



PRINCIPLES OF ENGAGEMENT

MODULAR OPEN SOURCE IDENTITY PLATFORM

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mosip.io

The Importance of a Principles-based Identity System

There has been growing recognition that a legal identity forms the first step in securing a person's status before the law, their rights and any consequent violation of these rights. Without legal identity, you cannot prove who you are. You may be denied healthcare or education, access to jobs or social safety nets. In recognition of the fact that over a billion people globally lack formal identity, the UN Sustainable Development Goal 16.9 states "By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration".

On the other hand, historically, governments have wielded significant power in issuing formal credentials - the power to define what qualities constitute proof of identity, and the power to accept or reject a person's identity claims. Now, this power has expanded to other institutions as well, including private companies and international organisations.

Because technology serves as an exceptional amplifier of both positive and harmful efforts, digital identity systems have the potential to significantly accelerate access to formal identity and enable more inclusive and equal participation in the digital economy. It can also work to concentrate power in the hands of identity issuers, and perhaps other stakeholders in the data ecosystem. It is critical, therefore, to ensure that 'good' ID is adopted by governments and service providers: ID that empowers individuals to get the benefits of formal identity, while ensuring adequate safeguards against misuse.

How We Understand Good ID

MOSIP is a modular, open source platform that countries and other ID issuing organisations can adopt and customize to their requirements. MOSIP was envisaged to provide an open source solution to tackle the problems related to digital identity systems, particularly that of closed, proprietary technology and consequent vendor lock-in. It has been created as a global public good - a core for foundational digital identity systems that enable the issuer to accelerate progress towards inclusive, privacy-centric and secure digital economies.

To make this a reality, key enablers need to be in place:

- A legal and governance framework for digital ID that is designed to be inclusive and to prioritise users' control over their information
- Transparency and wide stakeholder participation in the decision-making process
- A system that prioritizes privacy and user control, is secure and uses open standards.

Our understanding of these issues has come a long way in the past decade, and will continue to evolve, particularly with changing technologies. This document sets out the current approach and framework principles under which MOSIP will operate, to contribute to the adoption of good ID to the best of its ability.

While it is the government of a country that is the ultimate decision maker on these aspects of an identity system, the MOSIP platform, designed as the core of foundational identity layer, fully supports,

enables and encourages the implementation of critical principles related to good ID.

As a starting point, MOSIP endorses, and works actively to implement the Principles on Identification for Sustainable Development, that set out a path to creating an inclusive, user-centric and secure identity system. These principles have been backed by a wide-ranging group of organisations, including the ADB, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Center for Global Development, Omidyar Network, Mastercard, Secure Identity Alliance, GSMA, UNHCR, UNDP, United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, and the World Bank Group.

PRINCIPLES

<p>INCLUSION: UNIVERSAL COVERAGE AND ACCESSIBILITY</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensuring universal coverage for individuals from birth to death, free from discrimination. 2. Removing barriers to access and usage and disparities in the availability of information and technology.
<p>DESIGN: ROBUST, SECURE, RESPONSIVE, AND SUSTAINABLE</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Establishing a robust—unique, secure, and accurate—identity. 4. Creating a platform that is interoperable and responsive to the needs of various users. 5. Using open standards and ensuring vendor and technology neutrality. 6. Protecting user privacy and control through system design. 7. Planning for financial and operational sustainability without compromising accessibility.
<p>GOVERNANCE: BUILDING TRUST BY PROTECTING PRIVACY AND USER RIGHTS</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8. Safeguarding data privacy, security, and user rights through a comprehensive legal and regulatory framework. 9. Establishing clear institutional mandates and accountability. 10. Enforcing legal and trust frameworks through independent oversight and adjudication of grievances.

How We Implement Good ID

Inclusion

Specifically, MOSIP helps ensure universal coverage by making it easier to include people in difficult to access areas. It offers options that work both online and offline, reducing the burden of network requirements.

MOSIP has a range of options with regard to what information is required to enrol or authenticate, and it enables a Government to design for inclusion keeping in mind the technological and informational challenges faced by its people.

For example, while the MOSIP platform can be used to enable online authentication based on biometrics, it also allows for traditional methods of offline authentication through a physical identity card with demographic information and a photograph. MOSIP's use is not intrinsically linked to any one form of identity verification, and the fundamental principle of keeping the individual in control of her identity should guide countries in making the best choices for their own domestic contexts. MOSIP has and will continue to create good practices and a knowledge bank on how the platform can be customised to ensure maximum coverage and non-discrimination.

Design

MOSIP addresses user privacy with a consent framework that lets the individual user choose what to share and when. It is transparent and lets the user know what they have shared and when, and also allows the user to lock authentication features that they wish to restrict. From a security perspective, all personally identifiable information is encrypted both in flight and at rest and is inaccessible to internal and external parties without user consent. All flow of such information is in trusted environments only.

MOSIP is an open source platform, and embraces open standards - it therefore has the potential to develop in new directions and evolve to meet new challenges. Additionally, competition is encouraged when a vendor-neutral, open platform is adopted as the core of an identity solution. MOSIP enables ID issuers to work concurrently with multiple ID vendors, bring down costs and

avoiding lock-in to a particular proprietary technology, or a particular ID vendor. This helps bring down country costs and addresses the question of financial sustainability in the long run.

Beyond Technology

The core technology powering identity systems is only one aspect of a good ID system - strong governance frameworks and a policy making approach that engenders trust are critical elements, and the success of digital identity systems in countries that adopt MOSIP would rest on getting these elements right.

A Strong Legal and Governance Framework

MOSIP strongly believes that any effective and long-lasting identity system puts the individual's rights and needs at the centre of the overall system and processes. In particular, privacy by design principles, and robust enforcement mechanisms should be incorporated not only in the technical system but in the rules governing every partner and public or private agency involved. The most challenging task for a country looking to adopt an effective and inclusive foundational identity system is to ensure that law and policy move in tandem with the technology.

In particular, governments and other ID issuers should take into consideration the following aspects:

- Robust data protection frameworks, including rules for limited data collection
- User control over data enshrined in the law, including opt-out mechanisms and notice requirements
- Inclusiveness, including user choice on whether to enrol or use digital ID
- Effective grievance redressal mechanisms
- Widespread consultations with key stakeholders

Adopting a participatory approach and building trust

Many countries have initiated digital identity programs in the last decade, but in many of these attempts, adoption has been low (McKinsey Digital Identity Report, 2019). While reasons may vary, a

recurring theme has been the lack of trust in a new ID system - an element that, when missing, poses the risk of derailing identity programs entirely.

While recognising that different countries, organizations, civil society groups, open source developers and business groups are in vastly different stages of awareness and readiness with respect to the key enablers mentioned above, MOSIP encourages governments and other ID issuers to adopt a transparent and participatory approach when making decisions about their identity systems. Open source solutions such as MOSIP carry with them an ethos of visibility into decision-making, receptiveness to constructive inputs and engagement with diverse voices, that we hope will carry through to the implementation of MOSIP-based systems as well, and enable the creation of a good ID system.

MOSIP will be used in a number of different countries and situations. Governments, international and regional organisations, civil society, open source developers and businesses will all play different roles in the implementation and use of MOSIP.

MOSIP intends to work with ID issuers to ensure that ID programmes are inclusive, safe and empowering to individuals, and set examples for the rest of the world.

MOSIP will adopt the approach outlined above both in the development of the platform as well as in our engagement with potential partners. Wherever the MOSIP project engages in a partnership we will assist, to the best of our ability, on technical issues related to the implementation of the Principles, such as in the design of a robust and secure system. On matters of policy and governance related to identity, we look forward to ID issuers who use MOSIP adopting the letter and spirit of the approach we have outlined, that is designed to build good ID systems empowering individuals while minimising harms.

