

As seems to often be the case, researchers have implicated the usual suspects: inadequate infrastructure, poor education and high levels of corruption.

Emerging tech to the rescue?

Innovative technologies often upend what we think is practical or even possible. If harnessed, they could provide solutions to some of Africa's most intractable problems.

To cite just three examples, the blockchain, drones and AI have enormous promise. The blockchain technology's distributed ledger system may be able to reduce corruption in certain activities. My research indicates that firms in the region often tend to cite informal payments to government

officials as an important business challenge. Any aspect of business-government relationships that can be made more transparent would therefore be favourably received by entrepreneurs in the region.

Applying blockchain solutions to government transparency is not a novel idea. To boost government transparency, the government of Canada has started sharing information about research funding through an Ethereum-based blockchain ledger. Similarly, other business-government dealings could be monitored via blockchain, reducing the potential for backroom deals that may disfavour struggling entrepreneurs, and increasing transparency and overall trust in government.



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