

Advancing the Digital Legal Identity Agenda in Namibia

5 August 2025

Policy Brief

Leveraging Citizen Insights for Inclusive eID Rollout in Namibia – Lessons from an UnConference

Summary

Namibia's transition to a digital identity (eID) system presents an opportunity to enhance service delivery, reduce fraud, and improve accessibility. However, public trust remains a critical barrier. This policy brief synthesizes insights from the recent UnConference on the implementation of Namibia's Digital Legal Identity system. This was a participatory, gamified pilot that engaged over 250 citizens to inform an inclusive eID rollout strategy. The findings reveal deep-seated concerns around privacy, accountability, and accessibility, alongside strong demand for transparency, multilingual engagement, and youth-centric solutions.

The methodology prioritized the use of collective intelligence, leveraging citizen science over traditional top-down consultations, capturing nuanced fears and hopes that conventional surveys might miss. While this pilot demonstrates the value of participatory policymaking, limitations include self-selection bias (attendees were largely urban, educated, and digitally connected) and the need for broader rural representation in future dialogues.

This brief recommends three policy actions:

1. Launch a Multilingual Trust-Building Public Engagement Campaign co-designed with citizens.
2. Pilot Rural eID Access Solutions before the national rollout of the eID.
3. Strengthen Data Governance with clear accountability mechanisms.

Background and Context

The UN Global Digital Compact, as part of the Pact of the Future, highlighted equitable access to digital service delivery as a critical objective. The Compact emphasizes the need for inclusive digital technologies that bridge the digital divide and foster a safe, inclusive digital environment. A well-functioning Digital Legal ID system, essential for robust Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), is pivotal for this end.

In alignment with Namibia's Vision 2030, which aims to improve the quality of life for all Namibians and achieve the level of developed countries by 2030, the NDP6 objectives focus on fostering economic growth, inclusiveness, and resilience for sustainable development.

Specifically, NDP6 aims to achieve high, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth with decent wages, and to enhance efforts to deliver services that improve livelihoods and create certainty of sustainable development. This includes the development of DPI and e-governance systems, which are crucial for achieving the goals of Vision 2030.

In Namibia, the challenge of legal identity governance is closely tied to the broader issue of ensuring that all citizens have access to essential services and opportunities. Disparities in digital infrastructure and connectivity hinder the widespread adoption of digital services, particularly in rural and underserved areas.

Addressing these challenges is essential for Namibia to fully leverage digital technologies for sustainable development, improve public service delivery, and ensure that all citizens benefit from digital transformation.

UNDP's Governance Framework for Digital Legal ID, launched in 2023, holds significant promise to help accelerate progress towards a modern, and cost-effective 'Legal Identity for All' agenda across programme countries. The framework addresses governance challenges across the digital legal identity ecosystem and offers a practical roadmap

for utilising digital technologies. The roadmap applies to various programming contexts and addresses country-specific challenges.

The Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security, with UNDP's support, conducted a governance assessment in 2024 of their digital legal identity ecosystems, utilizing the UNDP Governance Framework. The findings and recommendations drawn from the assessment have been critical in shaping the scope of this initiative.

Key recommendations in the Digital Legal Identity Governance ¹Assessment Report recommends enhancing institutional capacity by increasing staffing and succession planning, reassessing digital talent policies, and considering open-source software. It additionally emphasises improving user value through better monitoring and by implementing Public Key Infrastructure (PKI).

Other recommendations include initiatives to strengthen data protection and privacy by finalising relevant bills such as the Data Protection Bill, Cybercrime Bill and improving oversight. The assessment also calls for better participation and access to information, promoting equality and non-discrimination to enhance the legal and regulatory framework.

Finally, it highlights the need for stronger procurement and anti-corruption measures and ensuring accountability and rule of law through adequate resources *and clear role definitions*.

Methodology ¹: Utilising Collective Intelligence, Citizen Science and Experimentation

Two key innovative and participatory methods were used throughout the UnConference to crowdsource feedback and engage citizens in unexpected ways.

Collective Intelligence refers to the enhanced capacity that emerges from the collaboration, collective efforts, and competition of many

¹ <https://unstats.un.org/legal-identity-agenda/documents/M-presentation/webinar06-presentation1.pdf>

individuals. It leverages the diverse knowledge, skills, and perspectives of a group to solve complex problems, make decisions, and generate new ideas. The rationale behind collective intelligence is that a group of people can often achieve better outcomes than individuals working alone, especially when the group is diverse and well-coordinated. Citizen Science, on the other hand involves the public in scientific research and data collection. It empowers citizens to contribute to scientific endeavours, often through participatory methods such as surveys, experiments, and observations.

The rationale behind citizen science is to democratize the research process, making it more inclusive and accessible, while also benefiting from the vast amount of data and insights that a large, engaged public can provide.

The deliberate selection of these methodologies provided the organisers with opportunities to gather valuable feedback and engaged citizens in meaningful ways, surfacing deep insights and fostering a sense of community and collaboration. These approaches align well with the principles of the eID implementation ensuring that the process was both inclusive and innovative.

Designed as a platform for consultation, the UnConference also showcased a series of mini experiments to engage citizens in unexpected ways while collecting qualitative data. Each activity challenged traditional policymaking norms, demonstrating the value of flexibility, creativity, and partnerships with unconventional actors.

The following is a brief description of the experiments, key learnings and their implications for the development of future eID public engagement activities and the development of the strategy.

Experiment 1: The Opening Dialogue

The event began with a live, semi-structured and unscripted discussion about the eID, between the Minister of Home Affairs and the UNDP Deputy Resident Representative. This was designed as an intentional shift from the standard one-sided speech format.



The opening dialogue between the Minister of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security and the UNDP Deputy Resident Representative engaged participants from beginning to end.

Learnings

Breaking Hierarchies

The conversational tone set a participatory atmosphere, signalling that this was not a “government lecture” or one-way “speech” but a shared exploration. Attendees later referenced this as a reason they felt comfortable voicing concerns.

Framing the activities

The opening dialogue between the Minister and the Deputy Resident Representative set the tone for the day and framed the eID as a national conversation rather than a policy mandate. It also stimulated curiosity and encouraged public engagement from the outset.

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- Future public engagements should replace ceremonial openings and speeches with interactive dialogues, using moderators to bridge technical and public language gaps.
- Leverage “Interest Hooks” and partner with the media to broadcast such conversations, extending reach beyond physical attendees. From the part of the Ministry, the entire day was livestreamed, allowing people to follow online.

Experiment 2: Dance as Advocacy – The Identity Dance

Three dance sets by Namibia’s OYO Dance Troupe visually depicted identity theft risks with current IDs versus the security of eID. The first dance set illustrated the vulnerabilities of traditional identification methods, showing how easily personal information can be stolen and misused. Dancers portrayed scenarios where an individual’s identity was compromised, leading to financial loss and emotional distress. The second set transitioned to the introduction of the eID, highlighting its advanced security features. Through dynamic choreography, the dancers demonstrated how the technology of the eID protects personal data, making it significantly harder for identity theft to occur. The final set emphasised the positive impact of eID on individuals’ lives, showcasing how secure identification can lead to greater trust in digital services and improved access to essential resources. The use of dance effectively communicated the importance of transitioning to the eID for enhanced security and better service delivery.



The Ombetja Yehinga Organisation (OYO) performing the “Identity Dance”

Learnings

Art as a Universal Language

Abstract concepts like “data vulnerability” became tangible through movement, resonating across language and literacy barriers.

Emotional Engagement

The performance humanized policy issues, making them memorable (e.g., dancers “stealing” identities vs. a “shielded” eID).

Policy Insights

- Mainstream Creative Partnerships by collaborating with artists early in the policy design process to translate technical jargon into relatable narratives.
- Scale the use of dance via Digital Media and share performances on platforms like YouTube / TikTok to reach youth (25% of attendees were under 30). Consider developing reels to share with both a digital audience as well as to remote and rural communities in future.

Experiment 3: Gamifying Complex Questions using Escape Rooms

Two rooms were set up as escape rooms. Each room was designed to engage participants in a unique and interactive way. The first room, called the Identity Puzzle, invited participants to explore the question, “What makes you who you are in the digital world?” Inside this room, participants encountered various challenges and puzzles that required them to think critically about their identities, and later their digital identities. They had to piece together clues and answer questions that highlighted the different aspects of their online presence, such as social media profiles, digital footprints, and personal data. The experience was both enlightening and thought-provoking, encouraging participants to reflect on how their identities and especially their digital identities are formed and perceived.

The second room, known as the Identity Vault, focused on the themes of privacy and accountability in terms of the eID. Participants were guided through a series of questions and scenarios that illustrated the importance of protecting personal information and ensuring transparency in the use of digital identities. They encountered questions and shared situations where their privacy was at risk and had to make decisions on how to safeguard their data. The room also emphasized the role of accountability, showing how the eID system can be designed to ensure that individuals and organizations are held responsible for their actions.

Both escape rooms were guided by Integrity Champions, who were public servants trained as

facilitators. These champions played a crucial role in guiding participants through the challenges, providing insights, and fostering discussions. Their presence added a layer of authenticity and expertise to the experience, making it more impactful and engaging for the participants.



The Identity Puzzle, one of the Escape Rooms used gamification to help define “Digital Identity”

Learnings

Gamification Drives Honesty

The “puzzle” framing made abstract topics such as *digital identity* feel approachable, yielding deeper responses than mere surveys.

Enlisting the Integrity Champions

The use of the integrity champions, public servants as facilitators reduced distrust; participants cited their neutrality as critical.

Policy Insights

- Train “Policy Gamifiers” and develop a Toolkit to use in expanding how the Integrity Champions were enlisted to include local leaders (e.g., teachers, pastors) to replicate this model of public engagement while connecting public servants with understanding the needs of community members.
- Adapt the UnConference for replication in rural areas by simplifying and translating the posters as part of the Toolkit in offline settings (e.g., printed and laminated posters and use of erasable markers to capture citizen insights).

Experiment 4: Using a Human Library to amplify Marginalized Voices

During this activity, representatives from the San, Ovaherero, Ovambo, and Nama Communities took part in a Human Library. Drawn from Namibia’s marginalised communities, they were joined by a Disability Inclusion Advocate who was visually impaired and formed a “Human Library”, complete with Book Names and Covers. Collectively, the “human books” shared their stories, struggles with the current IDs and hopes for the soon to be launched eID.



The Human Library effectively used empathy and inclusion to portray the struggles of the marginalized and the need for the eID

Learnings

Lived Experience Data

The stories of exclusion shared by individuals from marginalised communities brought the harsh realities of policy failures to life. For example, one Human ‘Book’ recounted a time when they were denied healthcare simply because they didn’t have an ID. The pain of inconvenience was accompanied by a story of vulnerability and fear. Without an ID, they couldn’t access the medical care they desperately needed, highlighting a critical gap in the system. These personal stories made the consequences of policy shortcomings visceral and real, emphasizing the urgent need for change.

Trust Through Proximity

Hearing from peers rather than public servants or officials built a sense of empathy and urgency among the audience. When people shared their experiences and challenges with the current

system and unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles, it resonated on a personal level. A departure from public servants speaking in abstract terms; members of the human library were fellow community members, neighbours, and friends. Their proximity and shared experiences fostered a deeper understanding and connection, making the call for improvements in the current system and adoption of the eID more compelling and immediate.

Policy Insights

- Center Marginalized Groups Early: Embed community storytellers in eID design teams to flag accessibility gaps.
- Documentary Tool: Film testimonials for training public servants on inclusive service delivery.

Experiment 5: Digital Solutions Exhibition showcasing Student Innovations

During this activity, students from the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST) embarked on an exciting journey to design and develop innovative digital solutions. These projects were part of their work-based learning experiences, carried out in close consultation with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Namibia. The students poured their creativity and technical skills into these projects, aiming to address real-world challenges and how the eID might improve the lives of their fellow citizens.

At the UnConference, the students showcased their eID prototypes, which included some truly groundbreaking ideas. One of the standout projects was a voice-based onboarding system for the eID, designed to cater to local languages. This solution aimed to make the eID registration process more accessible and user-friendly, especially for those who might not be comfortable with traditional text-based interfaces. Users were allowed to interact with the system using their native languages, a solution hoping to bridge the digital divide and to ensure that everyone could benefit from the eID system.

Another impressive project was an AI-driven talent platform linked to the eID. This platform was designed to match individuals with job

opportunities based on their skills and qualifications, as recorded in their eID profiles. The goal was to create a more efficient and equitable job market, where everyone had a fair chance to find talent across Namibia that corresponded with their unique gifts and abilities. Using the power of artificial intelligence, the students aimed to streamline the talent search process and help match talent with meaningful initiatives and projects more quickly.

These innovative projects not only demonstrated the students' technical prowess but also their commitment to making a positive impact on their community. The UnConference provided a platform for them to share their ideas, receive feedback, and inspire others with their vision for a better future.



Soft Ware Developers, Engineers and Students from the Namibia University of Science and Technology showcasing their prototypes

Learnings

Local Solutions Exist

Students proved Namibia's capacity to home-grow tech, and contribute to Namibia's digital Ecosystem, if given platforms.

Tangibility Builds Trust

Interacting with prototypes (e.g., testing voice recognition) demystified eID.

Policy Insights

- Popularise Policy Experimentation and Hackathons. Partner with universities to crowdsource solutions for rural access / disability inclusion and provide

opportunities for the prototypes to go through sandboxed testing.

- In order to fast-track pilots and provide for sandboxes, it might prove useful to fund and invest in student projects and prototypes (e.g., voice onboarding) for immediate testing.

Experiment 6: Community Mural

Art for Awareness Activity: A talented collage artist from the National Art Gallery led a unique and engaging activity that combined creativity with a powerful message. Using recycled materials, the artist guided participants in creating a large mural. As the mural took shape, it became clear that each piece of recycled material represented a small part of a larger picture. When the mural was finally completed and viewed from a distance, it revealed a stunning fingerprint. This fingerprint symbolized the uniqueness of each individual's identity, emphasizing the importance of recognizing and valuing our distinctiveness. The use of recycled materials also highlighted the theme of sustainability, reminding participants that just as we can repurpose materials to create something beautiful, we can also work together to build a more inclusive and secure digital identity system.



Community members co-created and contributed to a "Community Mural" bringing their ideas to art

Learnings

Hidden Patterns, Collective Impact

The mural mirrored the eID's promise, capturing individual data points creating a secure whole.

Participatory Art = Ownership

Attendees who contributed to the mural felt invested in the eID vision.

Policy Insights:

- Launch a National Public Art Mural Campaign, linking to the eID. Picture walking past a hospital and seeing a vibrant wall that tells a story. This mural, created by local artists, illustrates how the eID connects to seamless health services. It shows a patient being admitted, receiving treatment, and accessing follow-up care, all facilitated by the eID. The artwork not only beautifies the space but also normalizes the imagery of the eID, making it a familiar and trusted part of everyday life. A call for interested institutions to provide similar murals could be considered to engage the community and link the art to the mandate of the institution. Each mural can highlight how the eID serves as a cross-cutting tool and enabler, whether it is in healthcare, education, or social services.
- Crowdsourced Branding: A campaign where citizens are invited to co-design eID marketing materials could be launched. This initiative taps into the creativity and insights of the community, ensuring that the branding resonates with the people it serves. The involvement of citizens in the design process, helps in creating materials that are not only visually appealing but also culturally relevant and meaningful. This collaborative approach fosters a sense of ownership and pride in the eID system, making it more likely to be embraced and supported by the public.

Experiment 7: From "Cradle to Grave" Ministry Tour

This activity involved a detailed walkthrough of the Ministry's services, showcasing the journey of an individual from the issuance of a birth certificate to the establishment of their legal identity, and finally to the recording of their death. The lifecycle of an eID encompasses various stages, starting from birth registration and continuing through to the documentation of death records. This tour could

include potential use cases in the future, linked to other services such as ability to leverage social grants, find jobs and even access banking services.

Learnings

Seeing is Believing

Identify use cases to link the eID to concrete services such as social grants, linkage to voter registration or applying for jobs in the public service to illustrate how the eID might improve efficiency, effectiveness and boost support. Additionally, it is crucial to provide proof of concepts and conduct continued pilots for these use cases to ensure their viability and to refine the services based on real-world feedback.

Transparency Builds Trust

Expose how the backend processes look like, for instance, provide an overview of how the data is stored to address 'black box' fears. These fears arise from the lack of transparency and understanding of complex systems, such as the eID. Users may be concerned about how their data is processed and decisions are made if they cannot see or understand the internal workings of the system. By providing clear explanations and insights into the backend processes, we can build trust and ensure that users feel confident in the security and fairness of the eID system.

Policy Insights:

- Consider introducing Virtual Tours. Developing a 360° online tour for rural citizens can significantly enhance their understanding and access to various services provided by the Ministry. This virtual tour can include interactive elements that guide users through the different stages of obtaining and using an eID. For example, it can show the process of applying for a birth certificate, updating marital status, and eventually recording death. By providing a visual and interactive experience, rural citizens can better grasp the importance and benefits of the eID system. Additionally, the virtual tour can highlight potential future use cases, such as linking the eID to social grants, voter registration, and job applications in the public service. This will

not only improve service delivery but also boost support for the eID initiative.

- Conduct an end to end Service Mapping exercise. Using the lifecycle model to identify eID pain points is crucial for improving the overall user experience. For instance, updating marital status can be a complex and time-consuming process. Mapping out the entire lifecycle of an eID, from birth registration to death documentation, can aid in pinpointing specific areas where users face difficulties. This detailed mapping will help in developing targeted solutions to address these pain points. Moreover, it is essential to provide proof of concepts and conduct continued pilots for these solutions to ensure their viability. These pilots will allow us to gather real-world feedback and make necessary adjustments before full-scale implementation. Addressing these pain points and continuously refining the services could enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the eID system.
- Address 'Black Box' Fears to build trust and confidence in the eID system, by exposing how the backend processes work. This includes providing an overview of how data is stored and processed. 'Black box' fears arise from the lack of transparency and understanding of complex systems. Users may be concerned about how their data is handled and how decisions are made if they cannot see or understand the internal workings of the system. Offer clear explanations and insights into the backend processes, to alleviate these fears. This transparency is crucial for gaining public support and ensuring the long-term success of the eID initiative. Additionally, it is important to establish potential use cases in the future to give rise to improved and better service delivery. The identification and implementation of use provides assurance that the eID system remains relevant and effective in meeting the evolving needs of the population.

Key Findings and Overall Considerations for eID Implementation

1. Address Dominant Concerns on Privacy and Security

Citizens expressed 42 distinct mentions of identity theft or fraud fears, with quotes like “Your data is vulnerable; it’s used for fraud” recurring across sessions. This aligns with attendance data showing that 40% of participants use IDs for banking, a high-risk sector for fraud. To build trust, Namibia’s eID framework must explicitly guarantee data protection through real-time breach alerts, as requested by 19 participants, and strict penalties for misuse, with 35 participants demanding accountability from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security.

Additionally, strengthening data governance with clear accountability mechanisms is crucial. This involves establishing robust policies and procedures to ensure that data is handled responsibly and transparently. Implementing regular audits, providing clear guidelines for data usage, and holding individuals and organizations accountable for any breaches or misuse is necessary in building a secure and trustworthy eID system.

2. Build Trust Through Transparency and Multilingual Engagement

Participants stressed 27 times that policies must be communicated in local languages, such as Oshiwambo or Afrikaans. The attendance data supports this, with 30% of respondents preferring non-English communication. To contextualize the eID and gain wider acceptance, it is important to co-design awareness materials with community leaders to ensure cultural relevance.

Mandating multilingual frequently asked questions (FAQs) and fact sheets with screen readers across all communication media and eID portals, such as “How to lock your data” in different languages, will further enhance understanding and trust.

3. Bridge the digital divide among youth, women and rural inclusion

While 25% of attendees were under 30, reflecting strong youth interest in eID for jobs, rural representation was minimal. Only 10% of participants used IDs yearly, indicating infrequent use in rural areas. To address this, mobile registration vans with offline eID activation should be deployed in remote areas. Additionally, training youth ambassadors to demystify the eID in both higher education institutions and schools across Namibia’s 14 regions can bridge the divide and ensure that all citizens have access to the benefits of the eID system.

4. Inclusivity and Innovation: Flexibility and Unusual Partnerships Are Key

These activities proved that innovation thrives when policymakers leave space for experimentation, such as letting artists redefine “awareness,” and partner beyond the usual suspects, including dancers, students, and marginalized storytellers. Gamifying complex concepts to meet citizens where they are can also enhance understanding and engagement. By fostering an environment that encourages creativity and collaboration, we can develop innovative solutions that address the diverse needs of the population.

Conclusion: The eID - Building the Foundation for Trustⁱⁱ

This pilot proves that participatory policymaking uncovers insights traditional methods miss but it must be expanded to reach all Namibians. By addressing privacy fears, language barriers, and rural exclusion upfront, the eID system can become a tool of empowerment rather than exclusion.

Recommended Next Steps

1. Immediate (0–6 Months)

Document the “UN-Conference Model” as a replicable model with a toolkit for other ministries

The “UN-Conference Model” is a dynamic and interactive approach that fosters open dialogue and collaboration among participants. By documenting this model, we can create a comprehensive toolkit that other stakeholders and ministries can use to replicate its success. This toolkit will include detailed guidelines, best practices, and templates to help ministries organize their own UnConferences. The goal is to empower ministries to engage with their stakeholders in a meaningful way, encouraging innovation and co-creation of solutions.

Allocate 10% of the eID budget on public engagement and advocacy to creative and unusual partnerships (for example, collaboration with NUST and NAGN, OYO and other creatives)

Investing in creative partnerships is essential for the continuous improvement and innovation of the eID system. By allocating 10% of the eID budgets to collaborations with the creative sector and academic institutions like the Namibia University of Science and Technology (NUST), we can tap into the creativity and expertise of students and researchers. These partnerships can lead to the development of cutting-edge solutions and technologies that enhance the eID system, making it more efficient and user-friendly.

Future engagement events to include gamified sessions and activities designed and structured like the “The Identity Vault” and “The Identity Puzzle” encouraged open dialogue on eID risks/benefits

Future engagement events should incorporate gamified sessions and activities similar to “The Identity Vault” and “The Identity Puzzle.” These interactive experiences are designed to engage participants in a fun and meaningful way, encouraging them to explore the risks and benefits of the eID system. By participating in these

activities, individuals can gain a deeper understanding of the eID system, its potential impact on their lives, and the importance of secure digital identities.

Capture Real-Time Data

Anonymous data capturing as a collective group experience in tams ensured candid responses (e.g., “My data is vulnerable, it can be used for fraud”): These submissions are a powerful tool for gathering honest and candid feedback from participants. Allowing individuals to share their thoughts and concerns using post-it notes gave us valuable insights into their experiences and perceptions of the eID system. For example, a participant might express concerns about data vulnerability and the potential for fraud, highlighting areas where improvements are needed to enhance security and trust.

Explicitly build in Inclusivity Measures

While the event was open to all, attendance skewed toward urban professionals (70%), highlighting the need for targeted rural outreach. Inclusivity is a key consideration for the success of the eID system. While the event was open to everyone, the majority of attendees were urban professionals, which indicates a need for targeted outreach to rural communities. Strategies to engage rural populations, could be designed to ensure that the benefits of the eID system are accessible to all citizens, regardless of their location. This might include organizing similar UnConference events in rural areas, using local languages, and leveraging community networks to spread awareness.

Develop a Citizen-Centric Awareness, Engagement Strategy and Roadmap

Creating a citizen-centric awareness and engagement strategy is crucial for the successful adoption of the eID system. This strategy should be designed to address the needs and concerns of citizens, providing clear and accessible information about the eID system. Incorporating quotes from the UnConference, such as “Home Affairs must answer for misuse,” to humanize legal text and make it more relatable to the public. Additionally, developing a toolkit on training with communication guidelines to maintain consistency

in messaging will ensure that all communications about the eID system are clear, accurate, and trustworthy.

Develop and Pilot a Multilingual Awareness Campaign and the use of braille and Sign Language which also incorporates the use of radio for rural outreach and TikTok to target the youth, tested in Windhoek first

To ensure that the eID system is inclusive and accessible to all citizens, it is important to develop and pilot a multilingual awareness campaign. This campaign should include the use of braille and sign language to reach individuals with disabilities. Additionally, incorporating radio for rural outreach and TikTok to target the youth will help to engage diverse audiences. Testing the campaign in Windhoek first will allow us to gather feedback and make necessary adjustments before rolling it out on a larger scale.

2. Medium-Term (6–12 Months)

Run Rural Access Pilots

Imagine a scenario where individuals in remote regions, such as Erongo and Zambezi, can access essential services without the need for a stable internet connection. By partnering with telecommunication providers, we can trial offline eID verification in these regions. This initiative aims to bridge the digital divide and ensure that even the most isolated communities can benefit from the eID system. Picture a farmer in Erongo who, despite living miles away from the nearest town, can verify their identity and access government services using their eID. This pilot project will not only test the feasibility of offline verification but also gather valuable feedback from rural users to refine and improve the system.

Consider Disability-Inclusive Design

In our commitment to inclusivity, we are piloting and launching eID kiosks designed by NUST students. These prototypes are equipped with Braille and voice compatibility, making them accessible to individuals with disabilities. Imagine a visually impaired person using a kiosk that reads out instructions and options, allowing them to navigate the eID system independently. This initiative is informed by the 4% of attendees who disclosed disabilities, highlighting the importance

of designing solutions that cater to all users. By incorporating feedback from these pilots, we can ensure that the eID system is truly inclusive and accessible to everyone, regardless of their abilities.

3. Long-Term (12+ Months)

Design a National Feedback Loop for long-term sustainability and knowledge management

Continuously shape a system where the voices of citizens are not only heard but actively shape the future of the eID system. Embed participatory forums into the annual eID reviews to create a continuous feedback loop that ensures the system evolves in response to the needs and concerns of the people it serves. These forums would be open to all citizens, providing a platform for them to share their experiences, suggestions, and feedback directly with policymakers and stakeholders.

Scaling the UnConference model means taking the successful elements of this innovative approach and applying them on a national level. The UnConference model is unique because it prioritizes open dialogue, collaboration, and the co-creation of solutions. Instead of a traditional conference where the agenda is set in advance, an UnConference allows participants to shape the discussions and focus on the issues that matter most to them. This model fosters a sense of ownership and empowerment among participants, as they are actively involved in the decision-making process.

Incorporating these participatory forums into the annual eID reviews may ensure that the system remains relevant, effective, and responsive to the evolving needs of the population. It also builds trust and transparency, as citizens can see that their input is valued and has a direct impact on the policies and practices surrounding the eID system. This approach not only enhances the quality of the eID system but also strengthens the relationship between the government and its citizens, fostering a more inclusive and collaborative society.

Endnotes

ⁱ One of the main limitations in this brief is that as a pilot, this initiative prioritized experimentation over representativeness. Future iterations should integrate mobile outreach to include marginalized groups (for instance, marginalised groups and rural communities, persons with disabilities) and longitudinal tracking to measure sentiment shifts post-eID launch in 2026.

ⁱⁱ This pilot's findings are directional, not statistically representative. Future phases should use stratified sampling to ensure marginalized voices are heard.