

Rwanda, Benin and Ghana are getting ready to test a shared platform that lets one country check the digital identity of a person issued an ID by another.

The platform is Smart Africa's Smart Africa Data Exchange, known as SADX. It has already linked the three countries' national ID systems ahead of testing in the real world. No date has been set for the trials.

Under the plan, travellers flying between Benin and Rwanda will have their identities verified through the system. The same will happen at land borders between Ghana and Benin.

Smart Africa announced the news on X. It called the move "a key milestone for Africa's cross-border digital ID interoperability". The organisation says the aim is for Africans to use their digital identity safely across borders to travel, work, study and get services.

The platform sits under the Smart Africa Trust Alliance (SATA). The alliance backs trusted identity checks and the sharing of personal data between member countries. Each country keeps control of its own national system.

The announcement follows a technical meeting in Kigali earlier this year. Officials from the three countries went through how to join up their infrastructure, how to build trust through public key infrastructure, and how to use application programming interfaces, or APIs, which let separate digital systems swap information.

They also looked at how verification requests would be routed, where digital certificates would be stored and how technical problems would be dealt with. The answers will help show whether the linked systems can check identity credentials securely and reliably across borders.

Six African countries set up SATA in 2023 by signing a declaration to work together on personal data and digital ID interoperability. The alliance wants to build trust between national systems and support digital trade.

SADX is part of a wider push to make digital public infrastructure work across Africa. In West Africa, for example, regional bodies have promoted the ECOWAS National Biometric Identity Card.

Smart Africa's approach is different. Rather than creating one regional ID document,

it connects the systems countries already use, so each one keeps its own identity infrastructure.

The trials will show whether those connections work in practice at borders and airports. Any wider rollout will depend on the results and on what the governments agree.