

BOTSWANA - BwCSIRT WINS THE 2026 COMMONWEALTH TELECOMMUNICATIONS ORGANISATION CYBERSECURITY EXCELLENCE AWARD



Group photo of award winners.

The Botswana Computer Security Incident Response Team (BwCSIRT) won the Cybersecurity Excellence Award at the Commonwealth Telecommunications Organisation (CTO) Digital Excellence Awards 2026 held on 30 September 2026, in London, United Kingdom. BwCSIRT received a formal international recognition certificate and trophy in recognition of its outstanding contribution to cybersecurity, digital trust and national cyber resilience. The award highlights Botswana's emergence as a regional leader in developing effective national cybersecurity capabilities. Ghana and Lesotho came second and third runner-ups respectively.

The CTO Digital Excellence Awards recognise outstanding organisations, Governments and initiatives making highly impactful contributions to the Commonwealth's digital transformation. The winning initiatives are those that promote innovation, leadership and knowledge exchange across the Commonwealth. The Award was presented by Ms Doreen Bogdan-Martin, Secretary General of the International Telecommunication Union and received by Mr Martin Mokgware, BOCRA Chief Executive on behalf of the Republic of Botswana.

The BwCSIRT is Botswana's national entity founded in 2019 with the support of international partners mainly the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the European Union through Cyber4Dev programme. The entity is mandated to, among others, coordinate cybersecurity incident response, strengthen national cyber resilience, develop cybersecurity capabilities and promote digital trust.

Following its establishment, BwCSIRT rapidly developed cybersecurity frameworks and capacity as well as forged alliances with regional and international cybersecurity actors such as Africa Computer Security Incident Response Teams (AfricaCERT); South African National Research and Education Network (SANREN); Task Force CSIRT (TF-CSIRT); National CSIRT (Germany); and Forum of Incident Response and Security Teams (FIRST). These alliances have entrenched BwCSIRT internationally as a credible entity in the fight against cybercrime. Its mandate has since expanded beyond incident response to include cybersecurity awareness, capacity building, technical workshops, cyber drills, and cyber resilience initiatives.

The BwCSIRT has been mobilising and guiding local organisations to build resilience against cyber threats. As part of continuous growth, the Government of Botswana is investing in developing the next generation of cybersecurity professionals through a structured CSIRT trainee programme, with 10 trainees currently undergoing specialised training and practical development at the BwCSIRT.

Beyond Botswana, BwCSIRT has been supporting cybersecurity capability across Africa. The team has shared knowledge, expertise and experience in support of efforts to develop and strengthen national CSIRT capabilities in Namibia, Lesotho, Eswatini, Malawi and Zimbabwe.



Ms. Doreen Bogdan-Martin, ITU Secretary General and Mr. Martin Mokgware, BOCRA Chief Executive.



BwCSIRT award and certificate.

CTO Digital Excellence Awards

The Excellence Award recognises outstanding achievement in different digital development platforms and the Award winners' achievements reflect innovation, leadership and commitment to advance digital development across the Commonwealth.

Award winners for other categories of the 2026 CTO Digital Excellence Awards were:

- Universal Access & Service Excellence:** WITIN Girls – Nigeria
- Digital Policy & Regulatory Excellence:** National Incubation Centers – Pakistan
- 21st Century Government / E-Government Initiatives:** IrengoGov – Rwanda
- Digital Applications & Innovation:** AI Extract – United Kingdom

For Botswana, the award is a testament to the dedication, professionalism, resilience and innovation of the entire staff at BwCSIRT, as well as the continued support of the Government of Botswana.

The award is not only a recognition of what Botswana has achieved, but also a challenge for Botswana to continue strengthening the cyber resilience and contributing to cybersecurity capability across the Commonwealth.

The CTO Award comes at a time when Botswana, on 25 September 2026, signed the United Nations (UN) Convention against Cybercrime joining other 94 countries which signed the Convention. This signals the growing commitment to tackling online crime and making the internet safe for everyone. The convention aims to enhance countries' ability to prevent and combat cybercrime and to improve cross border cooperation in addressing offences such as online fraud, ransomware attacks and identity theft.

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For more information contact:
Masego M. Jeremiah
Head of Broadcasting & Corporate Communications
jeremiah@bocra.org.bw