

A Merchant's Guide to Identity Verification in MYANMAR

✓ Identity Verified

Real-Time Checks



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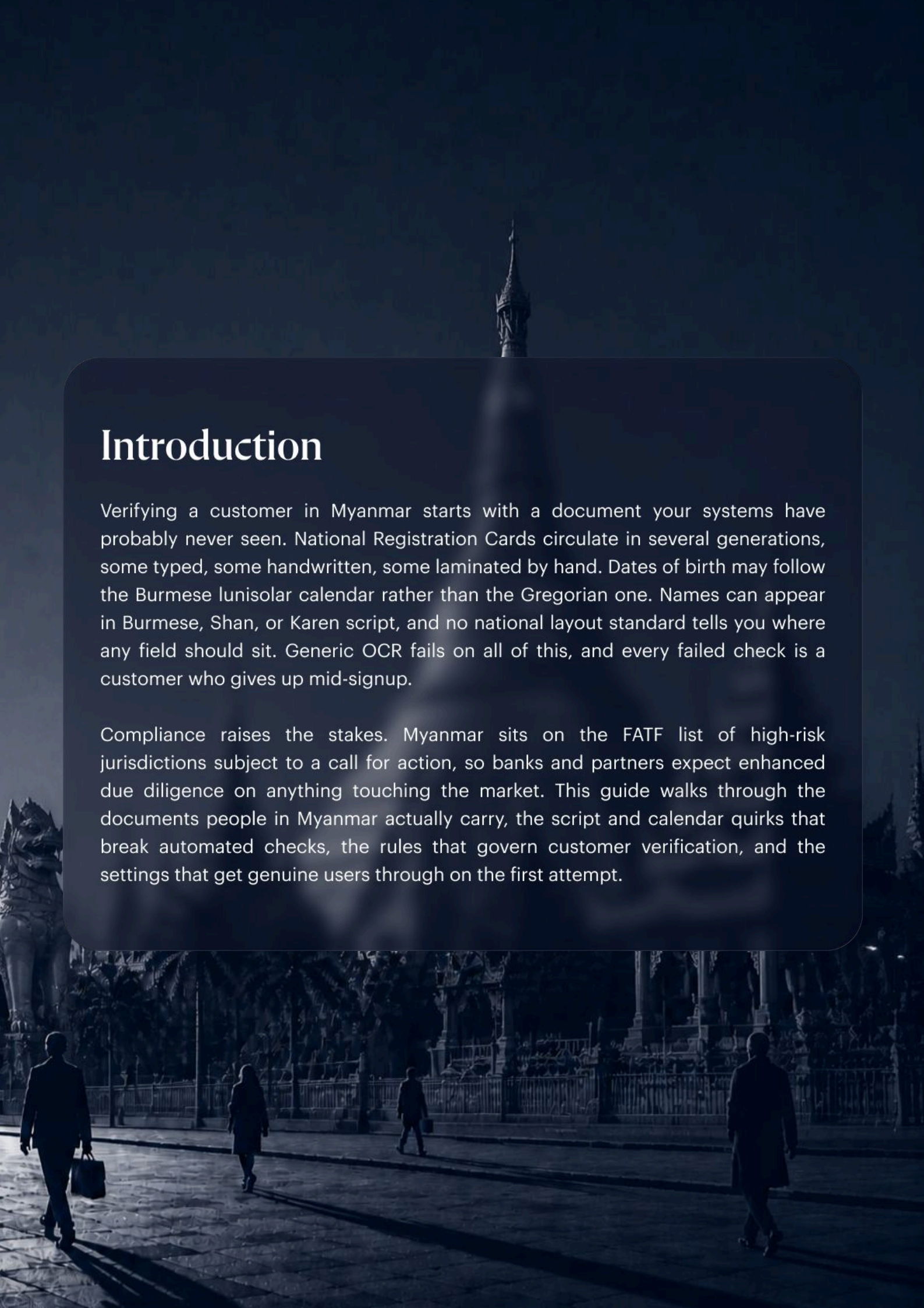
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Introduction

Verifying a customer in Myanmar starts with a document your systems have probably never seen. National Registration Cards circulate in several generations, some typed, some handwritten, some laminated by hand. Dates of birth may follow the Burmese lunisolar calendar rather than the Gregorian one. Names can appear in Burmese, Shan, or Karen script, and no national layout standard tells you where any field should sit. Generic OCR fails on all of this, and every failed check is a customer who gives up mid-signup.

Compliance raises the stakes. Myanmar sits on the FATF list of high-risk jurisdictions subject to a call for action, so banks and partners expect enhanced due diligence on anything touching the market. This guide walks through the documents people in Myanmar actually carry, the script and calendar quirks that break automated checks, the rules that govern customer verification, and the settings that get genuine users through on the first attempt.

Understanding Myanmar's Identity Documents

Nine document challenges that break generic verification in Myanmar, and what each one means for your flow. Burmese identity documents reward preparation. The nine challenges below show up in real verification traffic, and each one has a technical answer.

1 | Many Generations of National Registration Cards



Myanmar identity cards circulate in many colours, layouts, and generations at once.

National Registration Cards (NRCs) have been issued in different forms for decades. **Older versions** are often typed or fully handwritten, and their poor print quality drags down OCR accuracy. **Newer cards** are printed and laminated yet still vary in design and font from one issuing office to the next. No strict national standard fixes the layout, so font size, the position of the name and birth date, and the use of official stamps and seals all shift by region. Many people, particularly in conflict-affected areas, carry regional or community IDs instead, and local authorities issue their own formats for purposes such as travel or residency permits.

2 | Bilingual and Multilingual Documents

Burmese is the official language, but documents from border regions are often bilingual or multilingual because of the country's ethnic diversity. **Shan** State uses a script derived from Burmese with its own tonal markers and vowels. **Karen** communities in the southeast write in adapted Burmese scripts, and Sgaw Karen and Pwo Karen spell the same word differently. Jinghpaw, the most prominent **Kachin** language in the north, uses the Latin alphabet instead, so the word for water is simply written shanglaw. A verification engine that reads only standard Burmese misreads or rejects all of these.

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The Shan word for water.

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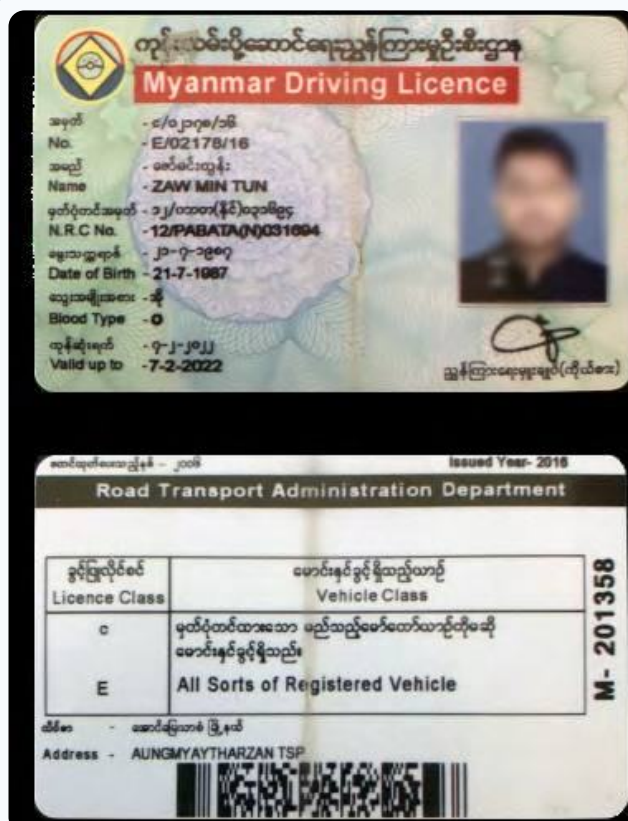
The Sgaw Karen word for water.

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The Pwo Karen word for water.



Driving licence specimens with bilingual Burmese and English fields.



A second licence generation, front and reverse, mixing Burmese and English.

3 | Burmese Script and Diacritic Complexity

A a	B b	C c	D d	E e	F f	G g	H h
[a~ʌ~ʌʌ]	[b]	[tɕ/tɕʰ]	[d]	[e~ɛ]	[f]	[g]	[h]
I i	J j	K k	L l	M m	N n	O o	P p
[i/i]	[ɕ]	[k~kʰ]	[l]	[m]	[n]	[o/ɔ]	[p]
R r	S s	T t	U u	W w	Y y	Z z	?
[ɹ~ɹ~ɹ]	[s~sʰ]	[t]	[u/ʊ]	[w]	[j]	[z/ɕ]	[ʔ]
aw	ai	br	by	gr	gy	iaw	iu
[au]	[ai]	[bʰ~bʰ]	[pʰ]	[gʰ~gʰ]	[gʰ]	[iau]	[iu]
kh	khrr	khy	kr	ky	k.y	n	ng
[kʰ/x]	[kʰʰ~kʰʰ]	[kʰ]	[kʰ~kʰ]	[kʰ]	[k.j]	[n/ŋ/m]	[ŋ]
n-g	ny	ou	oy	pf	ph	phr	phy
[n.g]	[n]	[ou]	[oi]	[pʰ~pʰ]	[pʰ]	[pʰʰ~pʰʰ]	[pʰ]
pr	py	p.y	sh	th	ts	ua	uy
[pʰ~pʰ]	[pʰ]	[p.j]	[e]	[tʰ]	[ts~s]	[ua]	[ui]

The Burmese alphabet with romanised sound values.

The Burmese script stacks diacritic marks above, below, and around base characters, and a single mark can change the meaning of a word or the sound of a syllable. Names and addresses depend on these marks being read exactly. An OCR engine that drops or misplaces a diacritic returns a name that fails watchlist and database matching even though the document is genuine.

4 | The Burmese Native Calendar

Burmese documents use varying date formats, and some rural and traditional documents still carry dates in the Burmese calendar. That system is **lunisolar**, so months follow the phases of the moon while the year tracks the sun, and the new year begins in April around the **Thingyan festival** rather than in January. The **Burmese Era** also has its own starting point in 638 CE, which puts its year count roughly 638 years behind the Gregorian number. Date extraction has to detect which calendar a document uses and convert it correctly, especially on monastic records, astrological charts, and traditional property deeds.

MONTH	LENGTH IN DAYS	CORRESPONDING GREGORIAN MONTHS	SPECIAL OCCASIONS
Tagu	29	March-April	Thingyan new year
Kason	30	April-May	Vesakha Day (on full moon)
Nayon	29	May-June	
Wasso	30	June-July	Vassa period begins; Martyr's day
Wahgaung	29	July-August	
Tavthalin	30	August-September	
Thadingyut	29	September-October	Thadingyut festival; Vassa ends; Kahtein religious period begins
Tazaungmon	30	October-November	Tazaungdaing festival; Kahtein period ends
Natdaw	29	November-December	
Pyathoe	30	December-January	Karen new year
Tabodwe	29	January-February	
Tabaung	30	February-March	Final day of Myanmar calendar (on the full moon)

Burmese calendar months, their lengths, and their approximate Gregorian counterparts.

5 | Handwritten and Printed Variations



A printed driving licence. The same fields appear handwritten on older documents.



An older pink card with fully handwritten Burmese entries.

Many older NRCs and supporting documents are partially or fully handwritten, particularly in rural areas. Handwriting often carries the fields that matter most, including names, birth dates, and addresses. Systems trained only on printed text return little more than noise on these documents, so the extraction model needs dedicated handwriting training for Burmese script.

6 | Document Aging and Wear



A faded and stained older National Registration Card.

Older Burmese documents are often physically damaged after decades of use and poor storage, especially in rural areas. Faded ink, torn edges, and peeling laminate are common because many holders never replace their original card. A verification flow tuned for crisp studio captures rejects these documents outright, while a model trained on worn specimens can still extract and match the data.

7 | Stateless and Refugee Documents

Refugees and stateless people inside Myanmar often hold no recognised national document at all. What they carry instead may come from international or humanitarian organisations, and those papers rarely pass standard document checks. Shufti supports alternative approaches for these cases, including biometric verification, so you can onboard users from these communities while staying within your compliance obligations.



A mid-century registration certificate with inked stamps and heavy wear.



A certificate from the same era, showing overlapping stamps and worn edges.

8 | An Identity System Still Moving to Digital

The NRC framework dates back to the 1950s, and over 27% of the population, particularly in rural areas, has never been registered at all. Myanmar is now building a digital identity layer through the Ministry of Immigration and Population's e-ID programme, which assigns a ten-digit Unique Identification Number (UID) backed by biometric data. The rollout is gradual, and paper documents still dominate day-to-day verification.

9 | Ethnic Diversity and Unequal Access to ID

Myanmar officially recognises 135 ethnic groups, and access to formal identity documents varies sharply between them. Communities such as the Rohingya have long faced barriers to obtaining the NRC, which locks them out of services that require one. Where a recognised document does not exist, biometric checks give you a compliant fallback for real users who would otherwise be turned away.



A resident holds a registration card with handwritten Burmese entries.

A Merchant's Guide to Identity Verification in Myanmar

The rules that govern customer checks in Myanmar, the documents you can accept, and how each one performs. Myanmar has no single, standalone data protection law. Customer verification is governed by the **Anti-Money Laundering Law of 2014** and its 2015 rules, with the Central Bank of Myanmar and the Myanmar Financial Intelligence Unit overseeing customer due diligence in the financial sector. The **Law Protecting the Privacy and Security of Citizens of 2017** covers personal privacy, and the **Cybersecurity Law** enacted on 1 January 2025 adds data retention duties for digital platform providers. FATF has kept Myanmar on its list of high-risk jurisdictions subject to a call for action since October 2022, so counterparties abroad apply enhanced due diligence to Myanmar-linked business. Clean, documented verification is what keeps that scrutiny manageable.

Compliance and conversion fail together here. A flow that asks for the wrong documents or stalls at capture loses customers mid-signup, so a compliant check that still passes genuine users first time protects both your regulatory standing and your completion rate.

1 | Verification Modes

Shufti gives you two ways to run a check, and most merchants in Myanmar use both.

ONSITE VERIFICATION

The check runs in real time through an iFrame or Verify component embedded in your flow. The user submits an NRC, licence, or other proof directly, with guided feedback that corrects bad captures on the spot. Results land in the Shufti Back Office and in your API response the moment the check completes.

OFFSITE VERIFICATION

You collect documents and data yourself and submit them to Shufti at your own pace. Results return through the Back Office portal or the API. This mode suits high volumes gathered asynchronously and regions where direct user engagement is hard.

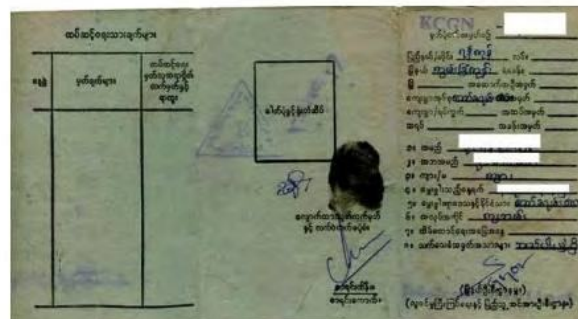
2 | Document Types Selection

Identity documents in Myanmar serve different purposes and carry different levels of security. These are the ones you will meet in real traffic.

National Registration Card (NRC). The primary ID for Myanmar citizens, mandatory from age 10, with separate formats and design patterns for male and female holders. It is a laminated paper card carrying the holder's name, birth date, ethnicity, religion, and NRC number. Older versions sometimes include English, but most are in Burmese only. Ethnic minorities, especially the Rohingya, have historically struggled to obtain one, which limits their access to citizenship and services.



An older NRC, pink booklet side with official stamps.



The inner side of an older NRC with photo and handwritten fields.

Citizenship Scrutiny Card (CSC). The CSC records a person's citizenship status and the legal rights that come with it, and it is used for voting, social services, and legal matters. Three variants denote different levels of legal rights.

Pink Card. Full citizenship for the Bamar majority and recognised ethnic groups.

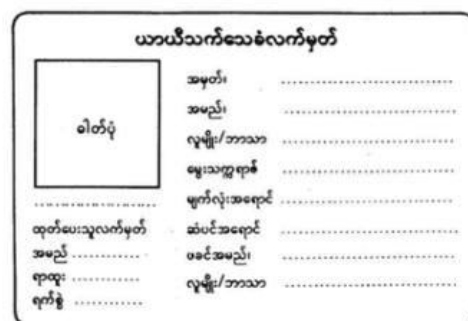
Blue Card. Associate citizenship for descendants of immigrants under the 1948 Union Citizenship Law.

Green Card. Naturalised citizenship for long-term residents without full ethnic citizenship.



The three Citizenship Scrutiny Card variants. Pink for full citizenship, blue for associate, green for naturalised.

Temporary Registration Card (TRC). Known as white cards, these were issued to people ineligible for full citizenship, including many Rohingya. They gave limited legal recognition without citizenship and were discontinued in 2015, which deepened the statelessness of many holders. Expect them in legacy records, not as live proof.



A Temporary Registration Card, the so-called white card, discontinued in 2015.

3 | Document Type Preference and Performance

Different Burmese documents yield different verification success rates. Here is how the main ones perform and what Shufti extracts from each.



A pink Citizenship Scrutiny Card with photo and handwritten entries.

Citizenship Scrutiny Card

The primary identification document for citizens, issued in pink, blue, and green variants by citizenship status. Shufti's OCR handles the card's layout and its mix of Burmese and English text, and the system manages regional variations in formatting.

Format: Laminated · **Extraction parameters:** Name, date of birth, issue date, document number

Driver's Licence

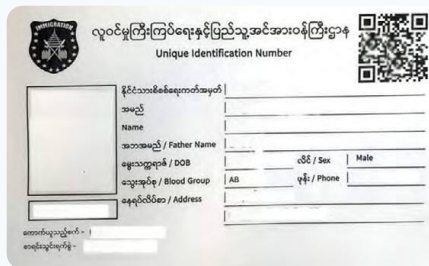
Designs vary by region and issuing authority. Shufti's OCR is tuned for these differences and reads handwritten and non-standardised data accurately.

Format: Physical document

Extraction parameters: Name, date of birth, issue date, document number, expiry date



Driving licence front. Bilingual fields with photo. Driving licence reverse with issuing department and barcode.

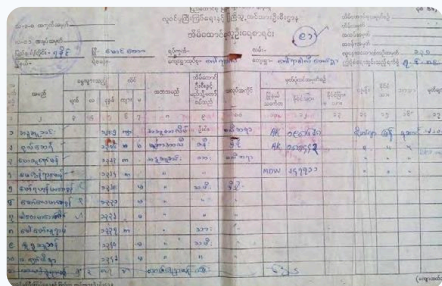


The Unique Identification Number card layout with QR code.

National ID Card

The new smart National ID, linked to the ten-digit UID issued under the e-ID programme, is appearing in administrative and financial use. Shufti's systems are tailored to the card's features and return fast, accurate results.

Format: Physical document · **Extraction parameters:** Name, date of birth, issue date, document number, expiry date

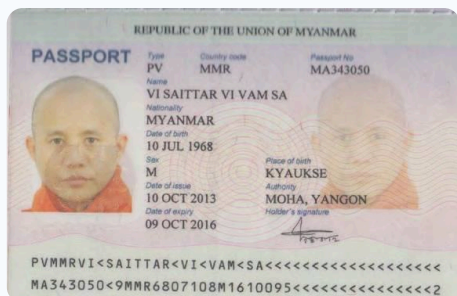


Household register pages. Handwritten member lists are the norm.

Household Registration Card

Commonly used in Myanmar for non-financial identity checks. Shufti's OCR is trained on both typed and handwritten entries and captures the data despite regional variation.

Format: Paper-based document · **Extraction parameters:** Name, date of birth, issue date, document number



A Myanmar passport data page with machine-readable zone.

Passport

Complex security features make the passport demanding for OCR. Shufti's systems are fine-tuned to capture and verify every required field accurately for smooth, reliable processing.

Format: Physical document · **Extraction parameters:** Name, date of birth, issue date, document number, expiry date

4 | Preferred Document for Identity Verification

The **driving licence** and the **Citizenship Scrutiny Card** are the preferred documents for KYC in Myanmar. Both carry the full set of parameters a reliable check needs, so they support thorough verification without extra document requests.

Verification Settings

Four settings, plus one device note, that decide how much friction your genuine users feel. Getting Myanmar right is mostly configuration. The settings below decide how much friction your genuine users feel and how much room fraud has to move.

01

Verification Mode (Onsite vs. Offsite)

Run onsite verification as your default in Myanmar. Live capture with biometric checks gives you tighter control in a market where document forgery is sophisticated, and Shufti's face verification carries iBeta Level 3 Conformance to ISO/IEC 30107-3 for liveness. Financial services and insurance flows that need immediate, high-accuracy results benefit most. Keep offsite available for

02

Data Extraction

Switch on OCR-based extraction. Shufti's models read Burmese script along with Shan and Karen scripts and Latin-alphabet Jinghpaw, and they convert Burmese calendar dates to Gregorian in the response. Manual review of Burmese fields does not scale, and generic OCR misreads them.

03

Identity Document's Backside Proof

Many Burmese documents carry required data on both sides. The back of the NRC often holds the document number, the address, and official seals, so set Backside Proof Required to Yes for the NRC and similar documents. Shufti captures and validates both sides in one flow.

4 | Real-Time Proof Capture vs. Proof Upload

Myanmar identity documents can be verified through two proof methods, and users pick whichever suits their convenience and connectivity.

Real-time proof capture. Shufti's auto-capture detects the document in frame and photographs it without any user effort. It produces the cleanest images and is the fastest, most dependable route for verifying physical documents.

Proof upload. Users can submit pre-captured images of their identity documents instead. The route suits people who already hold scans or photos and prefer a simple upload, and it holds up on weak connections where a live camera session may stall.

Turn on both **Allow Online** (real-time proof capture) and **Allow Offline** (proof upload) in the verification settings tab. Running the two side by side keeps completion high across Myanmar's mixed connectivity map, whether the proof is a physical document or an electronic one.

5 | Device for Identity Verification

As of 2023, more than 90% of internet users in Myanmar reach the web on mobile devices, and Android dominates the market. Test your flow on mid-range Android handsets before launch, since that is where most of your verifications will happen. Shufti's capture interfaces are mobile-responsive by design.

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Global reach, local precision

Shufti verifies identities across 240+ countries and territories and reads each market's documents with local accuracy. In **Myanmar** that means the old paper RG, the blue CPF card, every CNH format, and the new national identity card are all handled correctly, so you onboard real people fast and keep fraud out.

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