



Nigerian Research and  
Education Network  
Federated Identity

## Identity Federation Policy Document

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## 1. Definitions and Terminology

Attribute	A piece of information describing the End User, his/her properties or roles in an organization.
Attribute Authority	An organization responsible for managing additional Attributes for an End User of a Home Organization.
Authentication	Process of proving the identity of a previously registered End User
Authorization	Process of granting or denying access rights to a service for an authenticated End User.
Digital Identity	A set of information that is attributable to an End User. Digital identity consists of Attributes. It is issued and managed by a Home Organization and zero or more Attribute Authorities on the basis of the identification of the End User.
End User	Any natural person affiliated to a Home Organization, e.g. as an employee, researcher or student making use of the service of a Service Provider.
Federation	Identity federation. An association of organizations that come together to exchange information as appropriate about their users and resources to enable collaborations and transactions.
Federation Operator	Organization providing Infrastructure for Authentication and Authorization to Federation Members.
Federation Member	An organization that has joined the Federation by agreeing to be bound by the Federation Policy in writing. Within the federation framework, a Federation Member can act as a Home Organization and/or a Service Provider and/or an Attribute Authority.
Home Organization	The organization with which an End User is affiliated. It is responsible for authenticating the End User and managing End Users' digital identity data.
Identity Management	Process of issuing and managing end users' digital identities.
Inter-federation	Voluntary collaboration of two or more Identity Federations to enable End Users in one Identity Federation to access Service Providers in another Identity Federation.

NgREN	Nigerian Research and Education Network
NgRENID	Nigerian Research and Education Network Identity Federation
Service Provider	An organization that is responsible for offering the End User the service he or she desires to use. Service Providers may rely on the authentication outcome and attributes that Home Organizations and Attribute Authorities assert for its End Users.

## 2. Introduction

An Identity Federation (Federation) is an association of organizations that come together to exchange information, as appropriate, about their users and resources in order to enable collaborations and transactions.

The Nigerian Research and Education Network Identity Federation (NgRENID) is introduced to facilitate and simplify the introduction of shared services across the Federation. This is accomplished by using Federation Technologies to extend the scope of a digital identity issued by one Federation Member to be valid across the whole Federation. The Federation relies on Home Organizations and Attribute Authorities to correctly and accurately assert information about the identity of End Users to Service Providers that may use that information to grant (or deny) access to the services and resources they offer to End Users.

The Federation Policy document defines the Federation by defining the Federation Members' obligations and rights to be able to use available Federation Technologies for electronic identification and for access to attribute and authorization information about End Users in the Federation. The Federation Policy also defines the obligations and rights of the Federation Operator. This document, together with its appendices and any documents referred to herein, constitutes the Federation Policy. The current list of all appendices is available on the website of the Federation, <https://ngrenid.ngren.edu.ng>.

## 3. Governance and Roles

### 3.1. Governance:

The governance of the Federation is delegated to the Nigerian Research and Education Network (NgREN) hereafter referred to as the "governing body" or "NgREN". The Federation Operator is a team constituted from the NgREN technical department.

In addition to what is stated elsewhere in the Federation Policy the governing body is responsible for:

- Setting membership selection criteria for the Federation.
- Deciding whether a Federation Member is entitled to act as Home Organization.

- Granting or denying an application for membership into the Federation.
- Revoking the membership if a Federation Member breaches the Federation Policy.
- Managing and holding responsibility for the federation's inter-federation membership and agreements, including approval, registration, compliance, and all liaison duties with inter-federation operators.
- Maintaining formal ties with relevant national and international organizations.
- Future directions and enhancements for the Federation together with the Federation Operator who prepares the plans.
- Approving changes to the Federation Policy prepared by the Federation Operator.
- Addressing financial needs of the Federation.
- Determining the fees to be paid by the Federation Members to cover the operational costs of the Federation, on proposal of Federation Operator.
- Deciding on any other matter of interest to the Federation e.g. Whether or not members will be required to pay registration fee.
- Develop and maintain a Standard Data Protection Policy Template to be adopted with/without modifications by the Federation Members.
- Develop and approve all the necessary Agreements, policies and other documents for the Federation including but not limited to, the Membership Agreement, Federation Participation Agreement etcetera.
- Deciding on any other matter referred to it by the Federation Operator.

### 3.2. Obligations and Rights of Federation Operator

In addition to what is stated elsewhere in the Federation Policy, the Federation Operator is responsible for:

- Secure and trustworthy operational management of the Federation and providing central services following the procedures and technical descriptions specified in this document and its appendices.
- Provides support services for Federation Members' appropriate contact persons to work out operational problems regarding the Federation services.
- Acts as a centre of competence for Identity Federation: tests software, recommends and documents solutions, provides software deployment and configuration guides for selected software and operating systems for use within the Federation.
- Prepares and presents issues to NgREN and acts as the secretary of the NgREN meetings.

- Maintaining relationships with national and international stakeholders in the area of Identity Federations. This especially includes contacts regarding inter-federation activities and work with other Identity Federations in the area of harmonization.
- Promoting the idea and concepts implemented in the Federation so prospective Federation Members learn about the possibilities of the Federation.

3.3. In addition to what is stated elsewhere in the Federation Policy, the Federation Operator reserves the right to:

- Temporarily suspend individual Technology Profiles for a Federation Member that is disrupting secure and trustworthy operation of the Federation.
- Publish a list of Federation Members along with information about which profiles each Federation Member fulfills or implements, for the purpose of promoting the Federation.
- Publish some of the data regarding the Federation Member using specific Technology Profile. Definition of which data may be published is provided in appropriate Technology Profiles.

3.4. Obligations and Rights of Federation Members

In addition to what is stated elsewhere in the Federation Policy, all Federation Members:

- Shall appoint and name an administrative contact for interactions with the Federation Operator.
- Must cooperate with the Federation Operator and other Members in resolving incidents and should report incidents to the Federation Operator in cases where these incidents could negatively affect the security, trustworthiness or reputation of the Federation or any of its members.
- Must comply with the obligations of the Technology Profiles which it implements.
- Must ensure its IT systems that are used in implemented Technology Profiles are operated securely.
- Must recognize that costs of infrastructural maintenance and support will be offset by fee payments.

- If a Federation Member processes personal data, Federation Member will be subject to applicable data protection laws and regulations thereunder and must comply with the Standard Data Protection Policy developed by the governing body or their own Data Protection Policy that has been approved by the governing body which must follow the practice presented in the Data Protection Profile derived from the Nigeria Data Protection Act 2023 (NDP Act) by the Nigerian Data Protection Commission.

3.5. If a Federation Member is acting as a Home Organization, it:

- Is responsible for delivering and managing authentication credentials for its End Users and for authenticating them.
- Must submit its Identity Management Practice Statement to the Federation Operator, who in turn makes it available to other Federation Members upon their request. The Identity Management Practice Statement is a description of the Identity Management life-cycle including a description of how individual digital identities are enrolled, maintained and removed from the identity management system. The statement must contain descriptions of administrative processes, practices and significant technologies used in the identity management life-cycle, which must be able to support a secure and consistent identity management life-cycle.
- Ensures an End User is committed to the Home Organization's Acceptable Usage Policy.
- Operates a helpdesk for its End Users regarding Federation services related issues. Home Organizations are encouraged to maintain a helpdesk for user queries at least during normal office-hours in the local time zone. Home Organizations must not redirect End User queries directly to the Federation Operator, but must make every effort to ensure that only relevant problems and queries are sent to the Federation Operator by appropriate Home Organization contacts.

3.6. If a Federation Member is acting as a Home Organization or Attribute Authority, it:

- Is responsible for assigning Attribute values to the End Users and managing the values in a way which ensures they are up-to-date.
- Is responsible for releasing the Attributes to Service Providers.

3.7. If a Federation Member is acting as a Service Provider, it:

- Is responsible for making decision on which End Users can access the services they operate and which access rights are granted to an End User. It is the Service Providers' responsibility to implement those decisions.

## 4. Eligibility

- 4.1. The Federation sets out eligibility criteria that determines who is able to become a Federation member and who is able to act as Home Organization. The criteria is fully described in the eligibility criteria appendix 4.
- 4.2. The responsibility for setting membership criteria rests with NgREN and may be revised from time to time.
- 4.3. Any institution that qualifies to be a member of NgREN also qualifies to become a member of NgRENID (the Federation). The NgREN membership criteria is also defined at <https://ngrenid.ngren.edu.ng>.
- 4.4. However, to become a Federation Member as a Service Provider (SP), an organization **DOES NOT** have to first become a member of NgREN. Organisation that is not subscribed to NgREN membership, and has desire to join the federation as **an SP only**, can join through a different process under non-member terms.

## 5. Procedures

### 5.1. How to Join

- In order to become a Federation Member, an organization applies for membership in the Federation to NgREN by agreeing to be bound by the Federation Policy. This is done in writing by an official representative of the organization.
- Each application for membership including (if applicable) the Identity Management Practice Statement is evaluated by the Federation Operator. The Federation Operator presents a recommendation for membership with an evaluation report to NgREN who in turn decides on whether to grant or deny the application.
- If the application is denied, this decision and the reason for denying the application is communicated to the applying organization by the Federation Operator.
- All Federation Members shall be bound by this Federation Policy (and any other documents referred to herein).

### 5.2. How to Withdraw

- A Federation Member may cancel its membership in the Federation at any time by sending a written request to the Federation Operator.
- A cancellation of membership in the Federation implies the cancellation of the use of all federations Technology Profiles for the organization with immediate effect.

- The Federation Operator may cancel its participation in the Federation by announcing the termination date to the Federation Members. Until termination date, Federation Operator shall run the Federation on best effort basis.
- After the termination date, Federation Operator shall cancel the use of all Federations Technology Profiles for all Federation Members.

## 6. Legal Conditions of use

### 6.1. Termination

- If a Federation Member does not follow the Federation Policy, their membership in the Federation may be canceled.
- If the Federation Operator is aware of a breach of the Federation Policy by a Federation Member, the Federation Operator may issue a formal notification of concern. If the cause for the notification of concern is not rectified within the time specified by the Federation Operator, the governing body may issue a formal notification of impending revocation after which the governing body can decide to revoke the membership should the said Federation Member fail to comply or rectify the breach.
- Revocation of a membership implies the revocation of the use of all Technology Profiles for the Federation Member with immediate effect.

### 6.2. Liability and indemnification

- The Federation Operator offers this service on an “as is” basis, that is, without liability for Federation Operator and NgREN for any faults, losses, damages, errors and defects meaning, amongst other, that the Federation Member cannot demand that the Federation Operator or the governing body amends defects, refunds payments or pay damages. By accepting membership to the Federation and agreeing to be bound by the Federation Policy, each Federation Member (and End User) agrees that the governing body and the Federation Operator shall not be liable for any errors, damages or losses and that each Federation Member accepts liability for its reliance on the information or data provided in the Federation. The Federation Operator will nevertheless strive to ensure that any faults and defects of significance are corrected within a reasonable period. Further, the Federation Operator will endeavor to put in place sufficient technical, organizational, and structural measures that are reasonably proportionate to the potential risks that the Federation faces.
- The Federation Operator and NgREN shall not be held liable for any loss, damage or cost that arises as a result of the Federation Member connection to or use of Federation services, or other systems to which the Federation Member obtains access in accordance with this Policy.
- This limitation of liability does not however apply in the case of gross

negligence or intentional fraudulent act shown by Federation Operator personnel.

- Neither the Federation Operator nor NgREN shall be liable for damage caused to the Federation Member or its End Users. The Federation Member shall not be liable for damage caused to the Federation Operator or NgREN due to the use of the Federation services, service downtime or other issues relating to the use of the Federation services.
- Unless agreed otherwise in writing between Federation Members, the Federation Member will have no liability to any other Federation Member solely by virtue of the Federation Member's membership of the Federation. In particular, membership of the Federation alone does not create any enforceable rights or obligations directly between Federation Members.
- Federation Operator and the Federation Member shall not claim damages from other Federation Members for damages caused by the use of the Federation services, service downtime or other issues relating to the use of Federation services. The Federation Member may, in its absolute discretion, agree variations with any other Federation Member to the exclusions of liability. Such variations will only apply between those Federation Members.
- The Federation Member is required to ensure compliance with applicable laws. Neither the Federation Operator nor NgREN shall be liable for damages caused by failure to comply with any such laws on behalf of the Federation Member or its End Users relating to the use of the Federation services.
- Neither the Federation Operator nor NgREN shall be liable for any consequential or indirect damage.
- The Limitation of liability for acts or omissions shall not extend to offences under any written law and the offending party will be held individually liable unless the offence was in connivance with another party.
- Without prejudice to the limitation of liability under this clause, parties are under obligation to take necessary and reasonable measures with respect to their express and implied obligations.
- Neither the existence of inter-federation agreements, nor the exchange of information enabled by it, shall create any new legal obligations or rights between Members or operators of any Federation, except as otherwise advised by the Federation Operator. Federation Operator and Federation Members remain bound only by their own respective laws and jurisdictions.
- The Federation Member and Federation Operator shall refrain from

- claiming damages from entities in other federations involved in an inter-federation agreement.

### 6.3. Jurisdiction and dispute resolution

- Should any dispute arise between the Parties hereto with regard to the interpretation, rights, obligations and/or implementation of any one or more of the provisions of this Federation Policy, the Parties shall in the first instance attempt to resolve such dispute by amicable negotiation between themselves as highlighted in the Dispute Resolution Procedure (Appendix 3).
- Should such negotiations fail to achieve a resolution within fifteen (15) days (or such longer time as the Parties may jointly agree), each of the parties may bring the dispute before the Court of Laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
- If any provision of the Federation Policy is held to be unenforceable by any court of competent jurisdiction, all other provisions will nevertheless continue in full force and effect.

### 6.4. Inter-federation

- The Federation may participate in inter-federation agreements to encourage collaboration across national and organizational borders. The relevant Technology Profiles outline how the possible inter-federation agreement is administratively and technologically expressed for specific technologies.
- The Federation Member recognizes and knows that through those inter-federation agreements, the Federation Member may deal with entities that are bound by and committed to foreign laws and federation policies. Those laws and regulations may differ from those of this Federation.

### 6.5. Amendment

- The Federation Operator has the authority to alter the Federation Policy at any moment. Any such changes must be authorized by the governing Body and must be reported in writing to all Federation Members at least 90 days prior to their implementation (before they take effect).

### 6.6. Governing Law

- This Federation Policy shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the Federal Republic of Nigeria.
- If any term or provision in this Federation Policy shall be held to be illegal or unenforceable, in whole or in part, under any enactment or rule of law, such term or provision or part shall to that extent be deemed not to form part of this Federation Policy but the validity and enforceability of the remainder of this Federation Policy shall not be affected.

## **Appendix 1 – Governing Body Constitution**

1. This document describes at a high level how the NgRENID federation is structured and how it operates. Specific details and logistics are left to the discretion of the Federation Operator whose role is fulfilled by the Nigerian Research and Education Network (NgREN) technical department.
2. NgRENID Federation Members ("Members") should review this document to guide assessment of potential risks, if any, which might be incurred by their participation in the Federation. By reviewing the policies and practices of the Federation, Members and potential Members can evaluate the level of assurance of the Federation's services to ensure trustworthy operations and determine whether they meet a Member's minimum requirements.
3. Role of the NgRENID Organization
  - 3.1. The NgRENID Constitution defines the mission of NgRENID and its Federation and the principles and governance structure under which NgRENID and the Federation operates. This Constitution document outlines the activities undertaken by NgRENID on behalf of its Federation Members.
  - 3.2. The administrative and operational functions of NgRENID are carried out under direction of the Federation Operator. These responsibilities include development of the federation community (including through expanding such community through peering with other federations that share the same mission as NgRENID such as Research and Education federations in other countries), processing applications, identifying and authenticating eligible organizations and their trusted officers, processing participant Metadata, facilitating the exchange of Metadata between Members in NgRENID and inter-federations, overseeing the operation of NgRENID service platforms, dispute resolution, termination processes, accounting and billing, and other duties as deemed necessary.
4. Organizational Structure
  - 4.1. Management
    - Responsibility for management of the business and affairs of NgRENID is vested with the NgRENID governing body known as NgREN.
  - 4.2. Committees
    - The governing body may designate subordinate or advisory committees to make decisions, develop position papers, and/or provide advice on particular matters of importance to the Federation.
    - At least one member of the governing body will participate in each advisory committee to ensure good communication between the committee and the governing body.
    - Additional membership in such committees will be defined by the

- governing body and typically will be drawn from the participant community.
- Other individuals may be asked to participate based on their particular knowledge of the subject matter. Current committees are listed on the NgRENID website <https://ngrenid.ngren.edu.ng>.

#### 4.3. Offices and Records

The NgRENID Federation office's contact information is:

NgRENID c/o NgREN technical Department,

NgREN Secretariat, Prof. Peter Okebukola Building

National Universities Commission,

No 26, Aguiyi Ironsi Street, Maitama, Abuja, FCT

Email address: [support@ngren.edu.ng](mailto:support@ngren.edu.ng) OR  
[info@ngren.edu.ng](mailto:info@ngren.edu.ng)

Telephone: (+234) 0916 153 1765

Website: <https://ngrenid.ngren.edu.ng>

All records of NgRENID are managed by this office.

#### 4.4. Personnel

- All NgRENID Federation administrative and operational functions are performed by the Federation Operator. Other officers may be appointed as need arises.

### 5. Policies, Requirements, and Standards

- The governing body approves all policies, requirements, and standards that apply to the NgRENID federation and its Federation. All documents, guidelines, and other papers are available on the NgRENID website.

### 6. Registration and Management of Participant Policies, Systems, and Technical Components

#### 6.1. Types of Registered Systems: Identity Providers and Service Providers

- Within the Federation, Members may offer services as an Identity Provider for their respective user community, as a Service Provider to any participant organization's user community, or both. For instance, a Higher Education Institution serving primarily as an Identity Provider might also make online information or services available to other NgRENID Members or Inter-Federations. Members register identity management systems and/or service provider systems.

## 6.2. Relationship of Systems to Participant

- Any identity management system or service provider system registered by a Participant must be under the management hierarchy of the Participant organization. The Participant is responsible for the actions of any system registered with the Federation. Members may only register third party systems that operate services under contract to Participant and for which Participant will be responsible, in accordance with the provisions of the Participation Agreement. Such third party systems might, for example, include outsourced identity management services.

## 6.3. Required Information Components

- Participant Operating Practices
  - a. A fundamental expectation of Federation Members is that they provide authoritative and accurate attribute assertions to other Members and that Members receiving an attribute assertion must protect it and respect any privacy constraints placed on it by the Federation or the source of that information.
  - b. Metadata
    - i. A Participant Administrator registers its Identity Provider and/or Service Provider systems. The data are collected by the Federation Operator, up-to-date, trusted information about all Members and their systems is a core service of the Federation. NgRENID will make reasonable efforts to verify submitted data.
    - ii. Under special circumstances, Participant Executives or Administrators may make removal requests via e-mail or telephone. NgRENID will verify these requests using trusted communication channels before processing any removal requests.
    - iii. NgRENID may also collect Metadata from metadata registrars of other inter-federations and make it available to Members for the purposes of furthering the mission of the Federation.
    - iv. Transmission of Federation Metadata to Members is not initiated by NgRENID. Instead, Members are expected to retrieve Metadata compiled by the Federation on a regular basis.

## 7. Operations

7.1. The operation and performance of the Federation infrastructure are paramount to maintaining its trust fabric. NgRENID supports certain operational services. As the Federation gains more experience with federated identity and access management and as requirements for other federation services emerge, the NgRENID Federation's operations will evolve to meet new functional criteria.

### 7.2. Communications and Support

- Posting Material on the NgRENID Website
  - a. All NgRENID operating documents and statements are made accessible via the NgRENID website.
- Help Desk
  - a. NgRENID provides a Help Desk for Participant administrative and technical support.
  - b. The Help Desk is staffed during normal NgREN business hours.
  - c. Any end users who inadvertently contact the Federation Help Desk will be referred to their home organization for support in online access to other Members.

### 7.3. Federation Technical Infrastructure

- NgRENID is responsible for the secure operation of a number of technology platforms including: a "Discovery Service" (DS) server; a Metadata distribution service; and other necessary infrastructure.
- Discovery Service (DS)
  - a. The Discovery Service, an optional user interface component, is responsible for allowing users to specify their appropriate Identity Provider for the services they intend to use online. Upon selecting an Identity Provider, the user is redirected to the Identity Provider's log in service to authenticate. NgRENID operates a DS service and Web page on which all Identity Providers are listed.
- Metadata Distribution
  - a. NgRENID publishes signed Metadata submitted by all Members for interoperation of Identity Provider and Service Provider systems. NgRENID may also make a subset of the signed Metadata available to peering Federations.

- Suspension of Federation Services
  - a. If NgRENID suspects compromise of any of its service components, it may take immediate action to remedy the situation or verify non-compromise, including taking components out of service for a limited time for diagnosis and repair. The Federation Operator always will endeavor to minimize interruption or inconvenience to Members. Any critical compromise will be communicated to Members in a timely manner.

#### 7.4. Disaster Recovery

- NgRENID disaster recovery practices ensure the minimum interruption of availability of Federation services in the event of a disaster. This includes providing redundant hardware and secure data backups.

## Appendix 2 – Fees

1. NgRENID fees are established by the governing body with approval from member institutions.
2. The current fee schedule is as follows:
  - 2.1. No membership or joining fee is paid for the service.
  - 2.2. However individual service providers may charge a fee for access to their services.
  - 2.3. Current fee schedules are also available on the NgRENID website.

## Appendix 3 – Dispute Resolution Procedure

1. Should disputes regarding Federation services or the use of those services arise among Members or between a Member and NgRENID, the following procedure is intended to affect a resolution. This procedure will evolve as the Federation gains more experience with the types of disputes that may occur.
2. Upon resolution, a brief description of the dispute's issues and the resolution of those will be communicated to Federation Members by email, unless non-publication is requested by any of the disputing Members.
3. Disputes Among Members in NgRENID and/or other Federations
  - 3.1. Members are expected to make every reasonable effort to settle disputes among themselves, especially if contractual issues among the Members are involved.

- 3.2. If circumstances warrant, (for example, if the dispute centers on the interpretation of Attribute values or the implementation of standards) NgRENID may be asked to act as referee in helping the Members come to resolution.
- 3.3. If an NgRENID Participant has a dispute with an organization in an inter-federation relating to services described in this document that cannot be resolved, NgRENID will use best efforts to work with the Participant, any relevant inter-federation service provider and inter-federation operator on a mutually agreed-on solution.
- 3.4. The NgREN will serve as the Referee in working with Members. The Referee will gather as much information as possible from each disputing party and then, if necessary, ask for additional information or advice from other operational staff or advisors. The Referee will then document in writing a proposed solution and submit it to the disputing parties for comment. If both parties agree to the resolution the final draft will be filed and documented for future reference.

4. Disputes Between Member(s) and the Governing Body
  - 4.1. Any member may submit a written Notice of Dispute to the NgREN regarding any aspect of the operation or services supported by the Federation. The NgREN will make certain that sufficient information exists to define the dispute and then shall appoint a member institution to serve as Negotiator with the disputing Participant(s).
  - 4.2. The Negotiator will gather all the facts and rationales for the dispute and, as necessary, seek advice from any Federation advisors or other relevant parties. The Negotiator will prepare a written report, which shall include a recommended resolution of the dispute.
  - 4.3. The report shall be submitted to both parties within 30 days of the appointment of the Negotiator unless delayed by the required fact finding.
  - 4.4. NgREN shall report its final action to the disputing Member(s) in writing as soon thereafter as is practical. If any disputing party believes it cannot accept the outcome of this process, its only recourse is to discontinue participation in the Federation.

## **Appendix 4 – Eligibility Criteria**

1. Organizations that wish to participate in NgRENID must be eligible under the requirements defined below. Applications must be submitted and will be processed as described in section 4.2.
2. Eligibility to Become a Member
  - 2.1. NgRENID currently has two classes of Members:
    - Higher Education Institutions. Organizations that fall under this category

include but is not limited to

- a. Universities
- b. Polytechnics
- c. Colleges of Education
- Research Institutions.
- The NgRENID governing body may choose to set eligibility criteria for additional types of organizations or may vote on the approval of any applying organization under special circumstances.

## 2.2. Submitting and Processing an Application

- Interested organizations may apply for membership by sending an email or submitting an online application for review. NgRENID may request additional information concerning the nature or qualifications of the applying organization.
- Eligible applicants will be accepted for membership when a signed copy of the Policy Document has been received by the NgRENID office and has been countersigned by NgRENID.