

# African AI and Blockchain Policy Forum

Held in partnership with the OECD  
Blockchain Policy Forum

## Agenda

15-16 November 2023

Hybrid event

Le Meridien, Pointe aux Piments, Mauritius and online

## ■ About the RCE

The [Regional Centre of Excellence](#) (“RCE”) was inaugurated on 15 March 2019. The launching of the RCE in collaboration with the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (“OECD”) is a première in the region and will enhance the reputation of Mauritius at the international level. This initiative is a result of the Memorandum of Understanding (“MOU”) that was signed by the Government of Mauritius and the OECD in September 2018. This MOU laid down the foundations for collaboration between OECD and Mauritius to strengthen and support effective regulation, sound corporate governance and good conduct in the Southern and Eastern African regions.

## ■ About the OECD

The OECD is an international organisation that works to build better policies for better lives. The goal of the OECD is to shape policies that foster prosperity, equality, opportunity, and well-being for all. The OECD draws on 60 years of experience and insights to better prepare the world of tomorrow. Together with governments, policy makers and citizens, the OECD works on establishing evidence-based international standards and finding solutions to a range of social, economic, and environmental challenges. From improving economic performance and creating jobs to fostering strong education and fighting international tax evasion, the OECD provides a unique forum and knowledge hub for data and analysis, exchange of experiences, best-practice sharing, and advice on public policies and international standard-setting.

## ■ About the African AI and Blockchain Policy Forum

Artificial Intelligence (“AI”) and blockchain technology have attracted particular attention among African policymakers in recent years for their potential to contribute to economic development, drive regional connectivity, and support of multilateral initiatives like the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union’s Africa 2063 agenda. The rapid advancement and adoption of these emerging technologies have been met with new policy approaches and governmental frameworks to guide responsible innovation. Crucially, because the uses and impacts of both AI and blockchain are inherently cross-border, international standards are playing an important role in informing domestic policy and driving consistency across countries.

The African AI and Blockchain Policy Forum connects policymakers from across the continent with the latest international analysis and key policy developments to support domestic and regional responses that guide responsible innovation within these two technologies while mitigating key risks. The Forum’s first day focuses on general technology-level governance, aimed at officials from across governmental and regulatory bodies, with the second day focusing on financial market issues specifically, most relevant for economy and finance ministries, central banks, and financial regulatory, taxation and law enforcement agencies.

## ■ Forum Venue/ Physical participation

Le Meridien, Pointe aux Piments, Mauritius ([Mauritius Beach Hotel - Pointe Aux Piments | Le Méridien Ile Maurice \(marriott.com\)](#))

## ■ Virtual Participation

<https://events.hubilo.com/African-AI-Blockchain-Policy-Forum/register>

## ■ Contact

More information on the Forum can be obtained on the RCE website [www.rcemauritius.org](http://www.rcemauritius.org) /FSC website [www.fscmauritius.org](http://www.fscmauritius.org). For any queries, you may contact us on 403 7000 (Ext 7367)/404 5652 or drop us an email on [rce@fscmauritius.org](mailto:rce@fscmauritius.org).

## Venue: Le Meridien, Pointe aux Piments, Mauritius

### DAY 1 - Technology governance and responsible innovation

#### 15 November – 10:30-15:15

---

##### 10:30 Opening remarks

Master of ceremony, **Mrs Kheertee Ramsahok**, Head, Regional Centre of Excellence

Welcome Address by **Mr Dhanesswurnath Thakoor**, Chief Executive, Financial Services Commission, Mauritius

Address by **Mr Yoshiki Takeuchi**, Deputy Secretary General, OECD

Address by **Mr Harvesh Seegolam**, Governor, Bank of Mauritius & Chairperson of RCE Governing Board

Address by the **Hon. Mahen Kumar Seeruttun**, Minister of Financial Services and Good Governance

---

##### 11:15 Lunch

---

##### 12:15 AI governance: Global Trends and African Perspectives

AI brings benefits but also real risks like bias and discrimination, the polarisation of opinions, privacy infringement, and widespread surveillance in some countries. Some of these risks are already materialising. Worldwide, governments and AI stakeholders are increasingly gravitating toward the adoption of risk-based approaches and impact assessments to effectively govern AI, thereby harnessing its benefits while proactively mitigating its risks.

This session will examine the regulatory frameworks, ethical considerations, and economic implications of AI, shedding light on innovative solutions and lessons learned in Africa and beyond.

**Presentation:** [Luis Aranda](#), Policy Analyst, OECD Observatory on Artificial Intelligence

---

##### 12:35 Panel discussion: Lessons from AI policy in Africa and beyond

**Speakers:** [Jacques Ludik](#), Founder, CEO & Executive Chairman, Cortex Group; Founder & President, Machine Intelligence Institute of Africa  
[Golestan \(Sally\) Radwan](#), Chief Digital Officer, United Nations Environment Programme  
[Peter Addo](#), Head of Emerging Tech Lab, Agence Francaise de Développement  
[Conrad Tucker](#), Professor of Mechanical Engineering, Carnegie Mellon University  
[Emmanuel Kahembwe](#), CEO, VDE (Association for Electrical Electronic Information Technologies) United Kingdom  
[Suraj Juddoo](#), Academic Head: School of Science and Technology, Middlesex University Mauritius

---

##### 13:35 Coffee break

---

##### 13:50 The state of blockchain innovation and policy in Africa

The OECD presents its latest analysis into activities and developments in blockchain innovation in key African economies, highlighting sectoral priorities and opportunities to address policy gaps with

---

---

reference to international approaches, including the OECD's Recommendation on Blockchain and Other Distributed Ledger Technologies.

**Presentation:** [Oliver Garrett-Jones](#), Policy Analyst, Financial Markets Unit, OECD

---

**14:10**

**Panel discussion: From mirage to maturity – Can the promise of blockchain be kept?**

The development of blockchain technology from 2009 onwards sparked a wave of interest in potential applications across the economy, promising to digitalise, streamline and strengthen processes from supply chains and trade to public records and voting. Today, few of these solutions have reached mainstream use or commercial scale, including in Africa.

This session will discuss the lessons from over a decade of blockchain innovation, focussing on the suitability of the technology, structural barriers to innovation and adoption, and the role of governments in addressing these.

**Moderator:** [Oliver Garrett-Jones](#), Policy Analyst, Financial Markets Unit, OECD

**Speakers:** [Nandini Dhar](#), CEO, Consilium Global  
[Ilan Melendez Lugo](#), LACChain Regional Lead, Inter-American Development Bank  
[Ashish Gadnis](#), CEO, BanQu  
[Arushi Goel](#), Policy Lead, Middle East and Africa, Chainalysis

---

**15:15**

**Close of day one**

---

## Venue: Le Meridien, Pointe aux Piments, Mauritius

### DAY 2 AI and blockchain in finance: Harnessing innovation, safeguarding market integrity and stability

#### 16 November – 10:30-15:45

10:30

---

#### Keynote address

Address by **Mr Mardayah Kona Yerukunondu**, First Deputy Governor, Bank of Mauritius & Chairperson, Financial Services Commission, Mauritius

---

10:35

#### Presentation and discussion: **Generative AI in Finance**

Generative AI has experienced a notable surge in the financial sector in the last few years. While 'traditional' AI models have been predominantly used for pattern identification, classification and prediction, generative AI models are able to create 'original' output that is often indistinguishable from human-generated content. The use of generative AI innovation presents immense opportunities for efficiencies across sectors, including in finance, but comes with very important risks that warrants the attention, and possible action, of policy makers.

This session will discuss the current level of deployment of GenAI in Finance and the future impacts of generative AI models on financial products and market regulation.

**Presentation:** [Iota Nassr](#), Senior Policy Analyst, Financial Markets Unit, OECD

**Discussants:** [Dhanesswurnath Thakoor](#), Chief Executive, Financial Services Commission, Mauritius  
[Bright Simons](#), Founder and President, mPedigree  
[Nouran Youssef](#), Senior Policy Analyst, Arab Monetary Fund

---

11:35

#### **Global and regional implementation of FATF Standards on Virtual Assets and Virtual Asset Service Providers**

This session presents a stocktaking of the Financial Action task Force's Standards on Virtual Assets and Virtual Asset Service Providers (Recommendation 15), highlighting gaps and priorities to achieve a wider implementation of anti-money laundering (AML) and counter-terrorist financing (CFT) measures in the sector and ensure safe adoption in Africa and globally.

**Presentation:** [Dooyoung Kim](#), Policy Analyst, Risk and Policy Unit, FATF

*Followed by Q&A with in-person and remote Forum participants*

---

12:30

#### Lunch

---

13:30

#### **The Global Forum on Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes: The Crypto-Asset Reporting Framework**

The Crypto-Asset Reporting Framework (the "CARF") has been welcomed by the G20 as an international standard to ensure activities in crypto-asset markets will not erode recent gains in global tax transparency.

---

---

The CARF provides for the automatic exchange of tax relevant information on transactions in crypto-assets. Now that the technical work with respect to the CARF has been completed, the G20 has called for the Global Forum on Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes to ensure the CARF achieves widespread implementation globally.

This session will provide participants with an overview of the requirements of the CARF and highlight relevant considerations for countries considering CARF implementation. Particular focus will be given to relevant considerations for countries in Africa that wish to implement the CARF. Time will also be provided for audience questions and discussion.

**Presentation:** [Colby Mangels](#), Tax Policy Advisor, Global Forum on Transparency and Exchange of Information for Tax Purposes, OECD

*Followed by Q&A with in-person and remote Forum participants*

---

14:30

**Coffee break**

---

14:45

**Crypto-assets and financial inclusion**

While crypto-assets have attracted interest in emerging and developing markets as a potential instrument to address under-banked populations and drive financial inclusion, adoption and use remains low. The OECD will present its latest research on crypto-asset use in key African economies and where policymakers can concentrate to harness technologies towards financial inclusion.

**Moderator:** [Oliver Garrett-Jones](#), Policy Analyst, Financial Markets Unit, OECD

**Speakers:** [Iota Nassr](#), Senior Policy Analyst, Financial Markets Unit, OECD  
[Juan Montaner](#), Head of Investigations and Special Programs, Chainalysis

---

15:45

**Close of Day Two**