

PUBLIC NOTICE: ONLINE BUSINESS REGISTRATION SYSTEM UPGRADE

The Companies and Intellectual Property Authority (CIPA) wishes to inform its valued customers that the Online Business Registration System (OBRS) is currently undergoing an upgrade which will deliver enhancements of the system and an improved user-experience. The public is further informed that in order to migrate to the upgraded system, the OBRS will be offline from the 11th to the 18th March 2025. The system will be back online on the 19th March 2025. Kindly take note of the following key dates:

Activity	Dates
Last date to submit applications	10 th March 2025
Brown Out Period (only Public Search functional)	11 th – 13 th March 2025
System Offline (Black Out Period)	14 th – 18 th March 2025
System Back Online	19th March 2025
March Annual Return Filing and Business Name Renewal Filing Dates	1 st - 10 th March and 19 th March - 10 th April 2025
Penalty Period for March Annual Returns and Business Name Renewals	11 th -20 th April 2025
Removal Date for Failure to File March Annual Returns and Business Name Renewals	Midnight 20 th April 2025

New System Features

The following are some of the new features that have been introduced on the OBRS.

1. Mandatory Constitutions

Pursuant to Sections 7 of the Companies Amendment Act, 2022 (which amends Section 37 of the Companies Act), all companies will now be required to have a constitution. This will apply to all new registrations as well as all existing companies. A template to guide customers to develop their constitutions has been provided on the information centre section of the CIPA website www.cipa.co.bw.

2. Beneficial Owner Declaration

The Authority will introduce enhanced features for the declaration of Beneficial Owners of companies, and such information will be publicly available. All new and existing companies must declare persons having control or ownership over the company. Please note that a beneficial owner must be a natural person. Where a company or other legal entity such as a trust or association is identified as having a link to BO information, a natural person having some form of ultimate control, either directly or indirectly, over the identified legal entity has to be identified. In addition to providing the personal details of beneficial owners, the nature of their interest in the company must be declared. Please refer to the FIA Act (2022) for a detailed description of beneficial ownership.

3. Nominee/Alternate Directors and Shareholders Declaration

In order to comply with global anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing (AML/CFT) standards, nominee or alternate directors/shareholders must be declared and named should the company have such arrangements.

4. Pre-pay Accounts

Deposit Accounts will now be called Pre-Pay Accounts and the pre-pay account numbers will be used as the reference number when transferring/depositing funds to the CIPA bank account. Clients will now be able to:

- Create their own pre-pay account (new users only)
- Top up their pre-pay account using debit/credit cards
- View transaction history
- Export transaction history to excel

5. Watchlist

A new feature has been introduced to allow users to monitor any company that they have an interest in. Notifications will be sent when changes are made to any company that has been placed on a watchlist. This service is free of charge.

In order to further sensitize clients on the upgrade, CIPA will conduct several virtual and physical workshops for stakeholders (please visit our social media platforms for the schedules). The Authority wishes to further thank all our valued clients for their patronage and continued support. For more information on the OBRS upgrade please email info@cipa.co.bw.