



## **INSTANT PAYMENT FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **1. What is an Instant Payment Service (IPS)?**

An IPS enables real-time, 24/7 transfers of funds between two parties, ensuring that transactions are completed in real time.

### **2. How does an Instant Payment Service work within SaPS?**

SaPS connects multiple financial institutions, allowing for seamless real-time payment processing across various participants.

### **3. Who can use an Instant Payment Service?**

Individuals, businesses, and financial institutions connected to the National Switch can use the Service for real-time payments.

### **4. Is the Instant Payment Service available 24/7?**

Yes, IPS operates around the clock, even on weekends and public holidays.

### **5. What are the main benefits of using an Instant Payment Service?**

Speed, Secure, convenience, secure. Enhanced cash flow, lower transaction fees, and real-time transaction confirmations.

### **6. What kinds of transactions can be processed using IPS?**

Person-to-person (P2P), business-to-business (B2B), consumer-to-business (C2B), and government-related transactions.

### **7. What is the role of the SaPS in IPS?**

SaPS ensures interoperability between banks, mobile money operators, and other financial service providers.

### **8. How quickly are payments settled?**

Payments are settled in seconds or within minutes after initiation.

### **9. Is IPS secure?**

Yes, IPS employs strict encryption, multi-factor authentication, and regulatory compliance for secure transactions.

### **10. What happens if an Instant Payment fails?**

If a payment fails, the Service sends an immediate notification, and no funds are debited.

**11. Can I track my payments?**

Yes, you receive instant notifications after transactions, and you can track them via your bank's mobile or online services.

**12. Are there limits on how much I can transfer?**

Each financial institution sets transaction limits. Typically, IPS is designed for low-to-medium-value payments.

**13. What fees are involved in Instant Payments?**

The fees depend on the financial institution, but they are generally lower than traditional transfer methods.

**14. How do I know if my payment was successful?**

Both the sender and recipient will receive confirmation messages from their respective banks.

**15. Can I send money to other countries using IPS?**

Cross-border transactions depend on international agreements. Some IPS Services allow cross-border transfers through integration with international gateways.

**16. How do I register for Instant Payments?**

You can register by contacting your financial institution, which will enable IPS on your account.

**17. What happens if I enter incorrect details in an IPS transaction?**

If incorrect details are entered, the payment will either fail or be sent to the wrong account. IPS transactions are irreversible, so it's important to double-check before confirming.

**18. Can I cancel an Instant Payment once it has been initiated?**

No, due to the immediate nature of the transactions, instant payments cannot be canceled once processed.

**19. What happens if the recipient's account is inactive?**

The payment will fail, and no funds will be debited from your account.

**20. How do financial institutions communicate in an IPS?**

They use standardized messaging formats like ISO 20022, which allows for real-time data exchange between Services.

**21. Can businesses use IPS for payroll or supplier payments?**

Yes, IPS can be used by businesses for payroll, supplier payments, and other transactions requiring immediate settlement.

**22. What are the key challenges with implementing an IPS?**

Key challenges include ensuring nationwide interoperability, managing high transaction volumes, stable internet connectivity and adhering to regulatory compliance.

**23. What types of accounts can be linked to an IPS?**

Both bank accounts and mobile money accounts can be linked to the IPS as long as they are part of the SaPS network.

**24. What happens during a Service outage?**

SaPS typically has redundancy Services in place. If an individual bank or provider has an outage, transactions might be delayed until service is restored.

**25. Can IPS be integrated with mobile banking apps?**

Yes, most banks and mobile operators integrate IPS into their mobile banking or digital wallet apps for ease of use.

**26. What is the difference between Instant Payment Services and traditional bank transfers?**

IPS processes transactions in real-time, while traditional bank transfers may take hours or days to settle, especially across banks.

**27. Can IPS transactions be used for high-value payments?**

IPS is typically designed for low, medium and high-value payments. High-value payments may be restricted or routed through other payment Services.

**28. How does IPS impact financial inclusion?**

IPS enhances financial inclusion by enabling access to real-time payments for individuals and businesses, especially in underserved areas.

**29. How does IPS help businesses?**

It improves cash flow by providing immediate access to funds, allowing businesses to process payments faster and reducing settlement risk.

**30. How are instant payments regulated?**

IPS is regulated by the Bank of Sierra Leone, which set guidelines for security, transaction limits, and compliance.

**31. Can IPS be used for government payments?**

Yes, governments can use IPS for instant disbursement of social benefits, tax refunds, and other government-related payments.

**32. How does IPS affect consumer spending habits?**

Consumers tend to spend more confidently knowing that their payments are processed instantly and their funds are immediately available.

**33. How does IPS contribute to reducing cash usage?**

IPS provides a fast, secure alternative to cash, encouraging individuals and businesses to move away from physical currency.

**34. Can IPS be used for online purchases?**

Yes, IPS can be integrated into e-commerce platforms to enable instant checkout payments.

**35. How do I resolve a dispute with an IPS transaction?**

Disputes are handled by the respective financial institution and there is also a dispute portal where you can raise a complaint if there is an issue with a payment, but since payments are instant, resolution options are limited.

**36. What role do FinTechs play in IPS?**

FinTechs can act as intermediaries or service providers, offering real-time payment solutions for banks, businesses, and consumers.

**37. How are cross-bank IPS transactions handled?**

Cross-bank IPS transactions are routed through the SaPS, ensuring interoperability between different banks.

**38. Are there any risks associated with IPS?**

While IPS is secure, risks include potential cyber-attacks, fraud, and errors in transaction details. However, strong regulations and security measures mitigate these risks.

**39. How can I get support for IPS-related issues?**

For support, contact your bank or mobile money provider, which can assist with resolving issues related to instant payments.

**40. Is it possible for someone to have multiple accounts with different participants on IPS?**

Yes, you can have multiple accounts with different participants using the same phone number on the Instant Payment Service.

**41. How can I register for each participant?**

Visit each participating financial institution with your National ID card and update your account to be part of the Instant Payment Service.