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# **Leading the Digital Transformation Journey**

**Presentation made to the first session of the WIPO  
ICT Leadership Dialogue (WILD)**

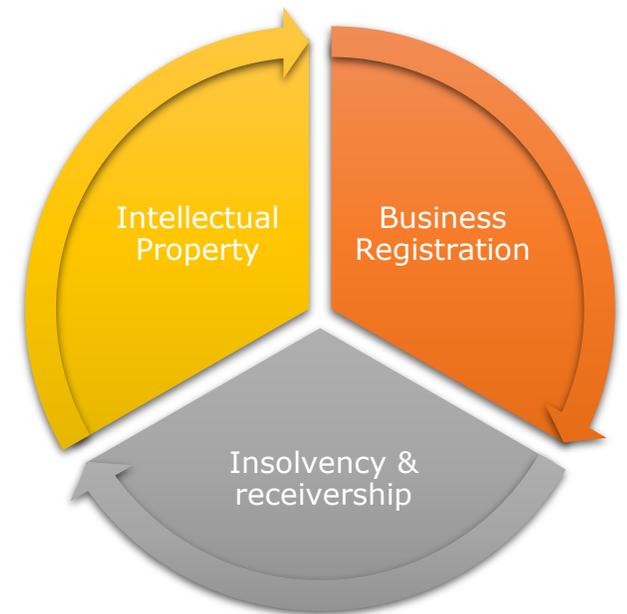
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**Arthur Kwesiga  
Director ICT and Innovation  
Uganda Registration Services Bureau  
14th April 2025**

# Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB)



**URSB** is government agency mandated to promote, register, and protect business enterprises, security interests in movable property, intellectual property rights, and to provide insolvency services



# Transforming URSB: The Digital Journey

## **Objective:**

- Showcase the URSB digital Transformation journey .

## **Context:**

- Moving from manual to digital systems:  
Highlight Key digital solutions, Challenges and Gains, Regional and International Collaboration, Future plans .

# Before Transformation

- **High levels of corruption and bribery**
  - Institution had lost public trust
  - Loss of government revenue
- **Bureaucratic organisational structure**
  - Less value addition to customer
- **Costly:**
  - The process and time to offer registration services was lengthy and unpredictable
  - Registration was lengthy and always required the assistance of a third-party
  - Registration required a lot of documentation
- **No linkages with other agencies**
  - Clients move between agencies to verify documents, causing delays
- **Limited access**
  - Registration was only at one location i.e. Head office, with no online services
- **Tedious process**
  - Required a lot of movements within the offices to complete a service
  - Many customer complaints

# Transition Goal

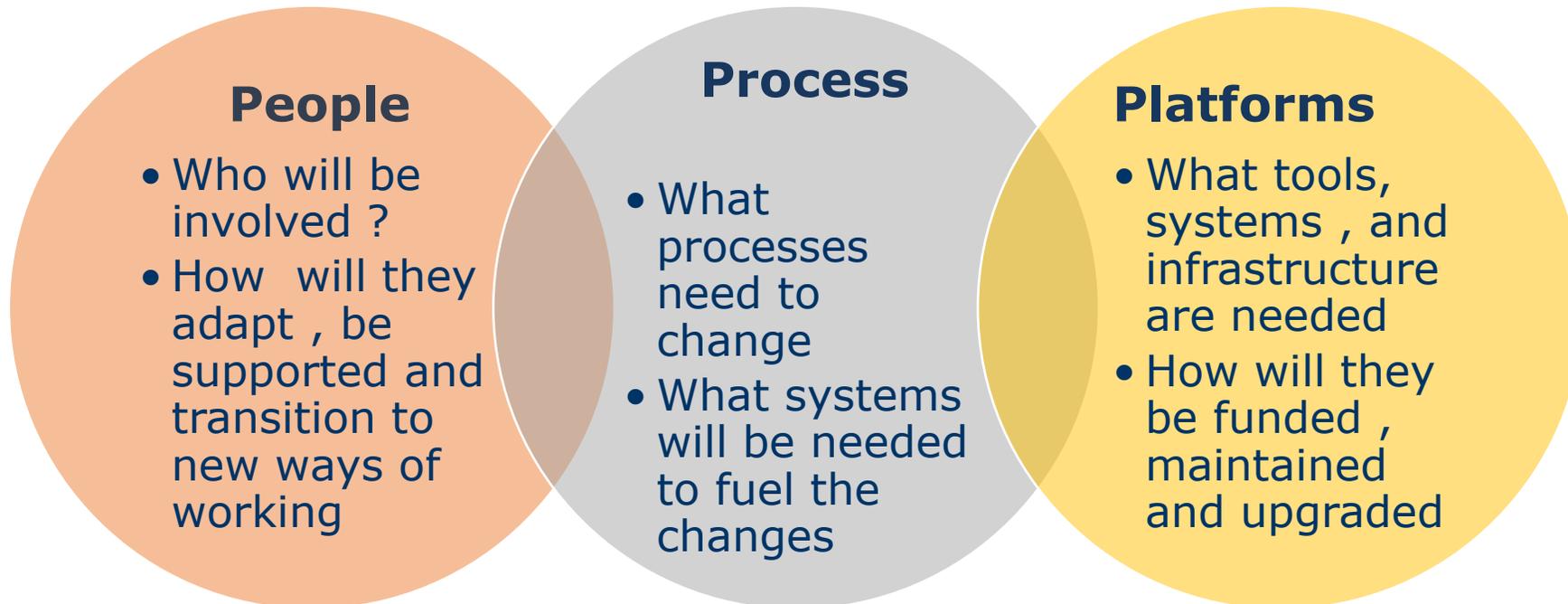
URSB defined the strategy “**ALL DIGITAL, ALL ONLINE.**”

With this, the Board and Management were committed to ensuring:

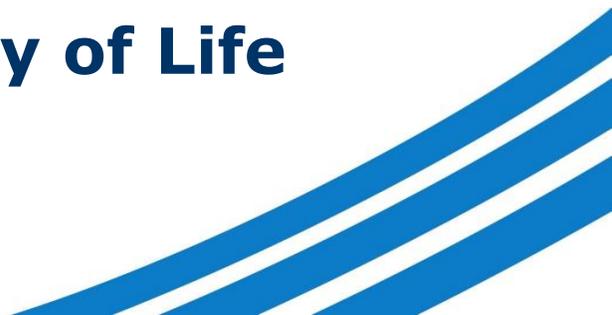
- All URSB registries, all records be recorded and kept as digital records (instead of paper records)
- All URSB services be provisioned online. Understanding realities of Uganda, URSB committed to provide walk in services in premises as well.
- This strategy became a slogan of URSB, which guided all existing processes, any new procurements, any new investments
- Budgeting and staffing reflected this strategy

# Key Transformation Considerations

Rebrand to enhance service delivery, digital transformation, and ease of doing business.



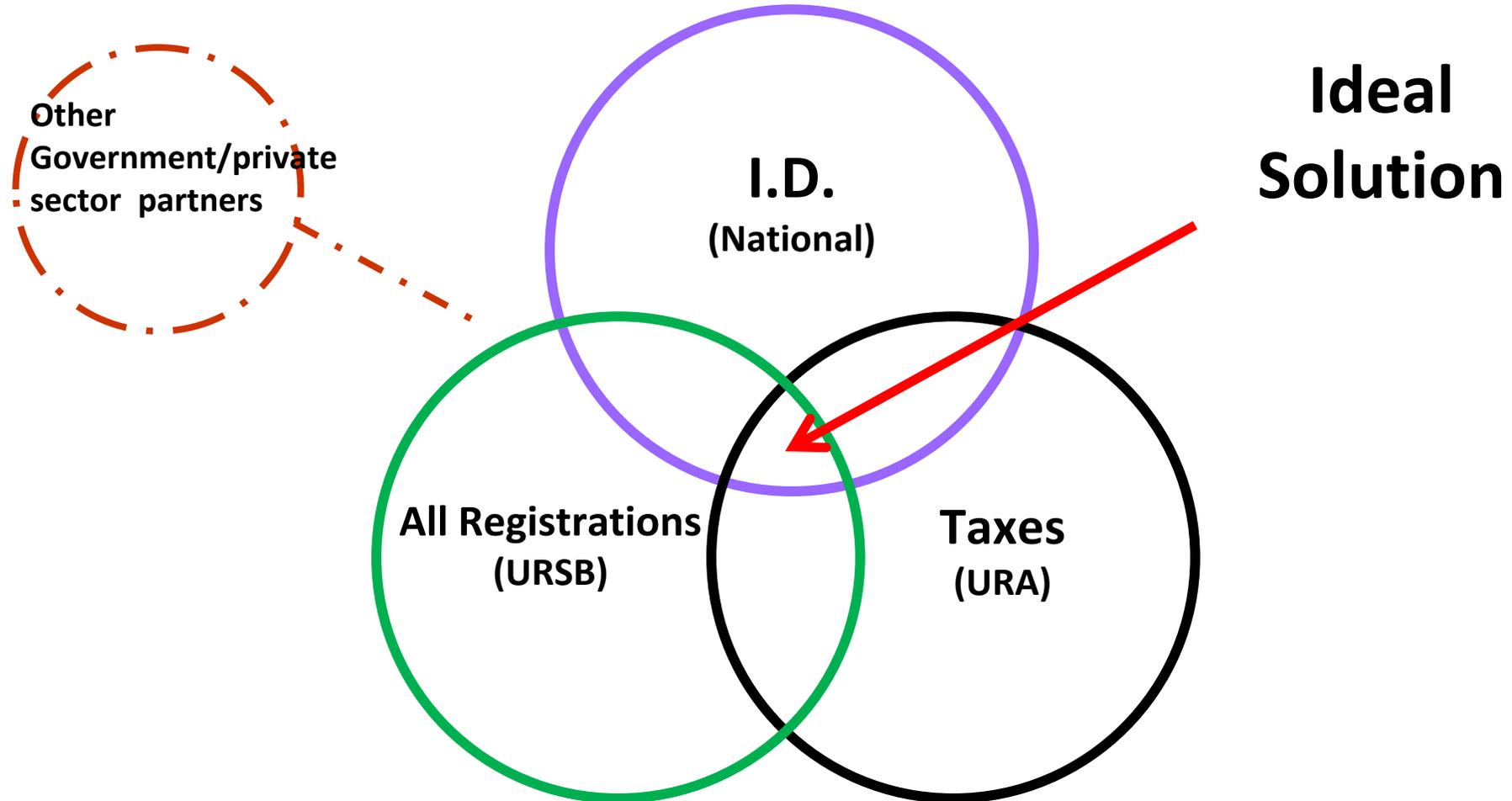
# Key steps in transformation

- **“See” from the customer’s perspective**
    - Don’t follow the process... follow the customer
  - **“See” from an end-to-end perspective**
    - The journey starts with customer “demand”
    - The journey ends with demand fulfillment
  - **Streamline bureaucratic processes**
    - Standardization: removing the “oral tradition”
    - Retain only the necessary procedures, merge others and removal of redundant ones
  - **One point access for customer and data entry**
    - The “touch it once” principal
  - **Continuous Improvement becomes a way of Life**
    - Evaluating and measuring improvements
- 

# URSB today

- **Service provision is more transparent and predictable**
    - Better user experience with full online registration
    - Predictable service, accessible, added value, AI-enabled chatbot
    - Increased revenue
    - Increased Public trust (Awards, partnerships)
  - **The process is simplified and does not require a third-party**
    - Fully online, inbuilt validation, including payments
    - Integrated with key agencies local and international
  - **Increased demand for our services**
    - High demand for data due to better quality
    - Increased access
  - **Improved governance and accountability**
    - Streamlined governance structures
  - **Reduced opportunities for corruption**
    - Strong internal controls
    - Severe punishment for culprits
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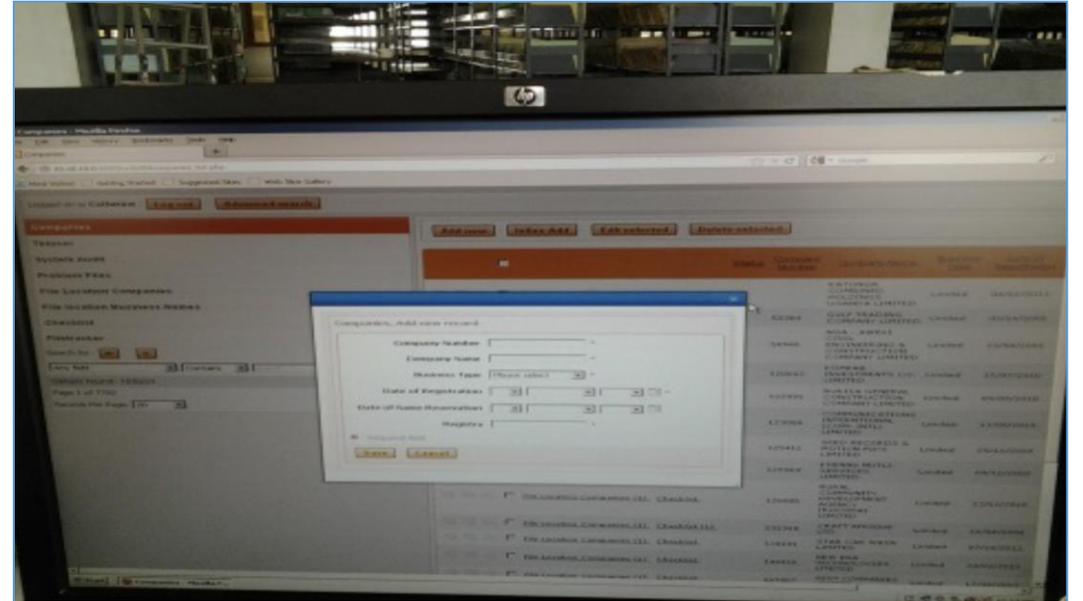
# URSB Today Fully Integrated Solution



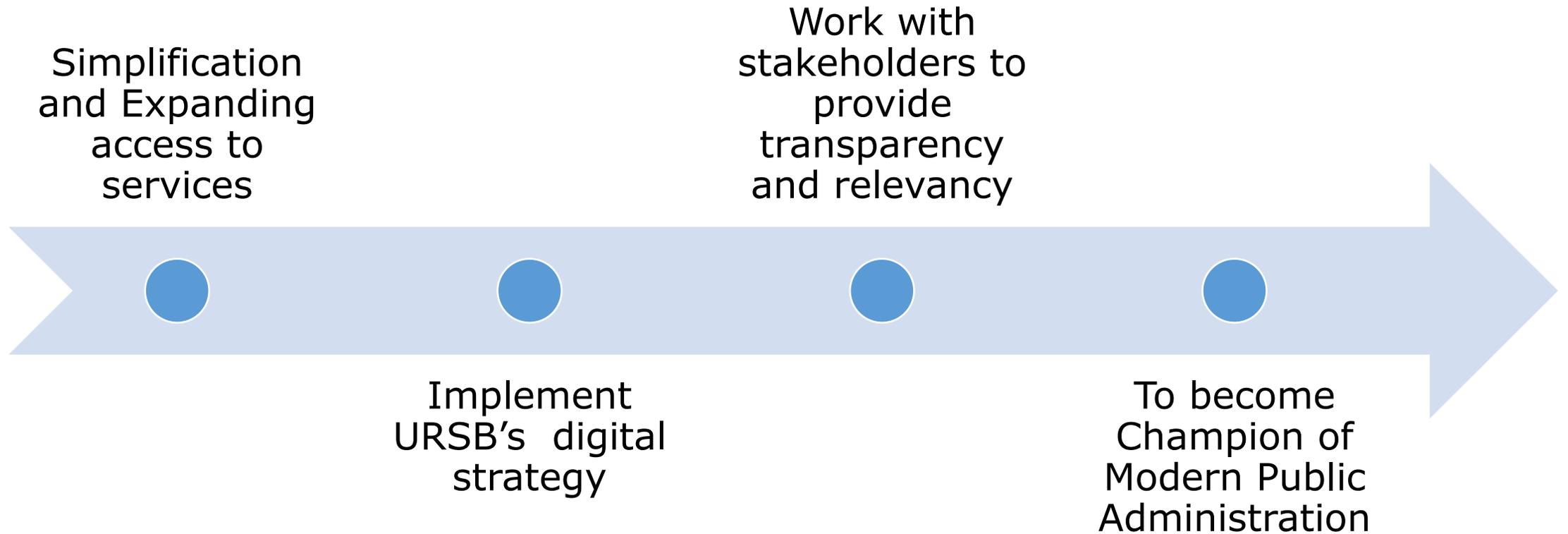
# State of Affairs

**Then**

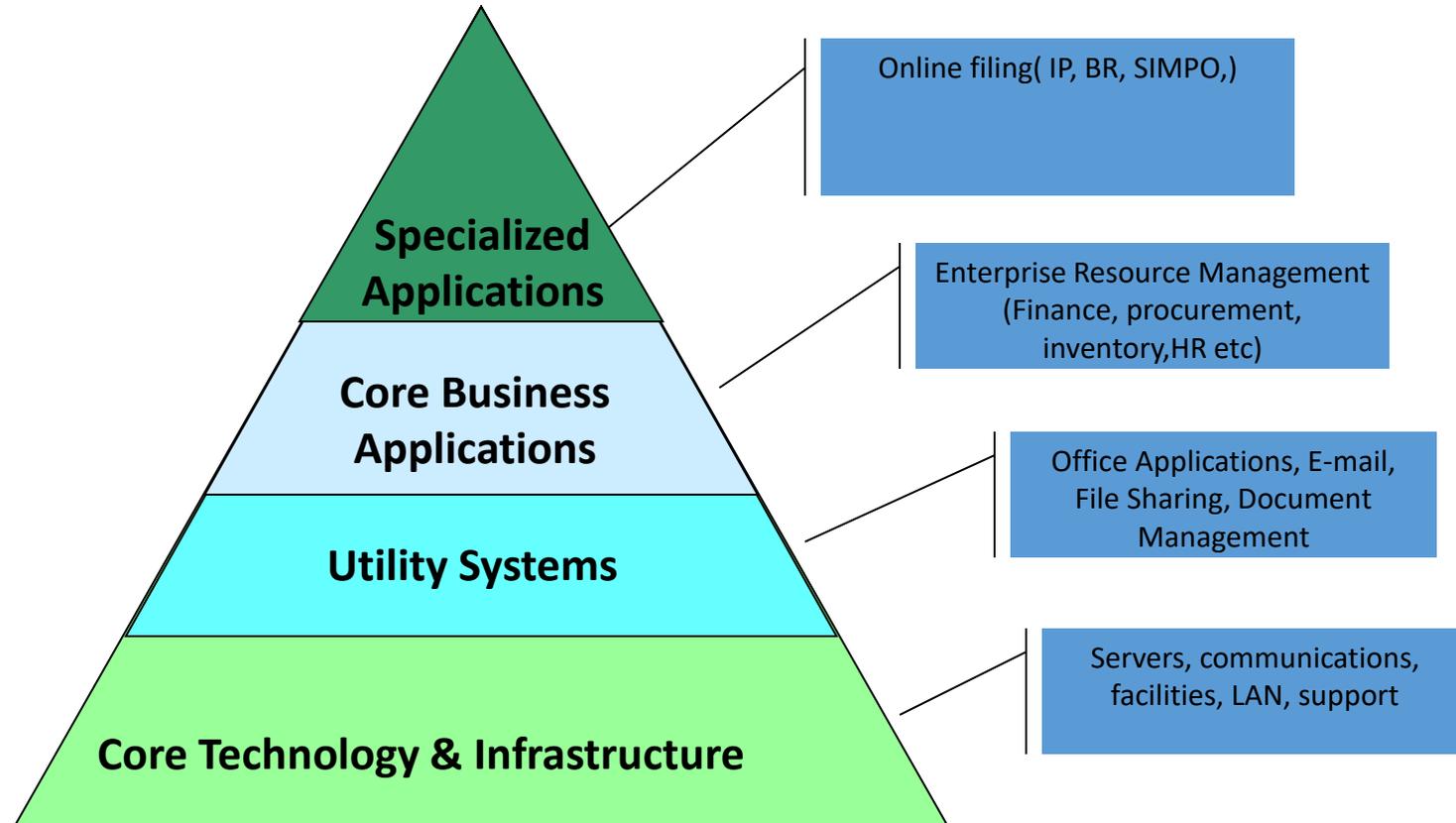
**Now**



# URSB'S Digital Business Approach



# Layers of URSB's Digital Ecosystem



# Transition to Digital IP Management

## Transition to IPAS for IP Management in 2007

- Introduced by WIPO to streamline IP management
- Migrated from Excel to IPAS for better data structure
- Required digitalization of physical records
- Applications still submitted physically
- 2017 WIPO Scan as EDMS
- Physical files archived at remote site
- Digital files used for day to day processing,
- **ARIPO Integration (2018):**
  - Real-time data exchange

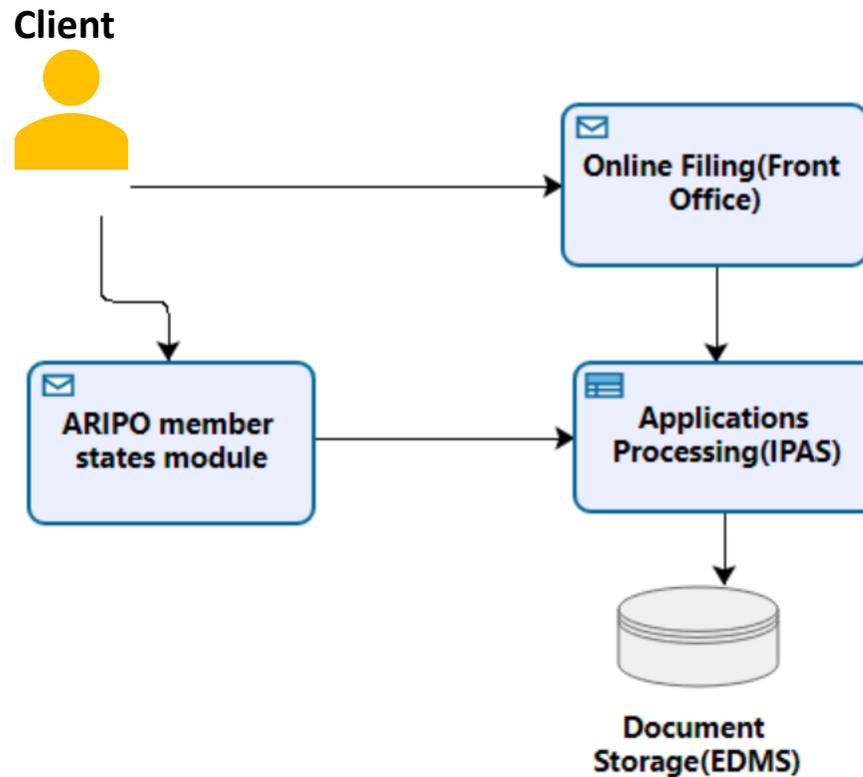
## COVID-19 Disruption and the Shift to Digital Submissions

- Physical submission of applications became impossible due to COVID-19 SOPs
- Temporary shift to application submissions via email
- Resulted in inefficiencies, increased workload, and longer processing times
- Highlighted the urgent need for a dedicated online filing solution

## Online Service, Integrating Regional And International Cooperation

- **EUIPO Front Office Tools Introduced:**
  - Online filing of Trademarks, industrial designs and Patents
  - TMview: For global trademark search
  - TMclass: For selecting and classifying goods and services
  - DesignClass: For classifying industrial designs
- **ePCT Implementation:** Supported online filing and management of international patent applications
- WIPO publish

# Current Status



- Eliminated data entry and scanning of documents since data is entered by clients and documents uploaded.

**URSB** Uganda Registration Services Bureau - IP Office  
Application for a Trade Mark

File received by User: URSB\_IP\_online\_sys  
Original filing date: 2022-04-06T18:05:48.0  
System reception date: 2022-04-25T12:09:34  
Trademark Application number: **UG/T/2022/116**

**Confirmation of Application for a Trade Mark**

Your application for a trade mark has been successfully filed with URSB. Thank you for choosing the trade mark.

Application details	
Provisional application ID	EFUG202200000018
Nature of Application	Local
Part of Register	PART A
Filing date	4/23
Filing time	18:09

**NOTE:**  
The filing number issued is a temporary tracking number for this application. An official application number will be issued shortly and shared by e-mail. Please use the official number when sending correspondences regarding this application.

Applicant(s)	
Applicant type:	Individual(s)
Name:	KEDI KEDI
Postal address:	KAMPALA Uganda
Telephone Number:	42947478
Email address:	@yahoo.com

Mark	
Mark type:	Name and Logo
Representation of mark:	
Word Element(s) of the Mark:	TESTED

Goods & Services			
Class	List of Goods & services		
4	TEST3.		
23	TEST1.		
45	TEST2.		

Fee(s)			
Type	Amount	Reference	
Search Fee	UGX 25,000	232732326	
Application Fee	UGX 50,000	33332653265	

Signature	
First Name and Surname	Capacity of the signatory
KEDI KEDI	Applicant

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# The Challenges along the URSB Digital transformation Journey

## Technical & Infrastructure

- High cost of setting up and maintaining backend systems and data centers
- Lack of integration between national systems (e.g., tax portal, national ID systems)
- Multiple specialized registers and platforms increase system complexity
- Limited internet access in rural areas

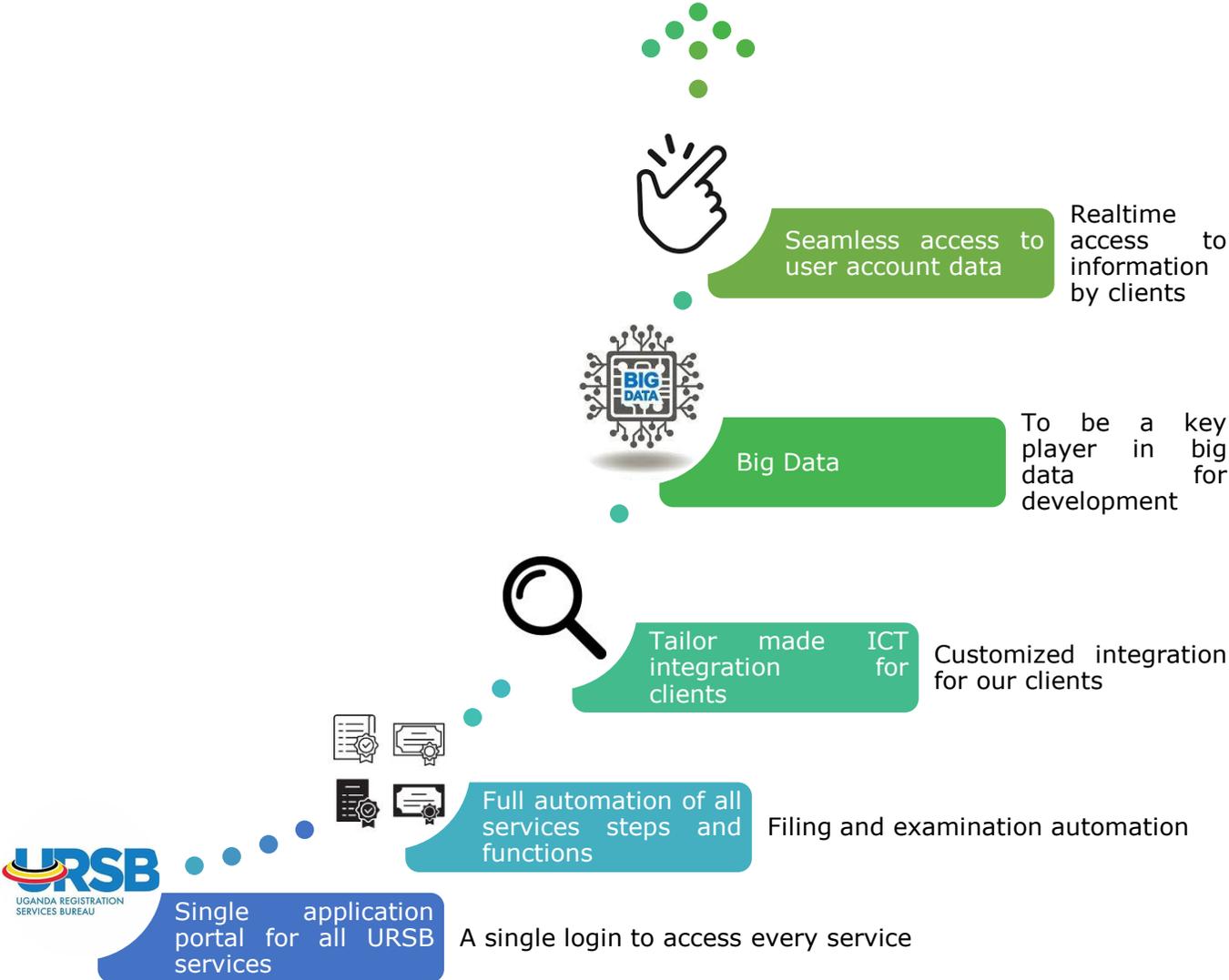
## Institutional & Organizational

- Resistance to change within the institution
- Hesitance to integrate similar systems (e.g., trademark vs tradename)
- Managing multiple legal registers with varying processes and dependencies
- Use of third-party partner systems adds complexity (IPAS, Front Office)

## Digital Human Capacity & Public Adoption

- High training and capacity-building costs
- General digital inertia and low uptake by users
- Difficulty in public adoption, especially in rural and underserved areas
- Limited digital literacy among users

# Where are we headed?



# Executive Leadership & Digital Transformation



## Why Digital Leadership Matters

- Rapidly changing market conditions
- Increasing customer expectations
- Need for innovation and competitiveness



## The Role of Executive Leadership

- Setting the digital vision and strategy
- Championing digital innovation
- Leading by example and modeling digital behaviors
- Fostering a culture of digital literacy

# Breaking Through Organizational Inertia



## Organization Inertia

- an entity's tendency to resist change and maintain the status quo, even when new approaches or strategies could be more effective, often stemming from outdated processes, bureaucracy, or a resistance to adapting to market changes



## Overcoming Organizational Inertia

- Identifying and addressing resistance to change
- Building a coalition of support for digital transformation
- Communicating the benefits of digital change
- Providing training and development opportunities

# Best Practices for Digital Leadership

## Tracking digital trends and innovations

- Keep up with trends allows for early adoption of new technologies or innovations like AI.

## Continuous Capacity Development of Staff

- Ensuring that the team is ready and learning at the pace of change and innovation

## Encouraging experimentation and risk-taking

- Creative thinking and problem solving to contribute to innovation and to facilitate up take of new digital solutions

## Performance Tracking and Management

- It is important to understand the impact of digital solution

# Conclusion

“Nothing Happens until something moves,”  
Albert Einstein.

As enablers of innovation, IP offices need to embrace change, and the most immediate change is to embrace digital transformation in the digital age.

# Thank You

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