



NCRA's Director General Statement at the Signing of the MoU with MoCTI for the Development of Data Exchange Layer.

Our gathering here today marks a significant milestone in Sierra Leone's journey towards digital transformation beginning with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Ministry of Communications, Technology Innovation (MOCTI). This event embodies a pivotal shift towards a future where technology and governance converge to foster an egalitarian and efficient society. This collaborative pact is not merely a formal Agreement but a declaration of our unwavering commitment to digitize and revitalize our national digital frameworks. By integrating 'Identity at the Centre' of our Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI), we are not just laying down the infrastructure for technological advancements; we are revolutionizing how Government interacts with its citizens—making it more connected, accountable, secure and responsive.

This strategic initiative transcends traditional methodologies to service delivery and public administration, instead establishing a foundational platform that propels Sierra Leone towards becoming a digitally empowered nation. It's about creating an environment where the Government does not just govern, but listens, adapts and responds to the needs of its people with precision. The DPI, with its citizen-centric approach, ensures that services are tailored to meet the unique needs of individuals, thereby enhancing their everyday experiences and interactions with Government entities.

The Power of Collaboration

The passage through bureaucratic corridors has been a tedious experience for our people. The fragmentation of data systems across various Government entities has perpetuated a cycle of inefficiencies and frustrations—requiring multiple submissions of the same documents, encountering delays and facing record inaccuracies. This historical dysfunction within our administrative frameworks affects national development, dwindling public trust and confidence in the operations of Government.



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Today, with the signing of this MoU, we are breaking down these longstanding barriers. We are forging a new pathway that celebrates synergy over siloed operations. Our collaboration with MoCTI is a transformative leap into a future where Government efficiency and responsiveness are at the forefront of digital initiatives. By synchronizing our data systems and digital processes, we are eliminating redundant bureaucracies and devising a streamlined and user-centric approach to governance.

This evolution in our digital landscape champions a philosophy of facilitation rather than regulation. It encapsulates our resolve to not just govern but to serve diligently and effectively using technology. Our partnership with MoCTI is instrumental in crafting a digital ecosystem that resonates with the needs of citizens and other residents accommodating their demands and exceeding their expectations. This is a transformative era for Sierra Leone, where digital governance opens up new avenues for participation, inclusiveness and empowerment. Through strategic collaboration and focused implementation of digital initiatives, we are not only anticipating the needs of our citizens but are actively working to fulfil them, thereby redefining what it means to be a citizen in a digitally empowered Sierra Leone.

About the Data Exchange Layer (DEL)

At the heart of our collaborative endeavors lies the Data Exchange Layer (DEL), a revolutionary infrastructure designed to serve as the linchpin of our digital transformation journey. Envisioned as the main conduit, the DEL stands as a beacon of secure and standardized inter-agency communication. It represents a paradigm shift in how Governmental data is harnessed and transmitted to guide the operational landscape of our administration. By establishing a unified hub where data can seamlessly traverse between Agencies, the DEL is set to revolutionize the efficiency and efficacy of Governmental processes a mechanism through which information harmonization and data synchronization occur effortlessly and instantaneously



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joining a shared pool, eliminating redundancies and delays that have historically plagued Government operations.

The Purpose of the DEL

Generally, DEL facilitates systems communication, ensuring that vital data—be it pertaining to pensions, immigration, tax, financial inclusion or any other Governmental service—is readily available where and when required thus expediting administrative processes and bolstering service delivery standards.

DEL represents a paradigm shift towards a future where technological integration acts as a catalyst for enhanced operations, rather than a hindrance. By consolidating data streams and fostering a culture of interconnectedness, the DEL not only streamlines Governmental functions but also paves the way for a dynamic ecosystem where technology harmoniously coexists with public service excellence. This unified approach to data exchange signals a transformative leap towards a more responsive, efficient and citizen-centric governance model, underscoring our unwavering commitment to leveraging technology for the good of our nation and its people.

The NCRA's Role

At the very core of this initiative beats the heart of the NCRA, an Institution dedicated to unifying and standardizing the identity framework for every Sierra Leonean. Through the issuance of the National Identification Number (NIN), we have not merely assigned an life time identification tag; we have presented a gateway to a multitude of services and opportunities for our citizens. Our integration into the DEL marks a significant stride towards harnessing the power of technology to augment Governmental efficacy and integrity. Our mandate extends beyond the realms of identification; we shoulder the responsibility of safeguarding data integrity, ensuring that each resident's digital footprint across Governmental platforms is safeguarded, seamless and purposeful.

As custodians of data integrity, we pledge to uphold the highest standards of security and confidentiality, guaranteeing that the



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information entrusted to us remains protected and utilized responsibly. Our commitment to nurturing a secure and efficient digital ecosystem resonates through every facet of our operations, underlining our dedication to fostering a transparent, accountable and citizen-centric Government.

Today's event is in fulfilment of relevant provisions of the NCR Act that includes Section 41 (1) "the Integrated NCR System shall be the basic information system in Sierra Leone in respect of Registration of personal data of individuals". Section 41 (2) "The Authority shall on the basis of the Integrated NCR System provide personal data to other Government Information systems and also receive from them". Section 41 (3) provides that "the personal registration data provided by the Integrated NCR System shall be the primary source of authoritative information as against other information systems providing administrative services to the population"

Identity Data within the DEL

The bedrock of our nascent digital infrastructure lies in the meticulous management of citizens' and other residents' data, a responsibility we embrace with utmost reverence and diligence. Within the DEL, this treasure trove of information serves as a cornerstone, fueling the seamless operation of Government e-services spanning diverse domains. It is incumbent upon us to ensure that personal and sensitive data are cocooned within layers of security and shielded by stringent privacy safeguards, in strict compliance with prevailing laws and regulations. By upholding the sanctity of individuals' information and championing data protection principles, we fortify the public's faith in the integrity and reliability of digital government services.

Benefits of the Data Exchange Layer (DEL)

The Data Exchange Layer (DEL) represents a transformative leap towards a more efficient and interconnected governance paradigm, promising a plethora of benefits that will redefine Sierra Leone's administrative landscape:



1. **Enhanced Interoperability:** By harmonizing disparate Government services, the DEL simplifies intricate processes and fosters seamless interactions across Departments. This interoperability not only expedites service delivery but also enhances the overall user experience for citizens and other residents navigating the Governmental ecosystem.

2. **Improved Data Security and Privacy:** Advanced identity verification mechanisms embedded within the DEL ensure robust control over access to sensitive information, adhering to stringent legal standards and bolstering data security measures. This heightens focus on privacy safeguards and instills public confidence regarding the confidentiality of their personal data.

3. **Streamlined Operations:** Through automation and the standardization of data management protocols, the DEL minimizes manual intervention, thereby reducing the occurrence of human errors and optimizing operational efficiency. This streamlining of administrative tasks frees up resources that can be redirected towards more strategic initiatives.

4. **Data-Driven Decision Making:** The DEL empowers decision-makers with access to real-time, accurate data, equipping them with the essential insights needed to address national challenges proactively and strategically. This data-driven approach enhances the Government's responsiveness to evolving societal needs and facilitates evidence-based policy formulation.

5. **Transparency and Accountability:** By enabling transparent tracking of data usage and access, the DEL promotes accountability within Governmental operations, fostering trust and confidence among the public in digital transactions with Governmental Institutions. This heightened transparency underscores a commitment to ethical governance and responsible data handling practices.

Conclusion

The signing of today's Memorandum of Understanding signifies more than a ceremonial event; it marks the dawn of a remarkable transition



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towards establishing a resilient and advanced digital infrastructure for Sierra Leone. United in purpose and guided by the visionary leadership of H.E President Julius Maada Bio, our collaborative endeavors pave the way for a future where public and individual interaction with Government is underpinned by a secure, efficient and technologically advanced framework.

This MoU underscores a strategic commitment to positioning Sierra Leone as a trailblazer in digital innovation within the realm of governance, setting the stage for transformative reforms that prioritize citizen-centric service delivery and operational excellence.

As we embark on this transformative journey towards a digitally empowered Sierra Leone, the promise of a brighter and inclusive future beckons. We envisage an era where digital identity is not merely a convenience but a fundamental right—a future characterized by inclusivity, accessibility, and operational excellence. The NCRA stands poised to be part of this evolution, forging new collaborations and pioneering initiatives to unlock the full potential of our digital assets for the collective benefit of all inhabitants of Sierra Leone.

Your undivided attention and steadfast support are integral as we navigate this uncharted territory together, shaping a future where technology is harnessed as a tool for progress and prosperity.

Thank you for your commitment to this shared vision of a digitally empowered nation.

Mohamed Mubashir MASSAQUOI,
Director General, NCRA