecosystem.

# News in Picture


*The Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Energy Hon Dr. Dotto Biteko listening to services offered by BRELA from The Director of Intellectual Property Ms. Loy Mhando during The Inter-Ministerial and Government Departments Sports Federation (SHIMIWI) held at CCM Kirumba ground Mwanza.*


*Senior Registrations Assistance from BRELA Nassoro Mtavu training students on Intellectual Property issues from CANOSA secondary school during their study tour at BRELA headquarter office*

# News in Picture

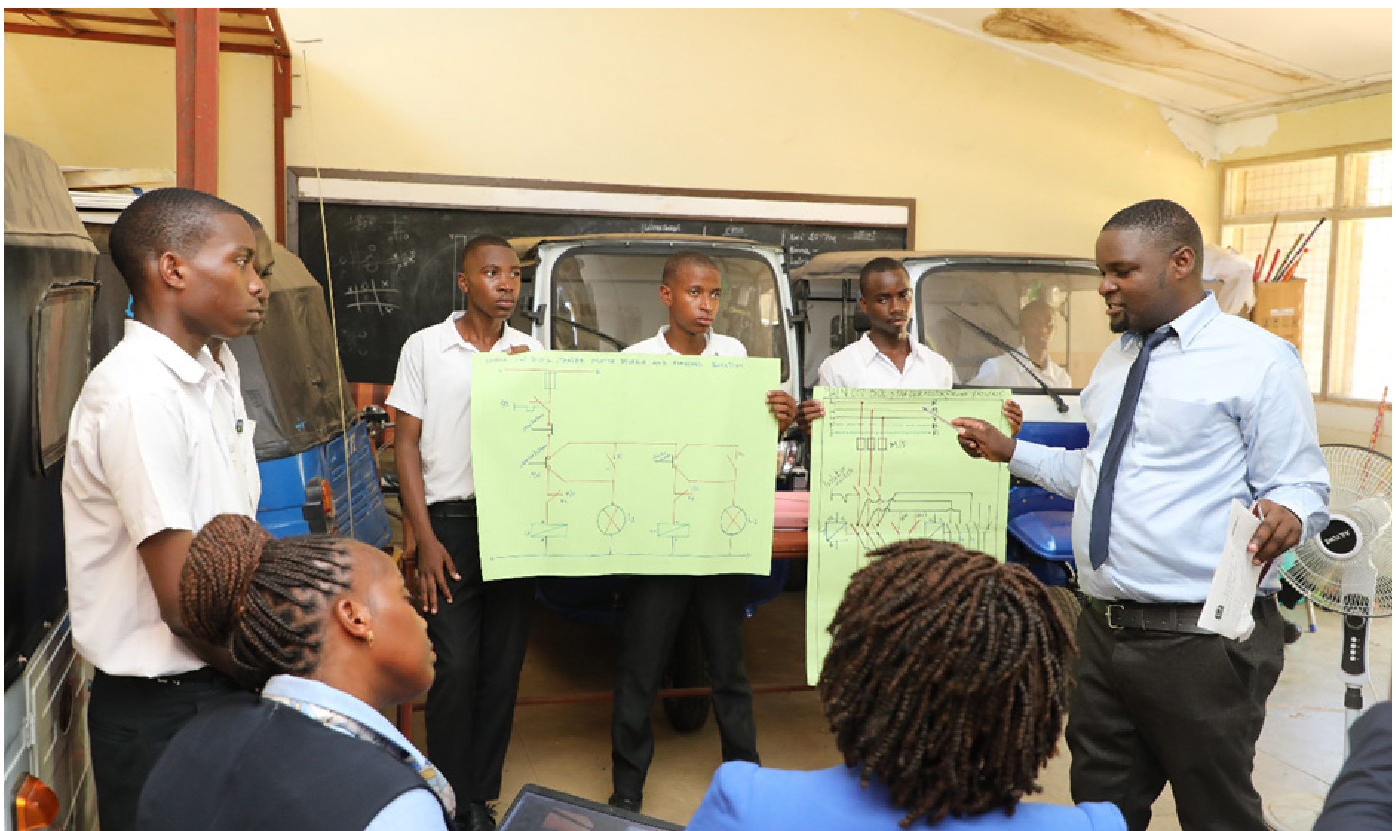
*BRELA and COSOTA Officers listening to Students from Makongo Secondary School who have innovated an electrical train that will provide a solution of traffic jam in the country after visiting the Intellectual Property Club at the school in Dar es salaam.*

*BRELA and COSOTA Officers listening to Students from Makongo Secondary School who have innovated an electrical train that will provide a solution of traffic jam in the country after visiting the Intellectual Property Club at the school in Dar es salaam.*

*BRELA and COSOTA Officers listening to the students of Tanga Technical School who innovated irrigation system that will help farmers who are in drought-prone areas*


*A group of photo of the BRELA Workers' Council when they visited Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCAA) on September 21, 2025 in Arusha*


*The Chief Executive Officer of BRELA Mr Godfrey Nyaisa (in the middle with white tshirt) in a group of photo with Teachers and Students of Temeke Secondary School during their study tour at BRELA headquarter office .*



*Registrations Officer from BRELA, Benedickson William in a discussion with students from Tanga Technical Secondary School who have innovated irrigation system that will help farmers who are in drought-prone areas*

*Registrations Officer from BRELA, Benedickson William in a discussion with students from Tanga Technical Secondary School who have innovated irrigation system that will help farmers who are in drought-prone areas*

*Legal Officer from BRELA, Neema Nyadzi training bakers from Lake Zones on the importance of business formalization during a special business clinic that was held during SHIMIWI sports at Mwanza*


*Group photo of BRELA Football team before the commencement of the Tanzania Sports Federation of Public Institutions and Private Companies (SHIMMUTA) that was held in Morogoro*


*BRELA Officers providing education on the importance of registrations of Trade Marks and Serviced to a participant of the 8th National Mining Technology Exhibition held at the Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan grounds in Geita*

*An Intellectual Property (IP) stakeholder contributing to a discussion during a special meeting between BRELA and IP stakeholders to discuss Intellectual Property Protocols. The meeting took place at the National College of Tourism in Dar es Salaam.*

# BRELA AND TPHPA BEGIN IMPLEMENTATION OF COOPERATION AGREEMENT

**By Lugano Mwakyombe**

The Business Registrations and Licensing Agency (BRELA) and the Tanzania Plant Health and Pesticides Authority (TPHPA) have officially started implementing their Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) by holding a working session today, 28th August 2025, at the TPHPA Headquarters in Arusha.

The agreement, signed on 9th May 2024, aims to ensure the institutions' systems are aligned and to strengthen the registration of businesses dealing with pesticides in the country.

The meeting brought together experts from both institutions to discuss initial Steps for implementation, including building a mutual understanding of the registration processes.

Opening the session, TPHPA Director General, Prof. Joseph Ndunguru, described the meeting as an important step in implementing the agreement, emphasizing the need to ensure services meet stakeholder needs and stimulate growth in the agricultural and business sectors in Tanzania.

"This meeting is not only about implementing our agreement but also serves as a platform to discuss challenges and provide practical solutions for our stakeholders, particularly regarding the registration of products such as plant pesticides," Prof. Ndunguru said.

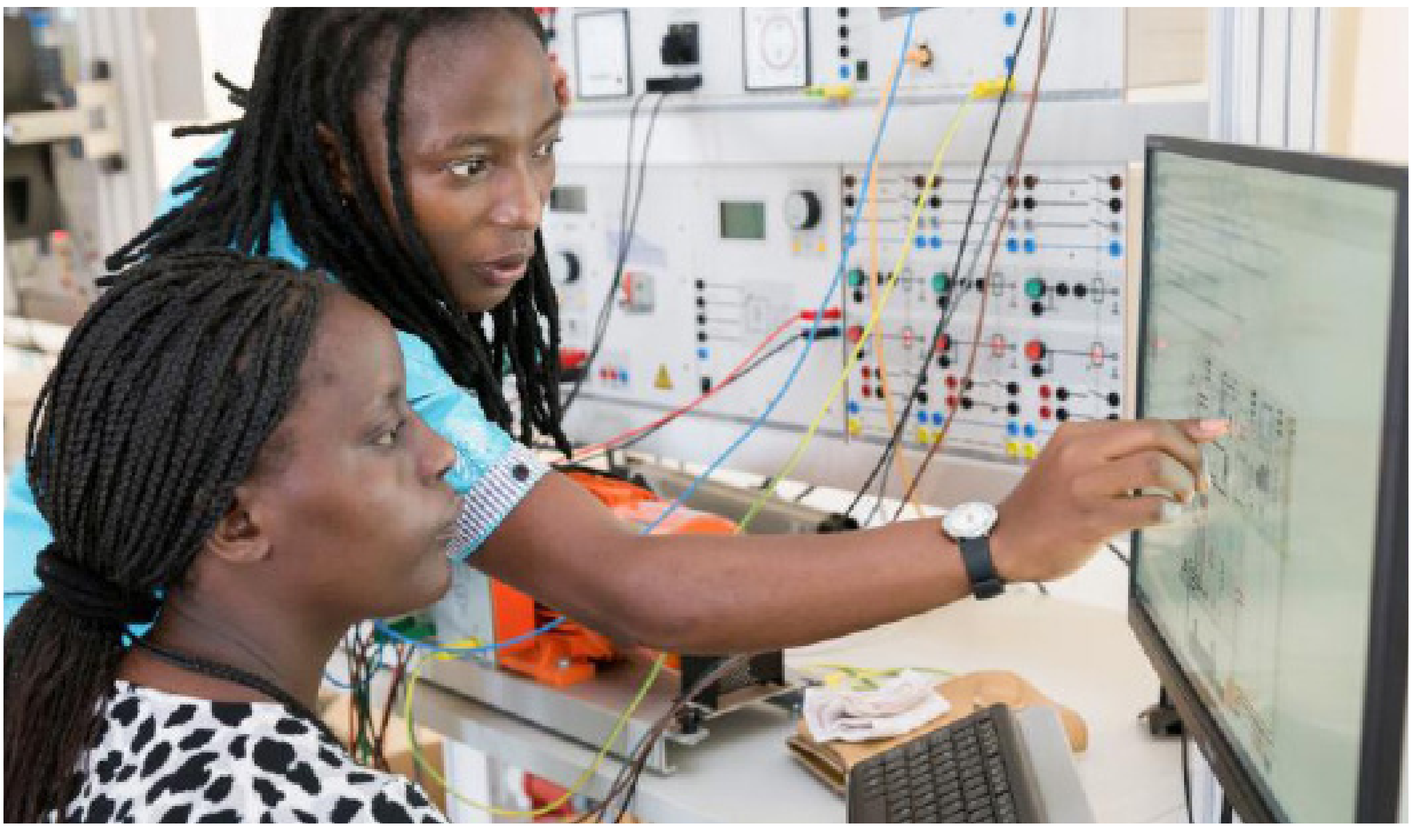
On his part, BRELA Manager for Trademarks and Services, Mr. Seka Kasera, reaffirmed BRELA's commitment to fostering cooperation with various government institutions to simplify service delivery, increase public understanding of business formalization, and protect trademarks and services, especially for producers, distributors, and sellers of pesticides.

"What we are doing here is strengthening the foundation for sustainable cooperation between our institutions so that citizens can access quality services promptly and conveniently," Mr. Kasera said.

The working session also discussed joint strategies for communication and public education on the importance of registration and protection of trademarks and services in agricultural products, as part of efforts to promote the sector and add value to the country's produce.


# BRELA SEEKS TO ATTRACT INNOVATION-DRIVEN PROJECTS THROUGH ARIPO PLATFORM

By Nehemia Mihayo



The Business Registrations and Licensing Agency (BRELA) is leveraging the 49th Administrative Council Meeting of the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO) to attract projects aimed at strengthening Tanzania's innovation and intellectual property (IP) ecosystem.

Speaking in Accra, Ghana, on November 17, 2025, BRELA Chief Executive Officer

Godfrey Nyaisa said the meeting provides a strategic opportunity for Tanzania to mobilise resources and secure technical and financial support for initiatives that enhance the country's IP systems and innovation-driven sectors.

He said the ARIPO Administrative Council is reviewing and approving the organisation's annual report, including an assessment of achievements, operational challenges, and priority areas that will shape the institution's agenda for the 2026 financial year.

"This meeting is of critical importance to Tanzania. BRELA is advancing a national agenda to ensure that, through this Council, we attract and allocate resources to support intellectual property projects that will strengthen IP systems in the country," MrNyaisa said.

The meeting is also preparing policy and technical documents for submission to the ARIPO Council of Ministers session scheduled for November 21–22, 2025, in Accra.

The Council of Ministers serves as ARIPO's highest decision-making body, responsible for setting policy direction and overseeing the implementation of regional intellectual property strategies.

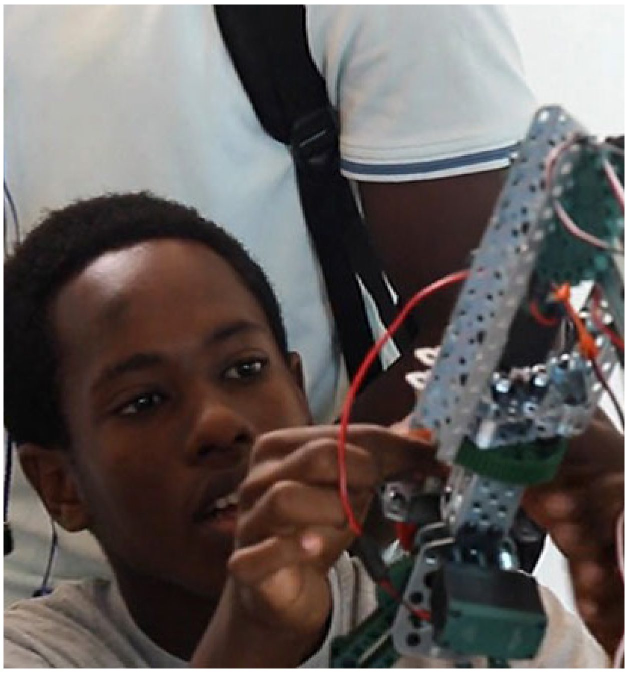
Delegates are reviewing and endorsing ARIPO's 2026 Work Plan and Budget, which will guide programmes designed to reinforce IP protection frameworks and expand the contribution of innovation to Africa's economic development.

Tanzania's delegation to the meeting is led by MrNyaisa and includes SempehoManongiNyari, Director of Business Development at the Ministry of Industry and Trade, as well as Seka Kasera, BRELA's Manager for Trademarks and Services.

The conference, running from November 17 to 20, 2025, was officially opened by Ghana's Attorney General and Minister for Constitutional and Legal Affairs, Dr. Dominic AkuritingaAyine, and brings together representatives from ARIPO member states.

Observers say Tanzania's active participation through BRELA and the Ministry of Industry and Trade reflects a broader policy drive to stimulate innovation, strengthen protection for creators and businesses, and expand the role of intellectual property in promoting trade, industrial growth, and investment.

By positioning innovation and IP as key economic enablers, Tanzania is seeking to build a more competitive business environment, protect homegrown products and services, and enhance its presence in regional and global markets through strategic engagement with ARIPO.



# TRADITIONAL MEDICINE INNOVATIONS AND THE IMPORTANCE OF PATENT PROTECTION

***By Lugano Mwakyombe***

In today's era of technological advancement and global health transformation, traditional medicine rooted in indigenous community knowledge is increasingly recognized as a valuable resource for public health and socio-economic development. Many indigenous communities, particularly in developing countries, possess rich traditional knowledge of medicinal plants, healing methods, and cultural practices. However, the recognition and fair sharing of intellectual property rights and commercial benefits arising from such knowledge remain limited. This has led to cases of cultural exploitation (biopiracy), unauthorized use, and minimal community participation.

In this context, patent protection and the safeguarding of traditional knowledge play a vital role in ensuring that innovations are acknowledged, communities benefit fairly, and that national and international institutions operate equitably. Tanzania, endowed with a rich heritage of medicinal plants and traditional healing practices, is in a unique position to implement policies and legal frameworks that harmonize the protection of innovation with the recognition of traditional knowledge.

Traditional Medicine Innovations and Patents
Innovations in traditional medicine may include a combination of medicinal plants developed or discovered through indigenous expertise, a novel method of preparing medicine or improving its therapeutic effectiveness, or a cultural innovation transformed into a modern health product. For instance, communities using plants such as Alstoniaboonei or neem for healing possess valuable knowledge that researchers can refine into new medicinal products.

Tanzania's Patents (Registration) Act, Chapter 217 grants exclusive rights to an inventor whose innovation meets the requirements of novelty, inventive step, and industrial applicability. Within the context of traditional medicine, for an invention to qualify for patent protection, the improvements or innovations upon traditional knowledge must be clearly defined—for example, a novel extraction technique, an unprecedented herbal combination, or a scientifically verifiable new use of a known plant.

**Benefits of patent protection include:** Providing inventors control over their innovations and preventing unauthorized use. Facilitating benefit-sharing with indigenous communities whose knowledge con tributes to innovation. Stimulating scientific research and development of new medicines, supporting both health and economic growth.

**Legal Framework, Institutions, and Implementation in Tanzania:** The Patents (Registration) Act, Chapter 217 provides the foundation for patent registration in Tanzania. Sections 8 (Patentable invention) and 9 (Novelty) guide the assessment of new innovations.

The law emphasizes promoting inventivity and innovation through patents, utility certificates, and innovation certificates. Key institutions involved include BRELA, which oversees intellectual property registration; ITMO under Muhimbili University, which conducts scientific validation of traditional medicines; TTAMD, which coordinates traditional and alternative medicine practices; and TMDA, which regulates medicinal products, including herbal remedies.

**Regional and International Agreements** anzania is a member of the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO) and a signatory to the Swakopmund Protocol (2010), which protects traditional knowledge and folklore expressions. This protocol ensures recognition of community-generated traditional knowledge and equitable benefit-sharing.

Additionally, the 2024 WIPO Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge enhances transparency in the patent system.

It requires applicants to disclose the origin of genetic resources and traditional knowledge used in their innovations, promoting fairness and accountability.

**Challenges and Opportunities in Tanzania**

**Challenges include:** Lack of formal documentation of traditional knowledge. Limited awareness of intellectual property rights among communities.

High costs and limited infrastructure for patent registration.

Incomplete implementation of some international protocols.

**Opportunities include:** Strengthening institutional frameworks such as BRELA, ITMO, TMDA, and TTAMD. The new WIPO Treaty provides a chance for Tanzania to lead in East Africa on traditional knowledge protection.

Expanding research can lead to more patentable innovations.

Collaboration between communities, healers, and researchers encourages a community-driven model.

Commercialization of herbal products can boost income for communities and the nation.

Innovations in traditional medicine bridge the gap between indigenous knowledge and modern healthcare. To ensure fair benefit and protection, Tanzania needs a strong legal and institutional framework.

Through laws like the Patents Act (Cap 217) and institutions such as BRELA,

ITMO, TMDA, and TTAMD, the country is progressing towards this goal.
By reinforcing discipline, accountability, and morale, as noted by Mr. Godfrey Nyaisa, CEO of BRELA, Tanzania can continue to strengthen its institutions and contribute to broader national interests.

# BRELA PLEDGES TO STRENGTHEN STARTUP INVESTMENT CLIMATE IN LINE WITH VISION 2050

***By Gerald Nyang'ali***

The Business Registrations and Licensing Agency (BRELA) has reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening Tanzania's startup ecosystem as part of broader efforts to support the country's long term ambition of building a trillion-dollar economy under the National Vision 2050.

The Agency says it will continue enhancing digital systems, expanding entrepreneurship awareness, and deepening collaboration with both private- and public-sector stakeholders to create a more enabling environment for startups to scale and contribute meaningfully to economic transformation.

Speaking during a policy dialogue on investment law frameworks held on December 2, 2025, as part of the ongoing Startups Week at the Millennium Tower in Dar es Salaam, BRELA Registration Officer Grayson Moshi said the growth of startups  viewed as key drivers of innovation, employment and structural change depends heavily on efficient registration and formalisation systems.

He noted that BRELA has prioritised improving the business environment through modern digital platforms, including the Online Registration System (ORS) and the Tanzania National Business Portal (TNBP), which simplify business formalisation and are integrated with other government institutions such as the Tanzania Revenue Authority (TRA), NIDA, and PPRA.

"BRELA operates a modern business registration system that enables fast and transparent formalisation.

We are working closely with other government institutions through integrated digital systems, and we are preparing to introduce a single window of registration that will allow entrepreneurs to complete all procedures in one place.

This is the foundation of the modern economy we are building," Mr Moshi said.

He added that BRELA is in the process of operationalising a single-window registration system, aimed at streamlining access to services for startups and entrepreneurs a move seen as critical to achieving Tanzania's trillion-dollar economic target by 2050.

However, he acknowledged persisting legal gaps, particularly the absence of a dedicated framework recognising certain modern investment structures such as Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs) a model widely used in global private equity and venture capital ecosystems.

He said legal reform efforts are underway and are expected to unlock more investment opportunities for both large investors and startups.

BRELA also highlighted that the implementation of Beneficial Ownership (BO) regulations has significantly improved transparency in corporate ownership, boosting investor confidence especially among value capital and private equity firms that prioritise strong governance and accountability standards.

Participants in the discussion stressed that achieving Vision 2050 will require sustained reforms to improve ease of doing business, accelerate registration processes, strengthen legal protections, and ensure regulatory clarity for both investors and entrepreneurs.

Analysts say BRELA's digital transformation and regulatory reform agenda could play a critical role in shaping Tanzania's startup economy positioning innovation-led enterprises as a key engine of growth in the country's long-term economic strategy.

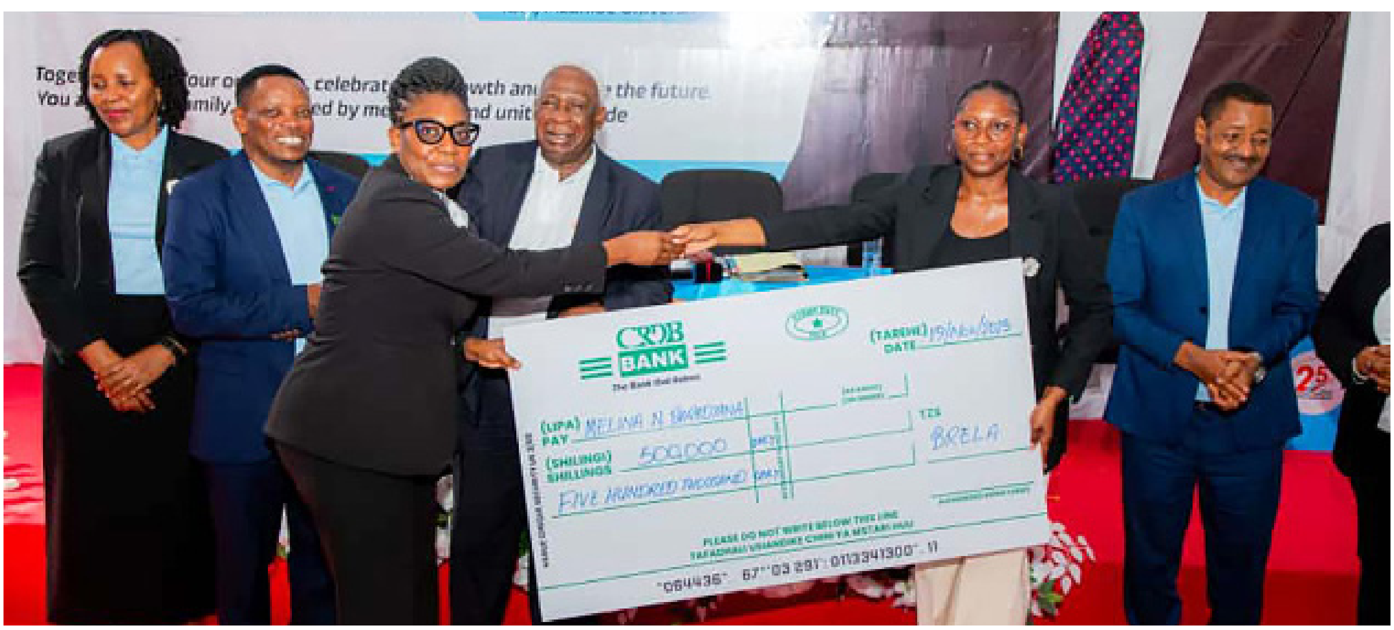
# BRELA AWARDS BEST OVERALL GRADUATE OF MZUMBE UNIVERSITY, MOROGORO CAMPUS

**By Theresa Chilambo**

The Business Registrations and Licensing Agency (BRELA) has recognized the best overall graduate of 2025 from Mzumbe University's Morogoro campus.

The award was presented on November 19, 2025, to Ms. Melina Baradyana, who completed her Bachelor's degree in Environmental Management.

She earned the distinction of best overall student among all undergraduate graduates at the Morogoro campus for the year 2025, achieving a remarkable GPA of 4.8.



Opening the event, Hon. Philemon Luhanjo, retired Chief Secretary, encouraged Mzumbe graduates to become catalysts for the university's development.

He proposed establishing a special fund for alumni, allowing graduates to give back and support students facing challenges while contributing to improvements in the college environment.

Ms. Baradyana expressed her gratitude to BRELA for recognizing her efforts, noting that the award would serve as a motivating factor to continue excelling academically. "Thank you very much, BRELA, for this support.

It will help me pursue my Master's studies here at Mzumbe and advance the research I am currently working on," she said.

The award forms part of BRELA's ongoing collaboration with Mzumbe University. For 2025, the agency has donated awards to the best overall students from the Morogoro, Dar es Salaam, and Mbeya campuses.

The ceremony was attended by Professor William Mwegoha, Vice-Chancellor of Mzumbe University, lecturers, graduates, students, and alumni. BRELA's continued partnership with the university underscores its commitment to supporting education, promoting academic excellence, and nurturing the next generation of Tanzanian leaders.

# BRELA URGES COMPANIES TO FILE ANNUAL RETURNS TO AVOID PENALTIES

***By Gerald Nyang'ali***

The Business Registrations and Licensing Agency (BRELA) has reminded companies operating in Tanzania Mainland to submit their annual returns and financial accounts within the legally prescribed timelines, warning that failure to comply could attract penalties, including deregistration.

In a public notice, BRELA said all locally incorporated companies are required to file annual returns with the Registrar of Companies every year, in line with the Companies Act. The submissions must be made by the anniversary of a company's registration or by the anniversary of the date on which the last return was filed, as provided under Section 128 of the Act.

**The Agency stressed that the requirement is not optional.**

"Submitting annual returns and financial accounts is a statutory obligation for every registered company. Compliance ensures that a company remains in good legal standing and can operate without regulatory interruptions," BRELA says in the statement.

BRELA added that the obligation also applies to foreign companies that have established a place of business in Tanzania. Such entities are required to file their annual financial accounts in accordance with **Section 438** of the Companies Act.

"Foreign companies operating in Tanzania are equally subject to the law and must meet the same transparency and reporting standards," the agency said.

According to BRELA, annual returns are a key regulatory tool for maintaining accurate and reliable records on company ownership, directors and other office bearers, information that is accessible to the public.

"These records enhance transparency, support investor confidence and promote accountability within the business environment," it said.

The Agency warned that failure to submit the required documents may lead to serious consequences.

"Where a company consistently fails to file annual returns, the Registrar may reasonably assume that the company has ceased operations," BRELA said, noting that under **Section 400** of the Act, such companies may be struck off the official register.

BRELA further cautioned that even companies that remain active but delay filing beyond 28 days after the due date are liable to penalties.

"Late submission attracts fines, and continued non-compliance exposes companies to further regulatory action," the agency said.

The agency urged company directors and secretaries, both local and foreign, to act promptly.

"We call upon all company officials to prioritise timely compliance to avoid unnecessary penalties and disruptions to business operations," statement says. Submissions can be made through BRELA's Online Registration System or in person at BRELA offices across the country.

## 2025 ARIPO IP JOURNALISTS AWARDS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# ARIPO AWARD WINNING STORIES

Why are trade and service marks essential for startup success in Tanzania?

**By Daniel Samson**

Published on July 22, 2025

They protect a company's brand identity and differentiate its products in the marketplace.
IP remained a critical yet underutilized asset within the Tanzanian startup ecosystem.

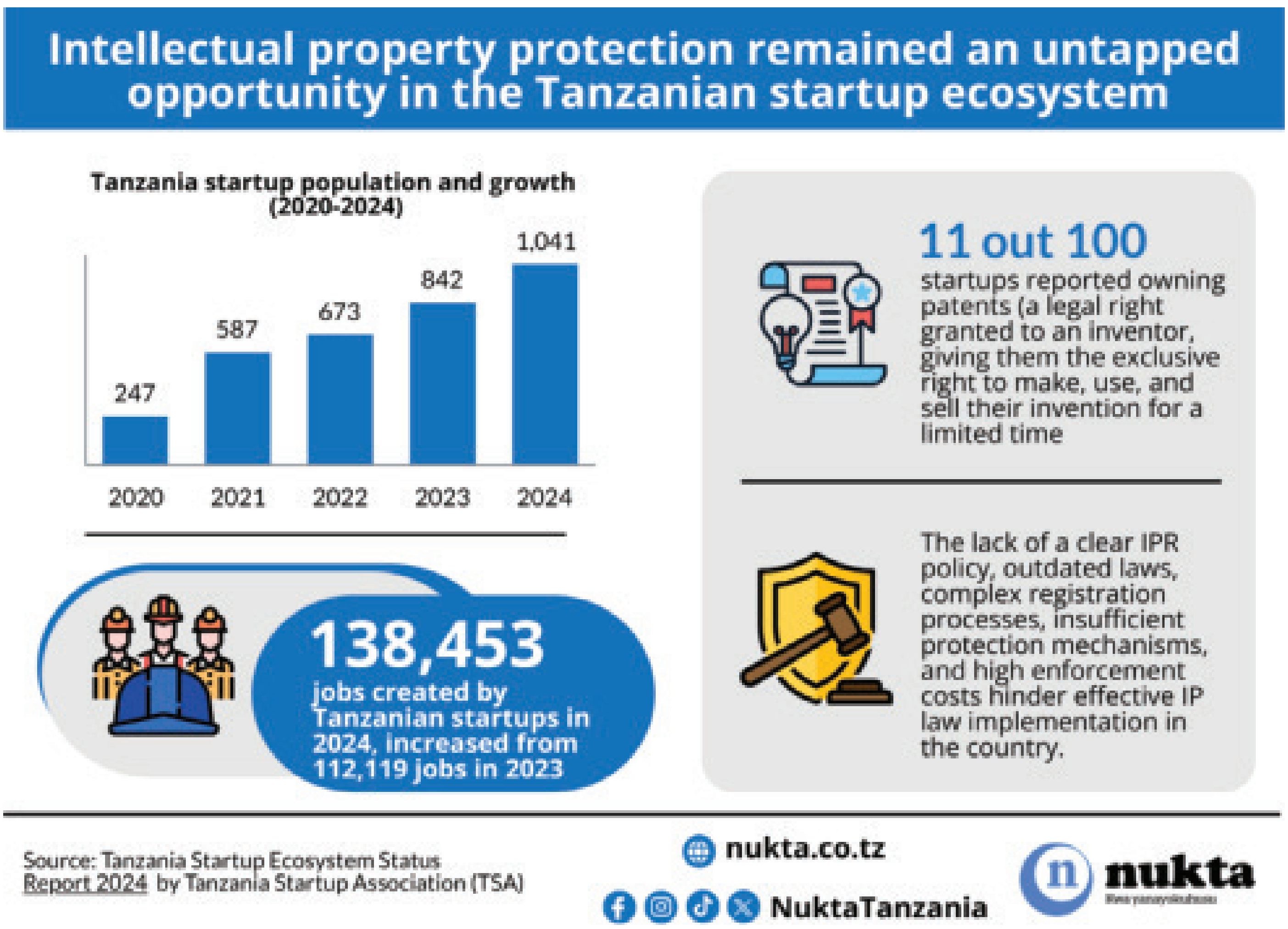
Dar es Salaam. When Innocent James started Soma Bags Tanzania in Mwanza, his dream was simple to bring affordable, recycled solar school bags to the Tanzanian market.

Inspired by his parents, he began crafting each bag by hand, from school backpacks to travel bags, building a brand that quickly won the hearts of customers across the country and beyond.

Within three years, Soma Bags had built a loyal following on social media and a solid reputation for quality.

But success came with an unexpected challenge One day, James received a call from a friend who had spotted Soma Bags on Instagram except it wasn't his business. The name was almost identical, but the phone number was different.
"I was shocked. I didn't even know I needed to register a trademark," he recalls.

By the time he approached the registration agency, the damage had been done. Customers were confused, and rebuilding trust took months. In 2022, he finally registered Soma Bags Tanzania as a trademark to protect his brand.
James' experience is a familiar story in Tanzania's growing



startup scene. Across the country, young businesses are driving innovation in fields ranging from agriculture and technology to fashion and finance.

They create jobs, inspire creativity, and contribute to economic growth. But many operate without protecting their most valuable asset, their intellectual property (IP). Intellectual property refers to creations of the mind such as brands, logos, inventions, software, and creative works. These can be legally protected through intellectual property rights (IPRs), including trademarks, copyrights, patents, and industrial designs.
For startups, trade and service marks are especially important because they safeguard brand identity and prevent imitation in the marketplace.

While some entrepreneurs ignore IP protection due to lack of awareness or cost concerns, others take action early and enjoy significant benefits. In Dar es Salaam, Loth Makuza, Startup Lead of Rifaly, a digital platform connecting content creators, publishers, and consumers registered the company's trademark in June 2021.

"As our brand grows, our CEO has started visiting different countries to attract investors. We needed to be taken seriously, and protecting our brand was key," says Makuza.

Rifaly registered its trade and service marks with the Business Registrations and Licensing Agency (BRELA) and is now exploring protection across other African markets.

With these safeguards, the startup is confidently expanding into other African and European countries.

Despite such success stories, the broader picture shows slow uptake. The Tanzania Startup Ecosystem Status Report 2024 by the Tanzania Startup Association (TSA) found that of 125 startups surveyed, only 14 (about 11 percent) owned patents, holding a total of 87 registered patents. This shows that while innovation and invention are present, the rate of formal intellectual property protection remains low compared to the overall startup population. These startups primarily operated in sectors like entertainment, digital marketing, e-commerce, and retail technology.

### What happens when a startup lacks IP?

The risks of operating without IP protection can be severe.

Kennedy Mmari, CEO of Serengeti Bytes, warns that businesses can lose brands they have worked hard to build.
"Think of a fashion brand in Dar es Salaam, especially those operating online, which grows in popularity only to later discover that a different business had trademarked their name. They would have no legal grounds to fight, even though they had built loyal customer bases. And that would be painful, expensive, and disheartening. It's something that could be avoided," says branding expert Mmari.

Entrepreneurs often delay trademark registration due to misconceptions that it is costly, bureaucratic, or unnecessary until a business becomes profitable.

### The challenges don't end there

Outdated laws and limited enforcement make matters worse. Tanzania currently lacks legal mechanisms to protect geographical indications or trade secrets, and enforcement can be inconsistent.

Although Tanzania's Constitution guarantees IP ownership and protection, laws like the Trade and Service Marks Act (1986), Patents Registration Act, and Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act (1999) are not fully integrated into national entrepreneurship policy.

IP protection is overseen by agencies such as BRELA, the Copyright Society of Tanzania (COSOTA), and the Fair Competition Commission (FCC).
Change is on the horizon
Startup ecosystem stakeholders like TSA recommend working on the existing IPR issues to help startups take IP as serious matter by imposing a waiver for startups that intend to protect their IPRs.

In alternative startups should be allowed to pay a lower range of fees for the registration processes.

"There should be increased sensitization and practical knowledge of IPRs for startups. This will help the start-ups to integrate the IP assets into their business planning and strategy," says a joint report between TSA and Breakthrough Attorneys issued November 20, 2023. The report also insists start-ups should take seriously the issues around IP and to register their works at the outlined agencies/ institutions to have guaranteed protection of their IP rights.

BRELA is working to bridge the gap by running IP awareness campaigns, seminars, and workshops, especially targeting startups.

"We issue a Certificate of Registration, giving startups exclusive rights to use the mark in Tanzania. We also assist in dispute resolution and work with enforcement bodies in infringement cases," says Calvin Rwambogo, BRELA Legal Officer.

BRELA's Online Registration System allows for easy trademark applications, and the agency advises startups to first conduct a trademark search to avoid conflicts. They can also extend protection through the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO) or internationally via the Madrid Protocol.

BRELA has set up an IP Management Unit and is redesigning its online system to make it more user-friendly. The Ministry of Industry and Trade is developing a new national IP policy, which includes reduced registration fees for startups, legal aid support, and stronger integration of IP in entrepreneurship programs.

On a regional scale, ARIPO offers multi-country protection for startups aiming to scale in Africa.

Rwanda as champion of IP in Africa Tanzania doesn't need to look far for inspiration. Rwanda has emerged as a continental leader in integrating IPRs into its startup ecosystem.

The country streamlined its IP registration process, incorporated IP education into university curriculums, and introduced subsidies for early-stage companies. Now the country has become a thriving startup scene where ideas are not only born but protected.

As Tanzania's innovation engine continues to roar, protecting ideas is no longer optional, it is essential. Without intellectual property protection, the country risks losing not only revenue but the very creativity that fuels its future.

# COPYRIGHT REFORM IN TANZANIA: URGENCY IN THE AGE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCES

> *Tanzania's Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act, it only recognizes works made by human beings.*
>
> *The government is reviewing its own laws to address challenges including AI.*

**By Daniel Samson**

*Published on May 27, 2025*

Dar es Salaam. In Tanzania, a quiet revolution is happening. It's not in the streets, but in studios and on laptops. Artists are no longer working alone. They are working with machines. Artificial intelligence (AI) is now a partner in creating music, videos, and art.

This is a powerful new trend. Musicians, scriptwriters, and designers use AI to find ideas. They use it to speed up their work. The creative process is changing fast.

But while the tools are advancing, the country's legal system has yet to catch up.

Tanzania's Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act, the main law that protects creative ownership, was written long before AI became part of everyday life. First enacted in 1999 and last revised in 2001, it only recognizes works made by human beings, either individuals or companies. It doesn't mention machines or AI-generated content.

That legal silence can create confusion. It assumes a person is behind every creative work. But what happens when an AI writes part of your song or designs your album cover? Right now, there's no clear answer.

And that uncertainty is growing. Musicians are using AI platforms to build beats in seconds. Visual artists explore digital programs to craft images. Content creators rely on chatbots to translate captions, write scripts, or brainstorm concepts. Even local influencers are blending AI-generated content with their own personal style to engage wider audiences.

One of them is Rodgers George, a Tanzanian musician and digital content producer.

"I use AI to generate ideas, lyrics, melodies but I'm not relying solely on AI, because music is a result of human feelings," he says. "But I wonder if I want to register this with the Copyright Society of Tanzania (COSOTA), will they accept it if part of it came from AI?"

COSOTA is the body responsible for registering and protecting creative works does not directly cover AI-generated works.

It's not just a Tanzanian issue  Around the world, governments are racing to respond. In the United State of America (USA), for example, copyright law only protects AI-assisted works if a human played a significant creative role. In the United Kingdom (UK), computer-generated works can be protected under specific terms, though for a shorter period.

Kenya is reviewing its own laws to address challenges brought by AI in creative production and data use.
Beyond authorship, AI raises even bigger questions. What happens when an AI is trained using thousands of existing songs, artworks, or scripts, many of them by Tanzanian creators without their knowledge or permission? Who gets credited or paid when that training data shapes a new product?

Intellectual Property legal expert, Addo Mwasonge, says the emergence of artificial intelligence (AI) has introduced new challenges in the implementation of the law, particularly in protecting artists' rights.

"Nowadays, artists are creating works with the help of AI, which raises the question — whose rights should be protected in such circumstances? Because there are also AI companies involved in generating the content," says Mwasonge.

Mwasonge, who is also the President of the Music Federation of Tanzania (SHIMUTA), says they have started holding meetings with stakeholders to discuss ways of developing a sustainable solution that aligns with the changes brought by AI, which directly impacts the creative industry.

These discussions are part of broader efforts to review and improve the Tanzania Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act of 1999 to reflect the realities of the present time.

Some AI experts urge institutions like COSOTA, local universities, and innovation hubs to lead the way in educating creatives about their rights and the risks in the age of AI.

The Minister of Information, Culture, Arts and Sports, Professor Palamagamba Kabudi, while presenting his ministry's budget for the 2025/26 financial year in Parliament in Dodoma recently, said the Government is reviewing laws to strengthen COSOTA in line with current developments.

These legal reforms may provide a new direction for protecting artistic works, especially those created using AI.

Internationally, the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) has produced guidance papers and launched consultations on AI and intellectual property though implementation at the national level remains slow.

The guidelines emphasize the need for legal clarity, fairness, and international cooperation, while noting that current laws were not designed with AI in mind. WIPO encourages member states to consider policy options and stakeholder input to ensure IP systems remain effective and inclusive in the AI era. Meanwhile, creators like Rodgers George keep experimenting. They share songs, videos, and designs with growing global audiences not always knowing how much of their work is legally protected, or whether it could be used by others without credit or payment.

Should artists wait for legal reforms to protect their works?

While stakeholders and the government are reviewing the law to make improvements that align with the current situation, artists are encouraged to register as a way to protect their intellectual property rights.

The Minister for Industry and Trade, Dr Suleimani Jafo, has called on artists to register their stage names with Business Registrations and Licensing Agency (BRELA) as trademarks and their creative works with COSOTA to ensure legal protection.

Dr Jafo made the call while officiating the national commemoration of World Intellectual Property Day held on May 21, 2025, in Dar es Salaam, under the theme: "Music and Intellectual Property: Feel the Beat of Innovation."

"This registration provides a strong foundation for income generation and doing business in accordance with laws, regulations, and procedures," said the Minister.
He noted that in the past, many artists lost their rights despite producing great work simply because they did not follow proper procedures.
Registration not only provides legal recognition of ownership but also strengthens a creator's ability to claim compensation, defend against infringement, and benefit from licensing opportunities.
By taking this step, artists, musicians, writers, and other content creators can better secure their rights and future earnings, especially as emerging technologies like AI continue to reshape the creative landscape.

# WHY DOING CUSTOM AND STANDARD SEARCH IS IMPORTANT FOR COMPANY OWNERS

***By Christina Njovu***

What is Official Search. An "official search" is a formal inquiry submitted to an official body or institution, such as institutions registry or local authority, to obtain verified information about a Company's or Business Name legal status or history.

The searches provide a comprehensive and reliable report to serve adverse interests and are often a crucial part of processes like share/property purchases, to check for issues like ownership, encumbrances, and land charges before a transaction is completed

Company's owners use searches to obtain other company information when they want to enter into agreements or contracts. Other stakeholders also search for Company's information for varied interests. These are such as Banks, Auditors, Law firms and the general public.

In the Online Registration System (ORS) official searches are divided into two categories which is Custom Search whereby the person can apply the information manually, this is for those registrations which companies and Business Names not registered or updated in the Online Registration System (ORS). The information required could be answered by officers by viewing the physical Company or Business Names document whereby Standard Search the report is be generated by the System. Moreover, a standard search is a default or pre-configured search function, while a custom search is a search function that has been handmade to meet specific needs, often by saving a customized query with specific criteria. Standard searches use built-in, out-of-the-box settings, while custom searches allow for personalized requests/ information.

How to obtain official search on BRELA Online Registration System:-

## STEP BY STEP PROCEDURE FOR REQUESTING ONLINE OFFICIAL SEARCHES IN ORS

1. Create ORS Account
2. Login: E services for Registered Users
3. Click New E Service
4. Click: Information Services
5. Click Request for standard search result or Request for custom search result
6. After reading the details and selecting search suitable for you; Then Click Proceed

a) If you have selected Request for a standard search result, you are required to select the following options:

i. Insert number then click Search, where entity name will appear . Then after choosing one of the options then click Proceed
ii. After proceeding you will fill in the part of Representation statement and click Proceed to create Payment
iii. Then get receipt and wait for response.

**Note: Standard searches are generated automatically**

b) If you have selected Request for a custom search result , you are required to select the following options:

i. select Tailor made search, then click proceed

ii. Insert Company/ Business name number then click Search, where entity name will appear according to your choice and fill description of the search and select delivery mode then click Proceed.

iii. After proceeding will fill in the part of Representation statement and click Proceed to create Payment.

iv. After payment, download receipt and wait for response.

**Note: Custom search results responses are manually replied**

# BRELA URGES COMPANIES TO FILE ANNUAL RETURNS TO AVOID PENALTIES

**By Theresa Chilambo**

The Business Registrations and Licensing Agency (BRELA) has reminded companies operating in Tanzania Mainland to submit their annual returns and financial accounts within the legally prescribed timelines, warning that failure to comply could attract penalties, including deregistration.

In a public notice, BRELA said all locally incorporated companies are required to file annual returns with the Registrar of Companies every year, in line with the Companies Act.

The submissions must be made by the anniversary of a company's registration or by the anniversary of the date on which the last return was filed, as provided under Section 128 of the Act.

The Agency stressed that the requirement is not optional.

"Submitting annual returns and financial accounts is a statutory obligation for every registered company. Compliance ensures that a company remains in good legal standing and can operate without regulatory interruptions," BRELA says in the statement.

BRELA added that the obligation also applies to foreign companies that have established a place of business in Tanzania.

Such entities are required to file their annual financial accounts in accordance with Section 438 of the Companies Act.

"Foreign companies operating in Tanzania are equally subject to the law and must meet the same transparency and reporting standards," the Agency said.

According to BRELA, annual returns are a key regulatory tool for maintaining accurate and reliable records on company ownership, directors and other office bearers, information that is accessible to the public.

"These records enhance transparency, support investor confidence and promote accountability within the business environment," it said.

The Agency warned that failure to submit the required documents may lead to serious consequences.

"Where a company consistently fails to file annual returns, the Registrar may reasonably assume that the company has ceased operations," BRELA said, noting that under Section 400 of the Act, such companies may be struck off the official register.

BRELA further cautioned that even companies that remain active but delay filing beyond 28 days after the due date are liable to penalties.

"Late submission attracts fines, and continued non-compliance exposes companies to further regulatory action," the Agency said.

The Agency urged company directors and secretaries, both local and foreign, to act promptly.

"We call upon all company officials to prioritise timely compliance to avoid unnecessary penalties and disruptions to business operations," statement says.

Submissions can be made through BRELA's Online Registration System or in person at BRELA offices across the country.

# ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON BENEFICIAL OWNERSHIP

*By Theresa Chilambo*

## Answers to frequently asked questions on beneficial ownership

| Question | Who is a Beneficial Owner? |
| --- | --- |
| Answer | A beneficial Owner is a natural person- (a) who directly or indirectly ultimately owns or exercises substantial control over an entity or an arrangement; (b) who has a substantial economic interest in or receives substantial economic benefit from an entity or an arrangement directly or indirectly whether acting alone or together with other persons; (c) on whose behalf an arrangement is conducted; or (d) who exercises significant control or influence over a person or arrangement through a formal or informal agreement |

| Question | Are Beneficial Owners different from Shareholders? |
| --- | --- |
| Answer | A beneficial owner can either be a registered shareholder i.e directly holding shares of the company or a person who is not a registered shareholder but owns or exercises substantial control in the company. |

| Question | Are locally owned Companies required to submit information of Beneficial Owners? |
| --- | --- |
| Answer | All companies incorporated in Tanzania Mainland issued with CERTIFICATE OF INCOPORATION must submit particulars of their beneficial owners. However, all Foreign companies registered and issued with CERTIFICATE OF COMPLIANCE are exempted from filing such particulars for the time being. |

| Question | Is filing Beneficial Ownership information different from Filing of Annual Returns? |
| --- | --- |
| Answer | Yes! Submission of Beneficial Ownership information is a legal requirement established under section 14(2)(b) of the Companies Act, Cap 212 while filing of Annual returns is legal requirement established under section 128 of the Companies Act. And the legal requirement serves different purposes. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **Question** | Why do we need to file Beneficial Ownership information? |
| **Answer** | Beneficial ownership information is vital for the following reasons: -<br>a) Improving investment climate;<br>b) Preventing corruption and illicit financial flows;<br>c) Improving the rule of law; and<br>d) Increasing trust and accountability. |
| **Question** | How do I know Beneficial Owners of a Company Owned by Other Companies Corporate Bodies? |
| **Answer** | If you are a company secretary/director you are duty bound to inquire such information from registered members/shareholders. It should be noted that each Company is required by law to establish and maintain its own Register of Beneficial Owner. |
| **Question** | How secured are the Beneficial Owners information as opposed to Share owners as registered in the Company Registry? |
| **Answer** | Beneficial ownership information is confidential information. The company, officers of the identified competent authorities and officers of the Registrar are duty bound to deal with beneficial ownership information with utmost secrecy. |
| **Question** | Can a Company Owning Shares to Other Company be a Beneficial Owner? |
| **Answer** | A beneficial owner must be a natural person(s) who directly or indirectly ultimately owns or controls the corporate entity. Thus a company or any corporate entity does not qualify to be called a beneficial owner it's the duty of the Directors of the company to ensure they get information of the natural persons in companies owning shares in their company. |
| **Question** | Is Beneficial Ownership Registration good for Investment Promotion in Tanzania? |
| **Answer** | Yes, it is! The key is to strike a balance between the competing goals of fighting corruption and improving the business climate in the our country. |
| **Question** | Do beneficial Ownership Registration target politically Influencing individual? |
| **Answer** | No, registration of information with regard to beneficial ownership is not for Politicians rather for all persons who directly or indirectly significantly influence/control the decision making of the Company. |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