

Nigeria – Database Harmonization between National Identification Management Commission and the Nigeria Immigration Service



KPMG in Nigeria

On Tuesday, 1 August, 2017, the Comptroller General of the Nigeria Immigration Service (CGIS), Mr. Muhammed Babandede, MFR, announced plans by the Federal Government to harmonize the database of the National Identification Management Commission (NIMC) and that of the Nigeria Immigration Service (NIS). This is in line with the one e-government initiative of the current administration to improve the ease of doing business and ensure efficiency in the processes of government agencies.

With the proposed data harmonization, it will become mandatory for all Nigerians and foreigners resident in the country to obtain a National Identity Number (NIN). According to the CGIS, any applicant for a Nigerian passport, whether renewal or fresh, must first have an NIN, effective 1st January, 2018. Also, all foreigners resident in Nigeria will be required to provide their NIN, to obtain renewal of their residence permits, in the New Year.

One of the benefits of the harmonization is that once an individual's bio-metric has been captured by the NIMC, there would be no need to repeat the exercise at NIS. Thus, the NIN will suffice for the issuance of a Nigerian passport as the NIS will be able to access the National Identity Database.

To ensure the realization of this objective, the CGIS stated that the NIN and the International Passport numbers will be harmonized. Also, officials of the NIMC will be stationed at various NIS offices across the country, while the NIMC would also allow staff of the NIS to work at its offices.

Conclusion

The proposed harmonization is a welcome development, given that one of the main functions of the NIMC is to integrate all existing identification databases in government agencies into the National Identity Database. This should, therefore, reduce some of the

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current bottlenecks associated with obtaining official documents / permits in the country.

At this point in time, the modalities for the issuance of NIN to resident foreigners are still unclear. However, the expectation is that the NIS and the NIMC would issue the relevant guidelines in this regard.

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