

UM-ID System Launched

“Hindi ba mas maganda na iisa ang ID na ginagamit mo sa lahat ng transaction ng pamahalaan kaysa pumuputok ang wallet mo sa dami ng ID na kailangan mo?” President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo asked during the launch of the Unified Multi-Purpose ID System (UM-ID) last August 23 at Malacanang Palace. “This system fills the last mile in the gap between people’s needs and a streamlined government that serves those needs,” she added.

The UM-ID was conceptualized to integrate and harmonize existing ID systems, thereby helping strengthen good governance, improve transparency, empower the citizenry, and give every Filipino faster access to government services. It will also put to an end the various ID cards being issued to the people.

President Arroyo issued in April 2005 Executive Order (EO) 420 creating the UM-ID System and requiring all government agencies, and government-owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs) to streamline and harmonize their ID systems. The EO also authorized the Director-General of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) to implement the UM-ID System.

Socioeconomic Planning Secretary and NEDA Director-General Romulo L. Neri signed NEDA Memorandum Circular No. 1, Series of 2006, prescribing the guidelines for the implementation of the UM-ID System. This includes the procedures for the collection and submission to the National Statistics Office of the 14 data items specified in EO 420 as well as the layout and design of the UM-ID card.

Before Secretary Neri issued the guidelines, the Supreme Court in its en banc resolution on June 20, 2006 ruled with finality denying the petitions filed against EO 420.



The SC affirmed that EO 420 does not violate the constitution, as it is within the President’s constitutional power to direct entities under the Executive Department to streamline and harmonize their existing ID systems and databases thereby reducing costs and ensuring greater efficiency, reliability, and convenience for those availing of government services.

Moreover, the SC affirmed that EO 420 is simply an executive issuance and not an act of legislation and does not preclude the need for Congress to establish a National ID System.

EO 420 aims to harmonize and unify existing ID systems in government through a Common Reference Number (CRN), CRN Registry and UM-ID Card.

Exemptions to the UM-ID Cards include LTO Licenses and PRC professional ID cards as well as ID cards issued in conformity with international statutes or treaties, such as DFA passports and seafarer’s ID. However, the CRN will be incorporated in these ID cards.

UM-ID System’s Expected Benefits

- Reduces costs in maintaining redundant ID systems and databases in government. Government will no longer have to provide different ID cards for members of agencies like GSIS, SSS, PhilHealth or Pag-IBIG.

- Results in savings due to: (a) elimination of redundancies in the procurement of equipment and supplies for the UM-ID system, realizing economies of scale; (b) compatibility of systems in terms of hardware and software, allowing the deployment of a multi-platform single application system across agencies, greatly reducing development and deployment costs; (c) ease of verification, not only increasing reliability of the UM-ID system, but more importantly, significantly reducing the time and effort spent in verifying the identity of persons.
- Provides greater convenience to citizens through the ff.: (a) program members can present the UM-ID Card as a valid ID in transacting with other agencies; (b) facilitates transactions with participating agencies as an individual with a CRN needs only to declare his or her CRN; (c) forms will be simplified, thus, time needed for filling up forms will be reduced; (d) securing birth and other civil registry documents can be easily facilitated with the use of the CRN; (e) Filipinos here and abroad, including OFWs, can transact with government agencies from the comfort of their offices or homes using the Internet or public kiosks; (f) in the future, the public can also use their UM-ID cards in ATM machines or as debit cards.
- Facilitates transactions by the public with government and private business through the ff.: (a) front-line services requiring verification of data with other government instrumentalities are facilitated with the use of the CRN – with appropriate consent; (b) there will now be a uniform “face” for government issued cards.
- Enhances integrity and reliability of government issued ID cards, preventing fraudulent transactions due to identity theft or use of false names and identities: (a) biometrics can check possible identity thefts and misrepresentations in applying for passports, prevents bogus health and insurance benefit claims, etc.; (b) biometrics in the card can certify the identity of the bearer during board/licensure examinations or during elections.

Implementation Process

Phase 1 lays the groundwork for its implementation which began in January 24, 2006. It consists of the following activities: (a) Adoption of the CRN into the agency systems; (b) Setting up of the CRN Registry and electronic linkages; (c) Design of the UM-ID Card; (d) Definition of procedures, standards and privacy safeguards.

Employees’ application forms are now being processed while negotiation with other agencies for the printing of the UM-ID are on going.

Phase 2 starts with the issuance of the UM-ID Cards. It was supposed to have started March 25, 2006 and will last up to one year. The activities are: (a) issuance of transition/UM-ID cards; (b) use of the CRN as the primary or secondary number in transactions with the agencies; (c) Adoption of the UM-ID as a valid ID; (d) Use of CRN for cross-checking card details against the CRN Registry.

Phase 3 entails the use of the CRN as a primary identifier of an individual transaction business or availing of services from any government agency.

Components of the UM-ID

The components of the UM-ID include the following:

1. Common Reference Number (CRN). This is the individual’s unique identifier during his or her lifetime. It is 12 digits long, grouped into four and separated by hyphens.

Ex: 0321-1954-777-7
2. CRN Registry. This is the database of individuals who were issued CRN. This consists of personal information limited to 15 items, as identified in EO 420. These information include three basic groups of data.
 - (a) Basic data – (name, home address and sex)
 - (b) Biometrics – (picture, signature)
 - (c) Other data – (date of birth, place of birth, marital status, name of parents, height, weight, mark of two thumbs, mark of two index fingers, any prominent distinguishing features and tax account numbers.
3. UM-ID Card. The size of this card is the same as that of a credit card, following ISO 7810. One side of the card depicts the “common look” layout of the UM-ID and the other side carries the agency-preferred ID look.

