

# Aadhar-based digital ID customer registration: a new era for the Indian telecommunications industry

# IDENTITY

POSTED ON 05.17.17

Following the Indian government's decision to require registration of each mobile customer in the country, mobile operators had to look for a solution to replace the old painstaking and unsecure manual process with a more efficient and paperless alternative, ensuring greater confidentiality and privacy of customer information and radically reducing wait time for SIM activation. The telecom industry has found the answer by combining the national ID project "Aadhaar" with digital ID customer registration.

## The largest identity database in the world

In 2010 the **Indian national ID project Aadhaar** was launched under the management of UIDAI (Unique Identification Authority of India) as the world's largest **identity program**. In order to create a single, reliable database of the Indian population, a 12-digit identification number is issued to each resident. Each person goes through an **enrollment process**, during which a facial photograph, ten fingerprints and scans of the two irises are recorded along with the resident's demographic information (name, address, gender and date of birth). Once the **enrollment** is completed and the biometric data verified, the **Aadhaar number** is issued. Service providers can **verify the identity** of a person by submitting the applicant's **Aadhaar number** along with **biometric data** (such as fingerprints) to UIDAI, which instantly confirms the person's identity – or not. The program has reached more than **1.1 billion Aadhaar numbers** to date in 2017.

## Ground prepared for digital ID customer registration by telecoms

Safran Identity & Security developed its **digital ID customer registration** solution to meet the registration needs of the Indian mobile telecommunications sector, building on the **Aadhaar system**. This has been the starting point for mobile network operators to turn subscriber onboarding into a seamless and paperless experience. Whenever subscribers get a new SIM card, their identity is verified thanks to the combination of their biometrics (iris scan/fingerprint) and their Aadhaar number. The user's biometric data, namely the fingerprint, is matched with the UIDAI database, and the result is instantly delivered to the operator and point of sale. This way the subscription is activated immediately. The **customer registration solution** provides digital onboarding of subscribers thanks to Safran Identity & Security's fingerprint sensor's and associated services, which are supported by fully integrated **MorphoTablet devices** as the single user interface. The company's **digital ID customer registration** solution provides the operators in India with an efficient means to meet government demand for **subscriber authentication**. In addition, the **robust registration process** ensures the operators can rely on the **trusted identity** of the subscriber to develop further services.

## The beginning of a new era for customer onboarding

A new era for customer onboarding for mobile network operators in India has begun. Airtel, the leading mobile network

operator in India, has chosen Safran Identity & Security's **customer registration solution** after a proof of concept (PoC) that took place in Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh. Airtel is rolling out **customer registration** first to company-operated stores and then to the ones operated by third parties. *"Aadhaar-based customer registration for a mobile connection is a milestone for the telecom industry and will enhance the customer experience through faster onboarding. A customer can now walk into an Airtel store and walk out with an active mobile connection in a matter of a few minutes. The solution also complements the Government's Digital India vision and will add to Airtel's green initiatives,"* said Ajai Puri, Director – Operations (India & South Asia), Bharti Airtel.

Vodafone, another leading mobile network operator in India, has also adopted Safran Identity & Security's **customer registration solution**. Sandeep Kataria, Director Commercial of Vodafone India declared: *"We are rolling customer registration out across the country. The use of customer registration will drastically cut down on delays in activating new connections because of infrastructure challenges like power cuts, transporting volumes of paper, lack of photocopying and photography facilities. It will also strengthen the verification process as there will be no room for any manual error."* In 2016, Vodafone rolled out the **customer registration** facility at all 10,000 plus Vodafone-branded stores in urban and rural areas and also across all multi-brand outlets, pan-India, in a phased manner.

## Strong customer registration combined with Mobile Connect turns the operator into a service gateway for subscribers

Once they have established the identity of their subscribers in a secure and reliable manner, mobile network operators can offer a wide selection of new services. During the **customer registration process**, the operator has recorded the **identity** of a user and associated it with its own identifiers. The fact that the customer registration process has been completed ensures the reliability of each subscriber identity.

The GSMA, the association of mobile network operators, has specified Mobile Connect, a secure, universal login solution enabling subscribers to access mobile services simply by using their own cell phone, using their SIM card as a secure means of authentication. Mobile Connect enables customers to create and manage a **digital universal identity** via a single login. Mobile Connect works by employing the user's unique mobile number, combined with a unique PIN for more secure use cases, to verify and grant online access. With Mobile Connect, users no longer need to remember their login and password for each service as they are automatically identified thanks to their SIM-card. The mobile network matches the actual identity of users with their SIM-card based identifier. This way, service providers know they can rely on a **verified user identity** without having access to all user details. In addition, with Mobile Connect, users can decide which identity elements they want to give to service providers, thus controlling the use of their details. Service providers do not have to build large **identity databases**, which are always at risk of being the target of hackers.

## In India, Mobile Connect has already been adopted by:

→ Aircel, Bharti Airtel, Idea, Tata Teleservices Ltd, Telenor and Vodafone.

A large number of services such as GaneshaSpeaks, Golbibo, Trupay, Twigly, Zee Digital Group and Zomato, covering areas such as commerce, finance and banking, health services, media and entertainment and travel and hospitality are already implementing Mobile Connect. Additionally, business-to-business Mobile Connect services have been deployed by BuyHatke and Times Mobile Ltd. enabled by mXpresso and will help to prevent fraud installations and fake application downloads.