QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE FOR REGULATORY AUTHORITIES ON MARKET ENTRY AND FIT AND PROPER CONTROLS



This document sets out important information for market entry fit and proper controls. Supervisors must be guided by this document when conducting fit and proper checks on beneficial owners, owners, controllers, directors and managers. This document should be read in conjunction with the requirements of the relevant AML/CTF related legislations, regulations and other prudential guidelines as amended.

1. New Requirements for Market Entry and Ongoing Controls

The 2017 suite of legislative reforms amend regulatory laws for sectors that are considered 'reporting entities' under the AML/CTF Act. These reforms were in response to FATF recommendations, which require that market entry controls, including fit and proper checks, be applied across financial institutions and designated non-financial businesses and professions (referred to as 'reporting entities' in Vanuatu) in order to protect the financial system against abuse from criminal elements. FATF also requires that these controls be maintained on an on-going basis. The disclosure of beneficial ownership and the application of fit and proper controls to beneficial owners, as required by FATF, also enhances transparency of the financial sector.

Note that the information in this documents focuses only on requirements stemming from FATF recommendations on AML/CTF. It is not an overarching guide on the regulation of these sectors.

2. What does 'market entry' refer to?

'Market entry' refers to the point at which an individual or entity applies for a license or registration under a regulatory regime. It does not refer to the point at which that individual or entity applies for registration as a reporting entity under the AML/CTF Act. The objective is to prevent unsuitable individuals or entities from becoming licensed or registered as a financial institution or designated non-financial business or profession in the first place. Registration as a reporting entity under the AML/CTF Act is a second stage. A robust market entry process means regulatory authorities take responsibility for regulating their sectors, and that these checks do not need to occur again for registration as a reporting entity under the AML/CTF Act.

Registration as a reporting entity under the AML/CTF Act has the main purpose of enabling VFIU to maintain a list of all reporting entities and their contact details. In Vanuatu, the registration of reporting entities also serves the purpose that individuals and entities from <u>UNREGULATED</u> sectors, are required to undertake fit and proper checks since there is no other regulatory regime which currently governs them.

3. New disclosure obligations at the point of market entry

The following table lists the new obligations for disclosure of information when an individual or entity applies for a license or registration under a regulatory law. The table also lists how a regulatory authority might request this information and what documents applicants could provide in support of the disclosure obligation.

Obligation to disclose	How to request the	Supporting documents
	information	
Applicants for a license or	Application forms and	In order to support the
registration are required	application procedure	applicants' claim that they
to provide the details of	guideline issued to	have provided the details
'key persons'.	potential applications	of all key persons,
	should be updated to	regulators should request
The reason for disclosure	ensure that applicants are	the core documents of the
of key persons is so that fit	required to provide details	entity. For example, if the
and proper criteria can be	of key persons. In terms of	applicant is a company, at
applied to each of those	what 'details' are	a minimum, it should
key persons. This ensures	necessary to include in the	provide :
that criminals and their	application form, the	 copies of license,
associates are not	following details would be	certificate of
entering the financial	a minimum: full name,	incorporation,
system.	address, date of birth,	memorandum and
Kay parsans conorally	completed personal	articles of association;
Key persons generally include: beneficial owners,	questionnaire and specific declaration required by	 company's register of
owners, controllers,	the financial rules in the	shareholders, and
directors and managers.	case of an FDL license	directors; and
Most regulatory Acts have	application.	 company's audited annual statements.
been amended to provide		If the applicant is an
a definition of 'key		individual, he/she should,
persons', which captures		at a minimum provide the
those listed above. Each of		following:
those key persons, such as		 certified copy of
a 'controller' is also		passport;
defined.		 police clearance

In rare cases, such as the Mutual Funds Act, there is no definition of 'key person', however, the key persons are listed in the obligation to disclose for each type of license under that Act.		certificate; evidence of residential address; Evidence of business address; CV (employment and education/ qualification history; At least two references. The documents must be notarised where necessary. The applicant must reveal what persons meet the definitions of beneficial owners, owners, controllers, directors and managers.
		Similarly, for an applicant that is a partnership, the partnership agreement should reveal such details.
Applicants for licenses or registration are also required to provide details of the source of funds used to pay the capital or equity of the applicant. The purpose of this disclosure is to determine whether the source of funds is from legitimate sources or whether it may be the proceeds of crime.	Application forms will be updated to ask applicants for details of the source of funds. Although at this moment Shareholders and directors are asked to provide bank statements to proof they have sufficient funds in their bank accounts.	In some ways, an inquiry into the source of funds is an inquiry into the ownership or beneficial ownership of an entity. For example, the source of funds for a company comes from its shareholders. Therefore a list of shareholders who own or control the company will enable a regulatory authority to

In the case of Foundations, the Act asks for the source of the initial transfer of assets to the foundation.	Details of the founder who provides the initial assets must also be provided.	consider whether the source of funds might arise from criminal proceeds. In this case, the regulator would ask for the following information: • register of shareholders; • the company's annual audited statements as substantiation of source of funds; • the company's or individual's latest banks statements. The documents must be notarised where necessary. In the case of membership-based entities, such as mutual funds or credit unions, the source of funds is the contribution of every mutual fund or credit union member. However, an inquiry into every member and their source of funds would not be reasonable. Instead, regulatory authorities could seek copies of the policies, by-laws or rules relating to capital contributions.
disclose whether a	Application forms will be	The core documents of an
uisciuse wiletitei a	Application forms will be updated to require	entity (for example, a

the beneficial owner or	whether a beneficial trust deed, constitution
owner of another	owner is also the etc.) will assist in revealing
regulated entity.	beneficial owner or owner beneficial owners.
	of another regulated Regulators can also obtain
The purpose of this line of	entity in Vanuatu. In the copies of other
inquiry is to reveal	case of an international licenses/registrations and
whether and how	company applying for the verify those against
different regulated	license, it is part of the database searches. The
entities in the financial	requirements that the Natural Person Beneficial
sector are connected	natural person beneficial ownership form has to be
through their ownership	owner has to be disclosed. completed and signed
and control.	

4. Determining Beneficial Ownership

Each regulatory Act as amended lists the key persons to whom fit and proper checks must be applied. Each of the 'key persons' is defined in the Interpretation Section of each Act. Key persons are generally: beneficial owners, owners, controllers, directors and managers.

A beneficial owner is a natural person who ultimately owns or ultimately controls an applicant for a licence or a licensee;

Owners are defined as persons (natural or legal persons) who have a legal entitlement to 25% or more of the interest in the entity by way of ownership of shares or otherwise.

A controller is a broad term that captures natural or legal persons who can influence the operational or financial policies of an entity, either directly or indirectly. They include, but are not limited to, directors and managers.

Directors and managers are specific types of controllers and therefore are specifically identified and defined in each Act and are generally given their ordinary meanings.

Determining the beneficial ownership of different types of entities can be complex. It starts with determining ownership and control and subsequently requires an inquiry into ultimate beneficial ownership. It can be useful to adopt an easy reference framework to assist in identifying beneficial ownership. A suggested **Quick**

Reference Guide to Determining Beneficial Ownership of Different Entities is provided at **Attachment A**.

5. Applying fit and proper criteria and assessing source of funds

The obligations to disclose key persons and the source of funds allows regulatory authorities to apply fit and proper checks as a part of the licensing or registration process. While the obligation to disclose is a checklist exercise to gather information, assessing against fit and proper criteria requires the exercise of judgement by the regulator. Further information may need to be gathered at this stage if required to assess fitness and propriety.

In determining whether a key person is fit and proper, each Act lists the 3 minimum criteria in the table below. The table also provides further information on what documents could be gathered or what further inquiries could be made to assess compliance with fit and proper criteria.

It should be noted that most regulatory Acts already have fit and proper criteria tailored to that sector prescribed in regulations, rules or guidelines under the Act. A few Acts also have additional criteria included on the face of the Act itself.

The fit and proper criteria should be a combination of the minimum fit and proper criteria used by VFIU under the AML/CTF Act as well as fit and proper criteria specific to the sector being regulated. For example, for financial dealers, accounting qualifications from accredited institutions may be a sector specific fit and proper requirement. The 2017 amendments to the regulatory Acts only listed a bare minimum criteria as required by FATF recommendations. It is up to regulatory authorities to develop a full list of fit and proper criteria per sector. It is important that this full list of fit and proper criteria include the minimum criteria used by VFIU under the AML/CTF Act.

Minimum fit and proper criteria	Information requested	Supporting documents and further searches
Whether the key person	Application forms should	Regulators could ask key
has a criminal conviction	be updated to ensure that	persons to provide a
or is subject to criminal	a questionnaire is included	police clearance or
proceedings.	for key persons to	criminal history check.
	complete. That	Regulators could also
Regulators should note	questionnaire should ask	perform searches of court
that the simple fact of	whether the person has a	databases if available.

having a criminal conviction or being subject to criminal proceedings does not mean that a person does not meet fit and proper criteria. This is not how the Act should be interpreted.	criminal conviction or is subject to criminal proceedings. The questionnaire would also ask other questions relevant to the full range of applicable fit and proper criteria.	In some cases, regulators may need to obtain information of criminal records from foreign jurisdictions. International cooperation mechanisms would need to be used.
Convictions for money laundering or terrorism financing should mean that a person does not meet fit and proper criteria. Some Acts or regulations list other specific types of criminal offences that would render a person unfit for the position.		
However, not all criminal convictions make a person unfit for the position. For example, one conviction resulting from driving offence may not render a person unfit to be the director of a financial institution.		
The number of convictions would also be a relevant consideration.		
Ultimately, regulators should have a system for assessing against this criterion.		
Whether the key person	A database search using	Regulators should utilise

is listed on a sanctions list of the United Nations, a foreign jurisdiction or Vanuatu's sanctions lists. If a key person is listed on a United Nations sanctions list or Vanuatu's sanctions list, then they would not meet this criteria. Aside from the United Nations, individual countries also have sanctions lists. Regulators can be selective as to which countries' sanctions lists they follow. For example, it would be prudent to follow the US sanctions lists in order to facilitate USD transactions. However, regulators can consider whether the sanctions lists of some other countries that have less connection with Vanuatu need to be followed. For example, Anne Smith is on Sierra	software such as World Check One is the best way of identifying sanctions matches. While regulators can ask this question on an application form or questionnaire for key persons, it is not essential.	databases such as World Check to screen all key persons for sanctions matches. Regulators should also note that it is possible under sanctions regimes for a person to obtain a permit or authorisation or have an exception to their sanction listing. This should also be taken into consideration.
•		
Whether the key person meets other fit and proper criteria prescribed in Guidelines, Regulations or Rules under the Act. As mentioned earlier, the	Application forms or questionnaires for key persons should cover the full range of applicable fit and proper criteria.	Regulators may seek a range of documents to support the responses to the questionnaire. These documents could range from providing CVs, proof

fit and proper criteria should include the fit and proper criteria used by VFIU under the AML/CTF Act as well as sector specific fit and proper criteria. Apart from the requirements under our legislations, VFSC also has issued prudential guidelines on fit and proper persons.		of educational qualifications, relevant accreditations, valid visas etc, copies of passports. Regulatory authorities should also consider the list of available information under the heading 'verification' below.
Whether the source of funds is acceptable The objective of this assessment is to determine whether the source of funds could be the proceeds of crime. Note that regulators may also inquire about the amount of capital and its management for prudential reasons and financial viability.	Application forms and questionnaires should inquire about the source of funds.	In some ways, an inquiry into the source of funds is an inquiry into the ownership or beneficial ownership of an entity. For example, the source of funds for a company comes from its shareholders. Therefore a list of shareholders who own or control the company will enable a regulatory authority to consider whether the source of funds might arise from criminal proceeds. In this case, the regulator would at first instance ask for the register of shareholders and the company's annual statements as substantiation of source of funds. However, if the owner or

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beneficial owner of the
company is another
company, the regulator
may also ask for the
owner-company's audits
and other documents that
show whether and how
that owner-company
generates profits or its
source of funds.
Bank accounts in the
name of the shareholder
(individual or corporate) is
another reliable check.
In the case of
membership-based
entities, such as mutual
funds or credit unions, the
source of funds is the
contribution of every
mutual fund or credit
union member. However,
an inquiry into every
member and their source
of funds would not be
reasonable. Instead,
regulatory authorities
could seek copies of the
policies, by-laws or rules
relating to capital
contributions and would
then need to assess
whether they provide
sufficient rigor in on-
boarding and on-going
knowledge of its
members.
members.
Assessing whether the
source of funds is

	acceptable requires the exercise of judgement. Take the following example. Anna Jones was a hairdresser for 10 years. Anna then started a foundation. She transferred \$3 million dollars as the initial assets of the foundation. On the application form for the foundation, the source of funds was listed as Anna Jones' profits from her hairdressing businesses. In this case, does it seem reasonable that the line of business (hairdresser) has resulted in \$3 million of assets? If not, then the regulator would need to make further inquiries to understand the source of funds.
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6. Identifying Politically Exposed Persons

Regulators should identify whether persons to whom fit and proper controls apply, including beneficial owners, are Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs). This may impact on the risk associated with the entity and the regulator's supervisory response to such risk.

Vanuatu's AML/CTF Act defines 'Political Exposed Person' or PEP as follows:

An individual who is or has been entrusted with prominent public functions such as the Head of State, the Prime Minister, Ministers, senior politicians, senior Government officials, judicial or military officials, senior executive members of state owned corporations or international organisations and officials of a political party.

Resources such as World Check One can assist in identifying whether a person is a PEP.

Where a 'key person' is identified to be a PEP, an inquiry into the source of funds of the PEP is important.

7. On-going disclosure obligations

Where a change to information provided at the point of market entry occurs, licensees/registered bodies must provide the regulatory authority with updated information, generally within 14 days. Failure to do so is a criminal offence under each regulatory Act and is also grounds for revocation of the license or registration. Upon receipt of the updated information, the regulatory authority, must ensure that fit and proper criteria continue to be met.

While licensed/registered entities have obligations to disclose information, regulators also have the ability to request information from, and perform on-site inspections on, licensed/registered individuals and entities. Criminal penalties apply for providing false information to regulatory authorities. A regulatory authorities' prudential supervision program will determine/will outline the type of supervision necessary and how periodically such supervision takes place.

8. Identification and verification of different entity types

Most regulatory Acts and application forms have a minimum set of requirements for identifying different types of persons and entities, such as natural persons, companies, partnerships, trusts and associations. In the sections above and in the Framework for Beneficial Ownership at Attachment A, key supporting documents have been identified for the updated market entry controls. In most cases, these documents are already requested as part of existing application processes.

In addition to documents to be requested from applicants for licenses registration, Regulators also have multiple sources of information that can be useful in verifying information provided by applicants.

Regulators should consider whether the following sources of information are available:

- register of births, deaths and marriages
- companies registry
- records/databases for other regulatory licenses or registrations
- immigration records
- drivers license records
- passport checks

- credit history
- water, electricity or other essential services records
- public medical registrations
- criminal conviction or civil suite records.

Regulatory authorities should ask themselves the following questions:

- How can we obtain access to this information domestically?
- What are the avenues for obtaining this information from foreign government agencies where necessary?
- If individuals have to obtain a police clearance or criminal history check, is there a standard form and process for individuals and the police to follow?

Regulatory authorities may also find it useful to have access to databases such as **World Check One**, which enables a search to be performed on individuals, organisations and vessels to determine whether they are any sanctions concerns, whether an individual is a Politically Exposed Person, whether there are Interpol notices relating to them, and what persons and entities they are associated with.

SWIFT KYC is another database that can provide valuable information to support fit and proper checks.

VFSC has access to the following online data base:

- World check one
 <u>https://risk.thomsonreuters.com/en/products/world-check-one-kyc-verification.html</u>
- International Chamber of Commerce Commercial Crime Services <u>https://portal.icc-ccs.org/portal/public/</u>

VFSC also has access to the following Sanctions List:

- United national Sanction List
 <u>https://www.un.org/sc/suborg/en/sanctions/un-sc-consolidated-list</u>
- DFAT Sanction List
 <u>http://dfat.gov.au/international-</u>
 relations/security/sanctions/pages/consolidated-list.aspx#lml

9. Applying simplified procedures or enhanced procedures (risk-based approach)

Regulators should consider simplified procedures for low risk applicants and enhanced procedures for higher risk applicants. While there should be a standard procedure, regulators may allow simplified procedures where the risk is low. For example, a very small agriculture cooperative may not have complex ownership and control structures but rather be comprised of individuals undertaking low risk activities. This would be very different to a large company seeking to be licensed as a financial institution. Another example is where certain individuals may not have birth certificates or other common forms of identification, however, the risks associated with their activities is low.

Regulators should take a risk-based approach to market entry checks that allows for simplified and enhanced procedures to be applied in appropriate circumstances.

Attachment 1: Quick Reference Guide to Determining Beneficial Ownership of Different Entities

A beneficial owner is a person who ultimately owns or controls a person or entity. The reference to 'ultimately' requires you to lift the corporate veil and follow the chain of ownership structures until you can identify the ultimate natural person who has ownership or control. This means that, in complex cases, an inquiry into the beneficial ownership of a trust, for example, may require a further inquiry into the beneficial ownership of a company which is the trustee and so on.

Defining 'Beneficial Owner'

Under Vanuatu's regulatory laws governing reporting entities, the concept of **'beneficial owner'** and its constituent parts is generally defined along the following lines:

Beneficial owner means a natural person who ultimately owns or ultimately controls an applicant for a licence or a licensee. Ultimately owns or controls include circumstances where ownership or control is exercised through a chain of ownership or by a means of indirect control that may not have legal or equitable force, or be based on legal or equitable rights.

The reference to **'ownership'** in the above definition is further defined as:

A person who has a legal entitlement of 25% or more of the applicant or licensee by way of ownership of shares or otherwise.

The reference to 'control' in the definition of beneficial owner is further defined as:

A person who exercises influence, authority or power over decisions about the applicant's or licensee's financial or operating policies, including as a result of, or by means of, a trust, agreement, arrangement, understanding or practice.

Example 1:

Big Corp Ltd applies for a license. Mega Corp owns 55% of the shares of Big Corp Ltd. No person or entity owns 25% or more of the shares of Mega Corp. However, Anna Jones owns 20% of the shares of Mega Corp and has veto rights over financial and operating policies. Anna Jones is therefore the ultimate beneficial owner of Big Corp Ltd.

The concept of beneficial ownership has a slightly different focus when applied to membership-based entities, such as credit unions and cooperative societies, and other entities such as foundations. The drafting of the definition has been slightly altered to reflect the greater emphasis on control by persons in senior management positions rather than ownership. For membership-based entities, we need to look at the beneficial owners of persons in senior management positions, not the beneficial owners of the licensed/registered entity. This is because, in practice, beneficial ownership of these types of entities is unlikely to be established by way of ownership of an interest in the entity. For example, every member of a credit union has an equal interest in the credit union. So long as there are more than 4 members of a credit union, this means that no member will satisfied the ownership test of 25% or more interest in the credit union. Therefore, the definition of beneficial owner for these types of entities is generally formulated along the following lines:

- (1) A "beneficial owner" is a natural person who ultimately controls a person or entity.
- (2) **Control** means exercising influence, authority or power over the person or entity, and includes circumstances where the person is acting as a nominee or proxy on behalf of another person or entity.
- (3) If a person is acting as a nominee or proxy on behalf of an entity (whether corporate or unincorporate), the natural person who ultimately controls the entity is the natural person who:
 - (a) has a legal entitlement to 25% or more of the entity by way of ownership of shares or otherwise, including ownership exercised through a chain of ownership; or
 - (b) otherwise exercises control, directly or indirectly, over the entity.

Example 2:

Jane Smith holds a senior management position in Cooperative Society A by virtue of being a member of its committee. However, Jane Smith acts in that position as the nominee of Cooperative Society B. The Registrar of Cooperatives must therefore look at the beneficial owner/s of Cooperative Society B to identify an ultimate beneficial owner.

Example 3:

Jane Smith holds a senior management position as a councillor on the board of councillors of Foundation A. However, Jane Smith acts in that position as the nominee of a company called Management Co. The Vanuatu Financial Services Commission must therefore look at the beneficial owner/s of Management Co. to identify an ultimate beneficial owner. This inquiry reveals that Adam Booth owns 60% of the shares of Management Co. Adam Booth therefore would be an ultimate beneficial owner.

	Determining Beneficial Ownership		
		Control	
	Ownership of 25% or more of shares or other interest	Direct or Indirect (if ownership cannot be established)	Senior Management Position (if ownership and direct/indirect control by other means cannot be established)
Company	A natural or legal person that has 25% or more shares in the company.	Shareholders who have a power of veto or can otherwise exercise voting power.	determined through ownership of shares or direct/indirect
	<u>Key documents:</u> Certificate of incorporation and	<u>Key documents:</u> Company	control of voting power.

	annual statement should provide information. Also consider company constitution, members register and/or shareholder agreement.	constitution, members register and/or shareholder agreement should provide information.	However, if beneficial ownership cannot be determined by these means, then directors, managers and other persons who have senior management functions would fulfil the 'control' element of beneficial owner. <u>Key documents:</u> Company's annual statement should provide information.
Partnership	25% or more of interest in the partnership. <u>Key documents:</u> Partnership agreement should provide information.	A partner may be appointed particular financial and/or operational control. <u>Key documents:</u> Partnership agreement should provide information.	It is likely that beneficial owners will be determined through the ownership and direct/indirect control elements. If this is not possible, then beneficial owners will be persons in senior management positions. <u>Key documents:</u> Partnership agreement should provide information.
Associations, cooperatives	N/A	A member of a membership-based	Each regulatory Act identifies a number

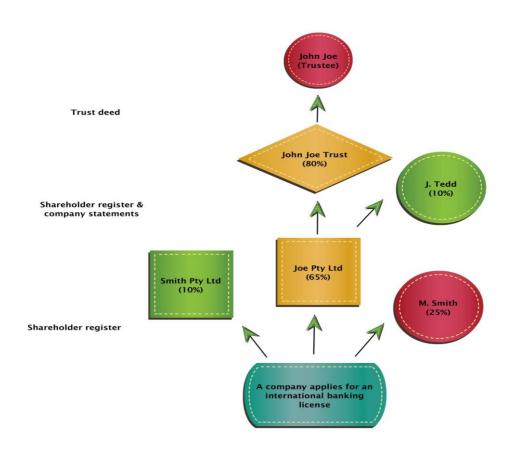
and other entities	entity may potentially be a beneficial owner by their exercise of control through some arrangement. This is not often likely to be	have senior management functions within the entity.
	the case. <u>Key documents:</u> Certificate of incorporation, articles of association, constitution of association, charter of a foundation, by-laws etc.	Persons in senior management positions are generally natural persons. However, some entities may allow another entity to hold a senior management position. In such cases, a natural person may hold the senior management position as the proxy or nominee of the entity and acts on behalf of the entity. For example, a company, trust or cooperative society may hold a senior management position and be represented in that position by their nominee who is a
		natural person. In these cases, the regulatory authority must determine the ultimate beneficial owner of the entity that holds the senior management position. This means

			that proxies and nominees must first be disclosed. <u>Key documents:</u> Certificate of incorporation, articles of association, constitution of association, charter of a foundation, by- laws etc.
Trust		Trusteeswillbebeneficialowners.Note that a companymay be a trustee, inwhichcasethebeneficialownerofthatcompanyneedsto be identified.Ifthereisan'appointer'of a trustwho has the power toappoint/removetrusteesorbeneficiaries,theappointer will also bea beneficial owner.Key documents:AtrustAtrustprovideinformation.	N/A
Natural person	N/A	The natural person (the applicant) is the beneficial owner	N/A

	unless there are	
	reasonable grounds	
	to suspect otherwise.	
	For example, if you	
	suspect that the	
	person is acting on	
	behalf of another	
	person, then you	
	need to identify that	
	other person.	

Example: Ultimate Beneficial Ownership

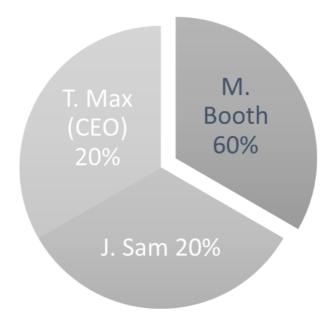
The definition of 'beneficial owner' requires an inquiry into chains of ownership and control to ascertain the '<u>ultimate</u> beneficial owner'. Where there are many layers of ownership, a complex inquiry to find the ultimate beneficial owners may be necessary. The below example demonstrates this. In this example, M. Smith and John Joe are the ultimate beneficial owners to whom the fit and proper criteria must be applied.



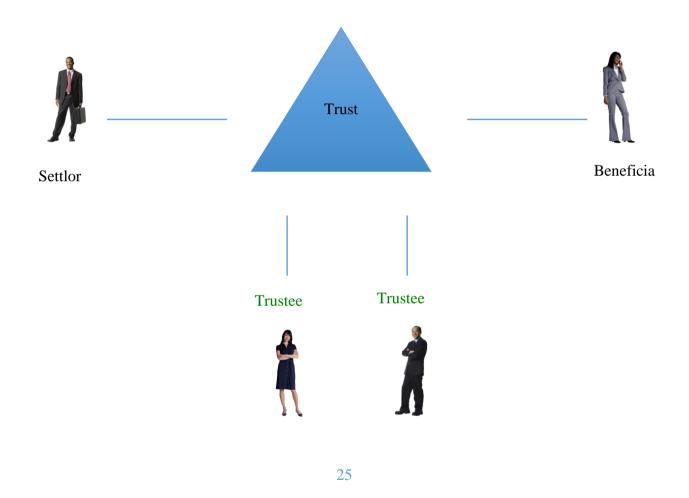
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Example: Company Structure

M. Booth is the beneficial owner since she owns 60% of the shares in the company, even though T. Max is the CEO.



Example: Trust Structure The trustees are the beneficial owners.



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Example: Partnership Structure

S. Wren and B. Smith are the beneficial owners since they both own 25% or more of the interest in the partnership.



S. Wren 55% B. Smith 25% A. Jones 20%