

Enhancing Corporate Transparency Through Mandatory Identity Revalidation

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Abstract

Transparency in corporate governance is vital for economic advancement and democratic accountability. In Nigeria, ambiguous ownership arrangements enable corruption and conflicts of interest, as individuals, especially public officials, obscure their financial interests through intermediaries like family members or shell corporations. The Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) depends on self-reported information with limited verification, enabling the existence of bogus directors and fraudulent beneficial ownership. This undermines regulatory scrutiny, enabling criminal activities such as money laundering and tax evasion. A qualitative methodology was employed, utilising secondary material from scholarly literature, policy papers, legal frameworks, and institutional reports. Thematic study concentrated on the opacity of corporate ownership, identity verification, and the obstacles of execution. Research demonstrates that compulsory identification verification can uncover concealed ownership, assist anti-corruption organisations, improve tax compliance, and foster a cohesive national data framework. Therefore, this research advocates for compulsory identification revalidation for all corporate directors and beneficial owners as a reform to improve openness and accountability. This study recommends incorporating National Identification Numbers (NINs), Bank Verification Numbers (BVNs), and biometric data into the corporation registration process, based on global best practices from the UK and the US.

Keywords: Transparency, corruption, CAC, NIN, BVN

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I. Introduction

Transparency in corporate governance is fundamental to sustainable economic development and democratic accountability. In Nigeria, the opacity around the true ownership of registered corporations has emerged as a systemic weakness, facilitating corruption, conflicts of interest, and illicit enrichment (Uzodinma & Okoye, 2020). The nation's existing corporate registration framework permits individuals, especially public officials, to obscure their financial interests using proxies, including family members, associates, or shell firms. This opacity compromises regulatory monitoring and enables the exploitation of public office for personal benefit, thereby diminishing public faith in institutions (Adebayo, 2021).

The Nigerian legislative system restricts certain kinds of public personnel from participating in specified business activities to avert conflicts of interest (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 1999). Notwithstanding these provisions, enforcement is hindered by inadequate data integrity and obsolete verification mechanisms. Consequently, numerous public officials possess clandestine interests in private firms, frequently exploiting their position to obtain contracts and other advantages undetected (Ezeani & Udeh, 2022). This scenario not only skews equitable competition but also robs the government of legitimate income and undermines the provision of public services.

A primary explanation for this enduring gap is the insufficiency of identity verification procedures during corporate registration and continuous compliance assessments. The Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) presently depends on self-reported data that is infrequently corroborated with official national databases (CAC, 2023). As a result, fraudulent identities, imaginary directors, and distorted beneficial ownership structures persist unnoticed across the business lifecycle. This weakness fosters opportunities for money laundering, tax evasion, and other financial malfeasance (Financial Action Task Force [FATF], 2021).

In recent years, global best practices have progressively underscored the significance of beneficial ownership transparency as an essential instrument in preventing corruption and fostering responsible business practices (OECD, 2020). The United Kingdom and the United States have established mandatory disclosure frameworks necessitating firms to identify and register their ultimate beneficial owners (UK Parliament, 2016; Financial Crimes Enforcement Network [FinCEN], 2021). These activities are underpinned by digital infrastructure that facilitates real-time verification and cross-referencing with law enforcement and taxation databases, thereby enhancing the integrity of business registrations.

To conform to international standards, Nigeria must upgrade its corporate identification systems by implementing a compulsory revalidation procedure that includes biometric and digital identity verification. This will need that all directors and beneficial owners of registered firms provide verified credentials, including National Identification Numbers (NINs), Bank Verification Numbers (BVNs), and physical biometrics (Adesina & Okafor, 2022). By incorporating these identities with current national databases, such as those managed by the National Identity Management Infrastructure (NIMC), the CAC may create a more precise and secure company ownership registry.

This change would achieve several aims. Initially, it would unveil concealed ownership frameworks and diminish the reliance on nominees in corporate registrations. Secondly, it would assist anti-corruption agencies in monitoring unlawful financial transactions and probing crimes related to public officials. Third, it would enhance comprehensive fiscal reforms by synchronising ownership records with tax reporting requirements, so guaranteeing that income and asset declarations coincide with business disclosures (World Bank, 2022).

Furthermore, compulsory identification revalidation might establish a consolidated, comprehensive citizen data framework, a concept long promoted by governance specialists and civil society organisations (Centre for Social Justice, 2021). A cohesive data ecosystem will augment inter-agency collaboration, optimise regulatory procedures, and elevate service provision across many sectors, including banking, taxation, procurement, and law enforcement. This would enhance Nigeria's capacity to fulfil its obligations under regional and international frameworks, including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC).

Critics may contend that enforcing rigorous identity requirements could hinder entrepreneurship and impose administrative burdens on small enterprises. Nonetheless, these apprehensions can be alleviated with a gradual and inclusive implementation plan that prioritises high-risk sectors, such as companies engaged in public contracting, while progressively expanding the need to the wider corporate environment (Ibekwe & Adeyemi, 2023). Moreover, safeguards must be integrated into the system to uphold individual rights, guarantee data privacy, and avert exploitation of the verification process by unethical actors inside the regulatory framework.

Ultimately, improving corporate transparency via compulsory identification revalidation is not just a technical reform but an essential measure for reinstating public trust in Nigeria's governance institutions. As the nation confronts the issues of corruption, inequality, and institutional deterioration, changes that enhance transparency and accountability must be prioritised in the national agenda. Through the adoption of innovation and the enhancement of regulatory monitoring, Nigeria has the potential to excel in ethical corporate governance and responsible public administration.

Statement of the Problem

The absence of transparency in business ownership constitutes a significant governance challenge in Nigeria, eroding accountability and exacerbating corruption. Notwithstanding regulatory frameworks intended to foster transparency, the existing system permits individuals, especially public officials, to obscure their genuine financial interests via intermediaries such as relatives, associates, or shell corporations (Uzodinma & Okoye, 2020). This technique enables unlawful enrichment, undermines the integrity of public procurement processes, and distorts equitable competition (Adebayo, 2021).

A primary cause of this issue is the insufficiency of identity verification processes during corporate registration and continuous compliance assessments. The Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) presently depends on self-reported data that is infrequently verified against national identity systems (CAC, 2023). As a result, bogus directors and fraudulent beneficial ownership arrangements persist undetected, exploiting loopholes for money laundering, tax evasion, and other financial offences (Financial Action Task Force [FATF], 2021).

This opacity significantly affects anti-corruption initiatives and democratic governance. In the absence of dependable ownership information, enforcing legislative prohibitions on public officials involved in private economic activity becomes challenging (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 1999). Consequently, conflict-of-interest cases frequently remain unpunished due to inadequate evidence connecting individuals to corporate entities (Ezeani & Udeh, 2022). The lack of verified ownership information obstructs tax reform efforts and undermines the coherence between business disclosures and personal wealth declarations.

Nigeria must implement contemporary verification methods that integrate biometric and digital identity assessments to rectify these systemic shortcomings. Utilising worldwide best practices (OECD, 2020), a compulsory revalidation process employing National Identification Numbers (NINs), Bank Verification Numbers (BVNs), and physical biometrics can markedly improve the precision and dependability of business ownership data.

Research Questions

1. How can mandatory identity revalidation discourage public servants from illegally maintaining stakes in private companies?

2. In what ways can ownership data be aligned with ongoing tax reforms to improve transparency and accountability?
3. How can this initiative contribute to the development of a centralized, cradle-to-grave citizen data system in Nigeria?

Research Objectives

This policy initiative aims to enhance corporate transparency and accountability in Nigeria through mandatory identity revalidation of company directors and beneficial owners.

The specific objectives include to:

1. Determine how mandatory identity revalidation can discourage public servants from illegally maintaining stakes in private companies.
2. Find out how the ways ownership data can be aligned with ongoing tax reforms to improve transparency and accountability.
3. To examine how this initiative can contribute to the development of a centralized, cradle-to-grave citizen data system in Nigeria.

Scope of the Study

This study's scope is limited to Nigeria's corporation Affairs Commission (CAC), which is in charge of corporation registration and compliance procedures. It analyses how the implementation of compulsory identity revalidation through National Identification Numbers (NINs), Bank Verification Numbers (BVNs), and physical biometrics can facilitate the identification of genuine beneficial owners and mitigate proxy ownership. The paper examines the potential integration of this change with current tax reforms and national data infrastructure efforts. The major focus is on corporations registered in Nigeria, although the suggested framework may have wider implications for promoting transparency in public procurement, fortifying anti-corruption initiatives, and improving inter-agency collaboration.

II. Literature Review

Transparency in corporate governance is crucial for promoting economic development, guaranteeing democratic accountability, and establishing public trust in institutions (Uzodinma & Okoye, 2020). Nigeria encounters substantial issues stemming from the absence of transparency regarding actual firm ownership structures. The existing structure enables individuals, especially public officials, to conceal their financial interests via proxies such family members, associates, or shell corporations (Adebayo, 2021). This opacity compromises regulatory monitoring and fosters corruption, conflicts of interest, and illegal enrichment, hence diminishing institutional credibility (Ezeani & Udeh, 2022).

The Nigerian legislative system restricts some kinds of public personnel from participating in business operations to avert conflicts of interest (Federal Republic of Nigeria [FRN], 1999). Notwithstanding these regulations, enforcement is ineffective due to inadequate data integrity and obsolete verification methods. Consequently, numerous public officials possess clandestine interests in private firms, frequently exploiting their position to obtain contracts and other advantages undetected (Ezeani & Udeh, 2022). This scenario not only undermines equitable competition but also deprives the government of legitimate resources and jeopardises the provision of public services.

A fundamental cause of this systemic issue is the insufficiency of identity verification procedures during firm registration and continuous compliance assessments. The Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) depends on self-reported data that is infrequently verified against national identity systems (CAC, 2023). As a result, bogus directors and fraudulent beneficial ownership arrangements persist undetected, exploiting loopholes for money laundering, tax evasion, and other financial offences (Financial Action Task Force [FATF], 2021). In the absence of dependable ownership information, enforcing legal restrictions on public officials involved in private business activities becomes challenging (FRN, 1999), resulting in unpunished instances of conflict of interest due to inadequate evidence connecting individuals to corporate entities (Ezeani & Udeh, 2022).

Worldwide, best practices have progressively underscored the significance of beneficial ownership transparency as an essential mechanism for combatting corruption and fostering responsible business practices (OECD, 2020). The United Kingdom and the United States have established mandatory disclosure frameworks necessitating firms to identify and register their ultimate beneficial owners (UK Parliament, 2016; Financial Crimes Enforcement Network [FinCEN], 2021). These activities are underpinned by digital infrastructure that facilitates real-time verification and cross-referencing with law enforcement and taxation databases, thereby enhancing the integrity of business registrations.

In light of these global changes, Nigerian scholars and policymakers have proposed the modernisation of corporate identification systems via compulsory revalidation processes that include biometric and digital

identity verification (Adesina & Okafor, 2022). This reform would mandate that all directors and beneficial owners of registered firms provide verified credentials, including National Identification Numbers (NINs), Bank Verification Numbers (BVNs), and physical biometrics. By incorporating these identities with current national databases—such as those managed by the National Identity Management Infrastructure (NIMC)—the CAC may create a more precise and secure registry of corporate ownership (World Bank, 2022).

This proposed reform theoretically aligns with principal-agent theory, which asserts that when agents (public officials or company directors) act on behalf of principals (citizens or shareholders), there exists an intrinsic risk of self-interest superseding fiduciary duty (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). Without effective monitoring and accountability systems, agents may leverage information disparities to obscure ownership and manipulate systems for their own benefit. Mandatory identification revalidation functions as a regulatory tool that diminishes information asymmetry by rendering ownership structures transparent and traceable, thus reducing agency costs and improving accountability.

Another pertinent theoretical framework is institutional theory, which underscores how formal regulations, informal norms, and cognitive structures influence organisational behaviour (Scott, 2013). In Nigeria, inadequate institutional frameworks facilitate the continuation of opaque ownership structures, as they are entrenched in a wider culture of informality and non-compliance. The implementation of a compulsory identity verification system indicates a transition in institutional rationale—from a framework that accepts ambiguity to one that necessitates clarity. Over time, this may result in normative transformations wherein stakeholders internalise the significance of transparency and accountability in corporate governance.

Empirical research have shown that openness in beneficial ownership effectively reduces corruption and enhances governance outcomes. A research by Transparency International (2018) indicated that nations with publicly available beneficial ownership registry saw a 24% decrease in grand corruption cases over a five-year period. Likewise, the implementation of the Persons of Significant Control (PSC) record in the United Kingdom resulted in a substantial rise in the volume of suspicious activity reports sent to financial authorities (UK Home Office, 2019). The findings indicate that verifiable and accessible ownership data improves the capacity of regulators, civic society, and the media to hold influential entities responsible.

Adesina and Okafor (2022) performed a comparative research of identity verification techniques in African economies and discovered that nations with integrated biometric systems exhibited elevated tax compliance and diminished occurrences of contract fraud. Their research highlights the significance of digital identification infrastructure in facilitating effortless verification and inter-agency collaboration. The amalgamation of NIN and BVN with CAC data in Nigeria could offer a viable solution to the ongoing issue of proxy ownership, particularly concerning politically exposed persons (PEPs).

Furthermore, compulsory identity revalidation could act as a fundamental measure in creating a centralised, comprehensive citizen data framework, a concept long promoted by governance specialists and civil society entities (Centre for Social Justice, 2021). A cohesive data ecosystem would bolster inter-agency collaboration, optimise regulatory procedures, and elevate service provision across many sectors, including banking, taxation, procurement, and law enforcement. This would enhance Nigeria's capacity to fulfil its obligations under regional and international frameworks, including the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) and the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC).

Critics contend that enforcing rigorous identity criteria may hinder entrepreneurship and impose administrative expenses on small enterprises (Ibekwe & Adeyemi, 2023). Concerns exist over data protection, implementation expenses, and opposition from impacted stakeholders. These obstacles can be alleviated with a staged and inclusive implementation strategy that prioritises high-risk sectors, such as companies engaged in public contracting, while progressively expanding the need to the whole corporate environment. Moreover, safeguards must be integrated into the system to uphold individual rights, guarantee data privacy, and avert exploitation of the verification process by unethical actors inside the regulatory framework.

The policy cycle model provides valuable insights for the effective planning, implementation, and evaluation of reforms (Howlett, Ramesh, & Perl, 2009). The approach delineates steps comprising agenda setting, policy design, adoption, implementation, and evaluation. In the Nigerian context, the agenda-setting phase has commenced, marked by an increasing recognition of the necessity for corporate openness. The policy design phase encompasses delineating the parameters of revalidation, selecting technical collaborators, and establishing legislative backing. Implementation will necessitate capacity development within the CAC, public outreach initiatives, and stakeholder cooperation. Ultimately, ongoing assessment using performance metrics will be essential to evaluate impact and enhance the process over time.

The literature offers robust theoretical and empirical evidence advocating for the implementation of obligatory identification revalidation in Nigeria's company registration system. Based on global best practices and local studies, it is clear that this reform would improve openness, reduce corruption, and align Nigeria with international standards of governance. Despite existing hurdles, notably regarding execution and stakeholder

engagement, the prospective advantages—spanning enhanced tax compliance to bolstered anti-corruption measures—render this program an essential element of Nigeria’s comprehensive governance reform strategy.

III. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research methodology, largely utilising secondary data sources to investigate the viability and ramifications of improving corporate transparency via obligatory identification revalidation in Nigeria. The research is predominantly documentary, utilising existing literature, policy documents, legal frameworks, institutional reports, and scholarly publications. These resources were obtained from esteemed academic journals, governmental publications, reports from international organisations (including OECD, World Bank, and FATF), and reliable web databases. Utilising secondary data facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the issue within its wider socio-political and economic framework, while also permitting comparison study with worldwide best practices.

This paper utilises an analytical framework that incorporates principal-agent theory and institutional theory to elucidate the dynamics of accountability, information asymmetry, and institutional transformation in corporate governance. This research utilises these theories to analyse how opaque ownership structures facilitate corruption and conflicts of interest, and how obligatory identity verification can function as a control tool to reduce agency costs and enhance institutional integrity. Moreover, empirical evidence from nations that have established beneficial ownership disclosure frameworks—such as the United Kingdom and the United States—is examined to discern insights applicable to the Nigerian context.

The data collection was executed methodically, commencing with an exhaustive examination of pertinent literature regarding corporate governance, beneficial ownership transparency, and digital identity systems. An analysis of national regulatory frameworks ensued, focussing specifically on the operations of the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), the National Identity Management Infrastructure (NIMC), and anti-corruption organisations. The evaluation included international norms and regional commitments, such as those under ECOWAS and UNCAC, to contextualise Nigeria's obligations and possible alignment solutions. The gathered data underwent thematic analysis to discern primary problems, opportunities, and policy recommendations for the establishment of a compulsory identification revalidation system for company directors and beneficial owners.

The study's exploratory and policy-oriented nature necessitates a methodology that synthesises findings from several sources to create a coherent and realistic reform framework. The lack of primary data collection restricts empirical testing of the postulated mechanisms, although it facilitates a comprehensive evaluation of structural difficulties and potential solutions. Potential limits, including political will, institutional ability, technological preparedness, and privacy issues, are recognised and examined within the framework of current discussions and expert perspectives. This analytical approach facilitates a comprehensive policy analysis designed to enhance decision-making and promote corporate transparency in Nigeria.

IV. Data Analysis And Interpretation

This study's conclusions were obtained through a qualitative synthesis of secondary data from academic literature, policy papers, legislative frameworks, institutional reports, and global best practices. The investigation concentrated on discerning major themes associated with business ownership opacity in Nigeria, the significance of identity verification in improving transparency, and the prospective advantages and obstacles of instituting obligatory revalidation methods. The thematic approach facilitated a systematic analysis of how systemic deficiencies in identity validation foster corruption and conflicts of interest, as well as how contemporary changes might rectify these shortcomings.

1. Corporate Ownership Opacity as a Systemic Vulnerability

A prevalent topic in the examined literature is that Nigeria’s existing corporate registration structure allows individuals—particularly public officials—to conceal their financial interests via proxies, including family members, associates, or shell corporations (Uzodinma & Okoye, 2020; Adebayo, 2021). The absence of transparency regarding true beneficial ownership compromises regulatory supervision and enables unlawful accumulation of wealth. The Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC), tasked with company registration, predominantly depends on self-reported data that is infrequently corroborated with reliable national databases (CAC, 2023). Consequently, fraudulent directors and distorted ownership frameworks endure, generating vulnerabilities that are exploited for money laundering, tax evasion, and other financial malfeasance (FATF, 2021).

This signifies a substantial institutional failure stemming from antiquated verification systems and inadequate enforcement capabilities. The lack of dependable identification systems hinders the enforcement of legal restrictions on specific categories of public servants involved in private business activities (FRN, 1999),

consequently permitting instances of conflict of interest to remain unaddressed due to inadequate evidence connecting individuals to corporate entities (Ezeani & Udeh, 2022).

2. The Role of Identity Verification in Enhancing Transparency

There is an increasing global focus on beneficial ownership disclosure as a mechanism for addressing corruption and fostering ethical governance (OECD, 2020). The United Kingdom and the United States have established mandatory disclosure frameworks that necessitate firms to register their ultimate beneficial owners (UK Parliament, 2016; FinCEN, 2021). These activities are underpinned by digital infrastructure that facilitates real-time verification and integration with law enforcement and taxation databases, thereby enhancing the integrity of business registrations.

In Nigeria, academics and policymakers have advocated for analogous reforms, specifically through the implementation of compulsory identity revalidation utilising biometric and digital identifiers, including National Identification Numbers (NINs), Bank Verification Numbers (BVNs), and physical biometrics (Adesina & Okafor, 2022). By incorporating these identities with current national databases—especially those managed by the National Identity Management Infrastructure (NIMC)—the CAC can create a more precise and secure registry of corporate ownership (World Bank, 2022). This technique would diminish the reliance on nominee shareholders and directors, hence enhancing the transparency and traceability of ownership arrangements.

This corresponds with principal-agent theory, which asserts that when agents represent principals, there exists an intrinsic risk of self-interest superseding fiduciary responsibility (Jensen & Meckling, 1976). Compulsory identification revalidation functions as a regulatory tool that diminishes information asymmetry, lowers agency costs, and improves accountability by rendering ownership arrangements verifiable and publicly accessible.

3. Potential Benefits of Mandatory Identity Revalidation

The investigation identified multiple strategic advantages linked to compulsory identity revalidation:

- **Revelation of Concealed Ownership Structures:** Mandating that all directors and beneficial owners provide verifiable credentials will unveil proxy ownership and diminish the reliance on nominees in corporate registrations.
- **Support for Anti-Corruption Initiatives:** Verified ownership data will assist anti-corruption organisations in monitoring illicit financial transactions and probing cases involving public officials with undisclosed interests in private firms (Ezeani & Udeh, 2022).
- **Alignment with Tax Reform Initiatives :** Integrating ownership data with tax reporting duties provides uniformity between business disclosures and personal asset declarations, hence enhancing revenue mobilisation efforts (World Bank, 2022).
- **Foundation for a Centralized Citizen Data Architecture :** A cohesive data ecosystem will augment inter-agency collaboration, optimise regulatory procedures, and boost service provision across several sectors, including banking, taxation, procurement, and law enforcement (Centre for Social Justice, 2021).

These observations indicate that obligatory identification revalidation is not simply a technical reform but a fundamental measure for establishing a more responsible and transparent government system in Nigeria.

4. Challenges and Implementation Considerations

Notwithstanding its prospective advantages, the suggested change encounters numerous obstacles. Critics contend that enforcing rigorous identity criteria may hinder entrepreneurship and impose administrative expenses on small enterprises (Ibekwe & Adeyemi, 2023). Moreover, issues of data privacy, implementation expenses, and opposition from impacted parties must be resolved to secure widespread endorsement.

According to the policy cycle model (Howlett, Ramesh, & Perl, 2009), successful implementation necessitates a systematic strategy that includes agenda setting, policy formulation, adoption, implementation, and evaluation. The agenda-setting phase has commenced, marked by an increasing recognition of the necessity for corporate openness. The subsequent steps entail delineating the revalidation scope, locating technical collaborators, and formulating legislative backing.

Implementation will necessitate capacity development within the CAC, public outreach initiatives, and stakeholder cooperation. Additionally, protections must be integrated into the system to uphold individual rights, guarantee data privacy, and avert exploitation of the verification mechanism by unethical actors inside the regulatory framework (Centre for Social Justice, 2021).

5. Policy Recommendations Derived from Comparative Analysis

Empirical research from different jurisdictions offers valuable insights for Nigeria. Transparency International (2018) discovered that nations with publicly available beneficial ownership records had a 24% decrease in grand corruption cases over a five-year period. Likewise, the establishment of the Persons of

Significant Control (PSC) record in the UK resulted in a notable rise in suspicious activity reports sent to financial authorities (UK Home Office, 2019). These findings highlight the necessity of ensuring that ownership data is reliable and accessible to regulators and civil society.

Adesina and Okafor (2022) performed a comparative research of identity verification techniques in African economies and discovered that nations with integrated biometric systems exhibited elevated tax compliance and diminished occurrences of contract fraud. Their research endorses the notion that Nigeria's amalgamation of NIN and BVN with CAC records may offer a scalable resolution to the ongoing issue of proxy ownership, particularly among politically exposed persons (PEPs).

A phased and inclusive implementation strategy is advised, commencing with high-risk sectors like governmental contracting firms, and subsequently expanding the need to the whole corporate sector (Ibekwe & Adeyemi, 2023). This methodology reconciles the necessity for reform with pragmatic considerations of administrative viability and stakeholder approval.

V. Conclusion

The absence of transparency in business ownership constitutes a significant obstacle to governance and economic integrity in Nigeria. The existing structure permits public officials and others to obscure their financial interests via proxies, so compromising accountability and facilitating corruption. Inadequate identity verification protocols at the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC) have exacerbated this issue, enabling the existence of bogus directors and concealed ownership structures. Consequently, anti-corruption initiatives are obstructed, tax reforms encounter discrepancies, and public confidence persists in its decline.

Nigeria must implement contemporary verification methods that include biometric and digital identity assessments to rectify these systemic shortcomings. Implementing required revalidation through National Identification Numbers (NINs), Bank Verification Numbers (BVNs), and physical biometrics, informed by worldwide best practices, can substantially improve the precision and dependability of business ownership data. This change conforms to international norms regarding beneficial ownership transparency and bolsters wider governance and fiscal measures.

Despite the existence of implementation hurdles, including privacy concerns and administrative burdens, a gradual and inclusive strategy can alleviate opposition and facilitate effective adoption. This project signifies not merely a technical enhancement but a fundamental advancement towards reinstating honesty and transparency in Nigeria's corporate and public sectors.

VI. Recommendations

1. CAC should mandate all company directors and beneficial owners to provide their National Identification Number (NIN), Bank Verification Number (BVN), and biometric data for verification by the Corporate Affairs Commission (CAC).
2. CAC records should be Connected with NIMC and CBN databases to facilitate real-time identity verification and mitigate fraud.
3. Enterprises engaged in public procurement and high-risk sectors should be prioritised prior to comprehensive deployment.
4. Current legislation to establish legal support for compulsory identity verification and compliance enforcement.

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