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WHY URA IS SEEKING TO MERGE IDENTIFICATION NUMBERS

By John Ricks Kayizzi

The taxman's revenue collection is set to be boosted, as a major reform proposal seeks to merge key identification systems into a single, unified number, a move experts say could transform service delivery, enhance compliance and spur business growth.

The Government is considering introducing a new system that will consolidate the tax identification number (TIN), business registration number (BRN) and national identification number (NIN) into one.

The initiative, spearheaded by the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA), in collaboration with the National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA) and the Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB), is aimed at improving efficiency while curbing fraud.

Currently, individuals seeking to start businesses must navigate a lengthy process involving multiple institutions. One must first secure a NIN from NIRA, then obtain a BRN from URSB, and finally apply for a TIN from URA.

This fragmented system has long been criticised for being time-consuming, costly and prone to duplication of effort.

Robert Kalumba, URA's assistant commissioner for public and corporate affairs, said the proposed integration represents a significant shift towards a more streamlined and user-friendly system.

"It represents a major shift towards efficiency, transparency and convenience for citizens and businesses alike," he said in a recent statement.

Kalumba added that one of the most immediate benefits of the unified identification system will be convenience.

"Citizens and business owners will no longer need to juggle multiple identification numbers or repeatedly submit the same information to different agencies. A single number will suffice for registering businesses, filing taxes and verifying identity across all government platforms," he noted.

Beyond convenience, the reform is expected to play a critical role in boosting enterprise growth, particularly among small and medium-sized enterprises.

"Many businesses in Uganda remain informal due to the complexity of registration procedures," Kalumba said, adding that by simplifying the process into a single step, the Government hopes to encourage more entrepreneurs formalise their operations, thereby gaining access to credit, support programmes and broader market opportunities.

The integration is also seen as a powerful tool in the fight against fraud and tax evasion.

"By linking personal identity with tax and business records, it becomes significantly harder for individuals to operate under multiple identities. This enhanced traceability is expected to improve compliance and increase government revenues."

Kalumba added that the unified system will strengthen data sharing across government institutions, enabling better planning and service delivery.

"With integrated and reliable data, policymakers will have clearer insights into economic activity, employment trends and sector performance, allowing for more targeted and effective interventions," he said.

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BETWEEN THE LINES

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GRAPHIC BY BRIAN SSEKAMATTE

Merging key identification numbers



- Spearheaded by the Uganda Revenue Authority, National Identification and Registration Authority and Uganda Registration Services Bureau

A LENGTHY PROCESS TO START A BUSINESS IN UGANDA

Secure a NIN from NIRA → Obtain a BRN from URSB → Apply for a TIN from URA

The process is time-consuming, costly, and prone to duplication of effort

OUTCOME

- Will improve efficiency while curbing fraud
- Fight against fraud and tax evasion
- It will become harder for individuals to operate under multiple identities
- Enhanced traceability is expected to improve compliance and increase government revenues
- Will strengthen data sharing across govt institutions, enabling better planning and service delivery
- Policymakers will have clearer insights into economic activity, employment trends and sector performance

EXPORT



EXPERT OPINION

Uganda's young generation may not own land or factories, but many have skills that can be exported.

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SECURITY



DIGITAL TOOLS FOR TRADE AGAINST FRAUD

Uganda's fast-growing digital economy need tools that protect them from fraud without making life harder for customers.

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When the side hustle gives you anxiety

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