

Rwanda's National Identification Agency (NIDA) on Thursday launched a national identity verification campaign, a key step toward the nationwide rollout of digital national ID cards planned for the coming months.

The announcement was made at the 28th Kigali International Trade Fair, where NIDA officials began registering citizens for biometric verification to prepare for the issuance of the country's first digital IDs.

The campaign follows a July statement by the Rwanda Information Society Authority (RISA), which told lawmakers the project had made significant progress and that full data collection would begin within three months. The digital ID system is expected to be fully operational within three years.

"We're launching the identity verification process here at the Expo, but this will continue in all sectors across the country," said Josephine Mukesha, Director General of NIDA. "We have already begun training trainers, who will then assist others in delivering this service nationwide."



Josephine Mukesha, Director General of NIDA

Unlike traditional ID cards issued only to Rwandans aged 16 and above, the digital IDs will be issued at birth and include biometric information such as fingerprints, iris scans, facial recognition, and other personal details.

The digital IDs will be available in three formats: a physical card, a QR code accessible via mobile phones and computers, and a shareable digital version.

The new system will also expand eligibility. In addition to Rwandan citizens, refugees and resident foreign nationals, digital IDs will also be available to stateless individuals, migrants, and short-term foreign residents staying in the country for fewer than six months.

NIDA said the full implementation of the digital identity system will cost more than 40 billion Rwandan francs (approximately \$33 million), with funding from the World Bank. The agency expects the system to improve data security, service delivery, and digital governance.

Personal information stored in the digital IDs will include full names, date and place

of birth, parent names, phone numbers and email addresses, along with high-resolution biometric data.

“This is more than just a new ID,” Mukesha said. “It’s about securing identity from birth and making access to services more efficient and inclusive for everyone in Rwanda.”