



# Re-thinking Switch edu-ID

Strategic realignment after 10 years of Switch edu-ID

Version 1.2, 9 June 2026

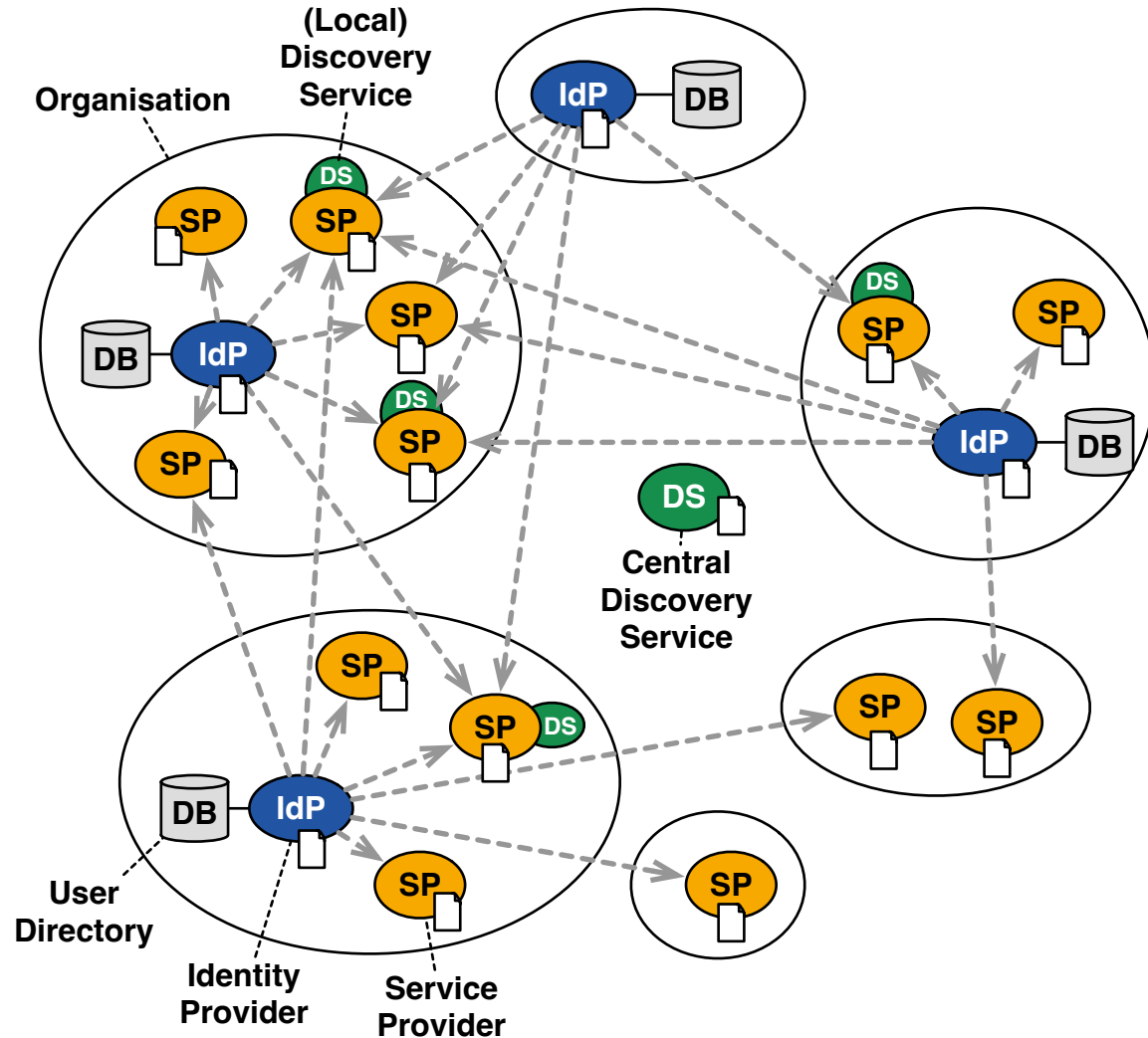
Christoph Graf, Switch, <[christoph.graf@switch.ch](mailto:christoph.graf@switch.ch)>

# Re-thinking Switch edu-ID

1. **Where it all began**
2. Our wake-up call
3. Consulting the community
4. Future scenarios
5. Future scenarios meet financial scenarios
6. What's yet to come



# 10 years ago: Full mesh federation SWITCHaaI

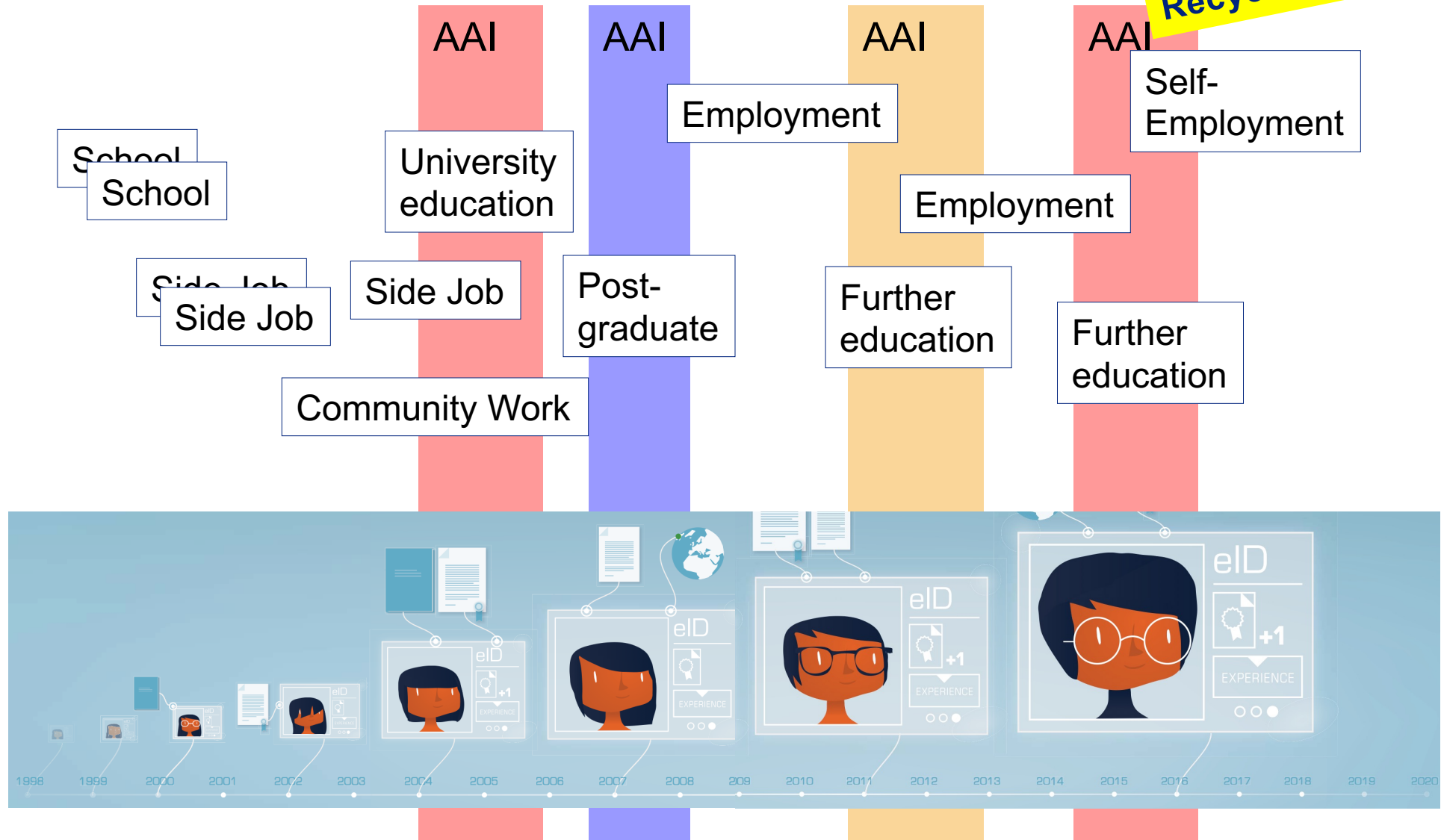


- Universities operate their own IdP
- Operation service quality varies considerably
- Know-how lost when IdP admins leave organization
- Not possible to introduce new feature scalably and quickly in federation
- Switch "just" provides metadata and some central components
- Few single points of failure

- > SAML Assertion Flow
- Connection to User Directory
- 📄 SAML Metadata including all SPs and IdPs

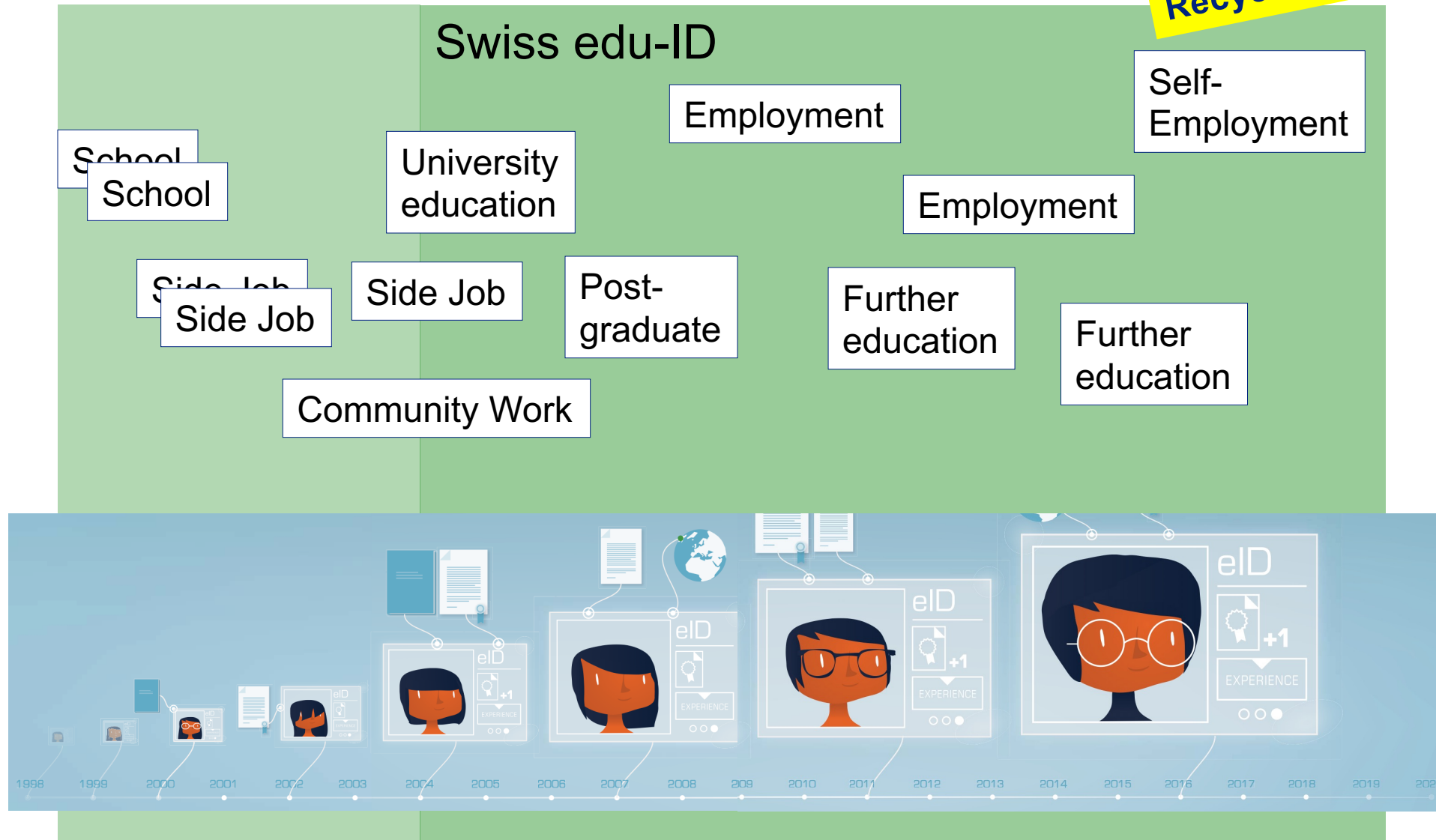
# Identity Management today...

Recycled from TNC14

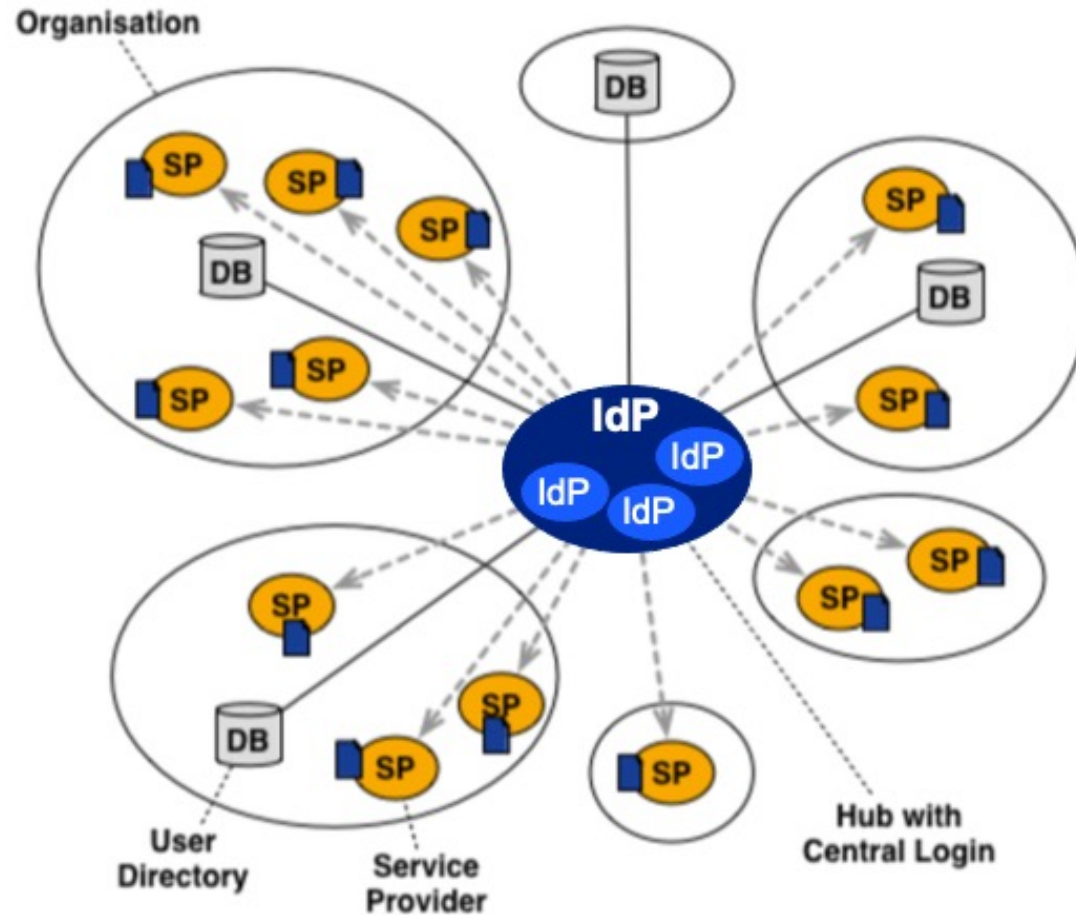


# ... Identity Management tomorrow

Recycled from TNC14



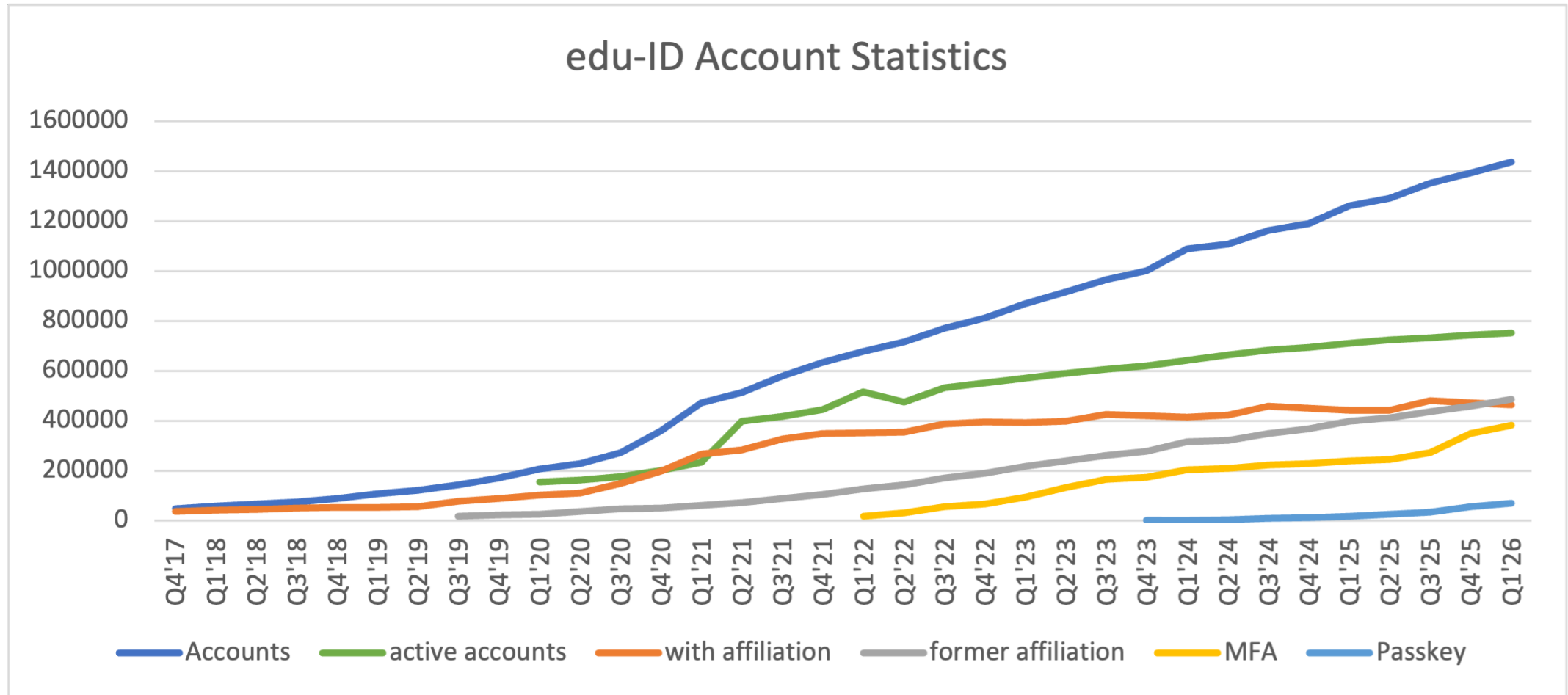
# Switch edu-ID today: Hybrid federation



- edu-ID database stores all attributes of private identities and organisational identities
- Organisational identities are kept up-to-date by institutions
- Possibility to manage users without organisational affiliation: prospective students, further education students, alumni, university guests, library walk-in
- edu-ID also has all credentials (passwords, MFA factors, passkeys)
- Hub = Single-Point of failure

- > SAML Assertion Flow
- Connection to User Directory
- 📄 SAML Metadata including all SPs and IdPs

# edu-ID has grown over time by users and complexity



Switch edu-ID counts over 1.4 million users,  
of which **53% have been active** during the last 12 months.  
University member coverage is close to 100%.

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# Switch edu-ID is much more than SWITCHaai

- The services provided by Switch edu-ID greatly exceed those of SWITCHaai
- With basically the same staffing



	AAI (until 2011)	Switch edu-ID
Operational responsibility for IdP at a university	Universities at their own expense	Switch
Number of services in the federation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2011: 50 SPs</li> <li>• 2017: 1000 SPs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2011: 1400 SPs</li> <li>• 2024: 2000 SPs</li> </ul>
Number of users without affiliation	0	750k (250k active during last year)
Providing 1st-level support to end users	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 450k university members</li> <li>• 750k non-university members</li> </ul>
Supported protocols	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SAML</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• SAML</li> <li>• OpenID Connect</li> </ul>

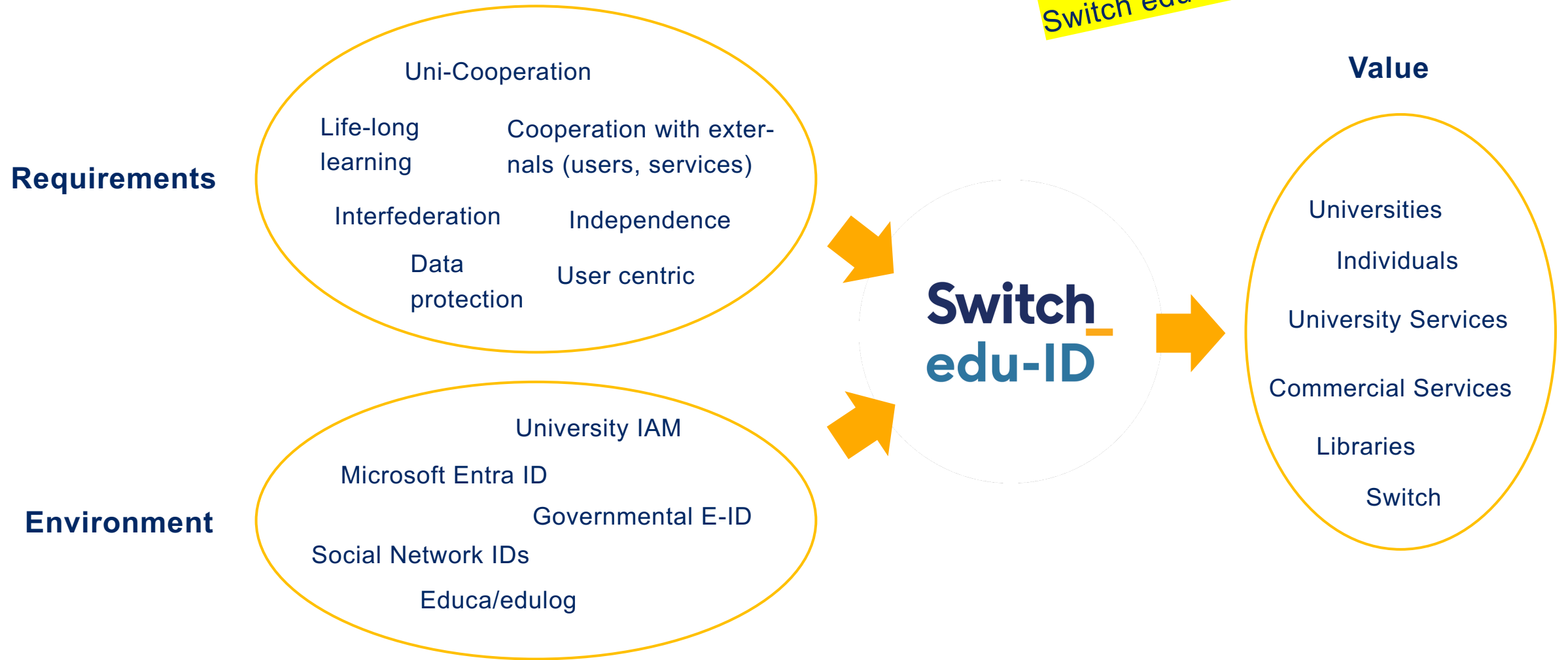
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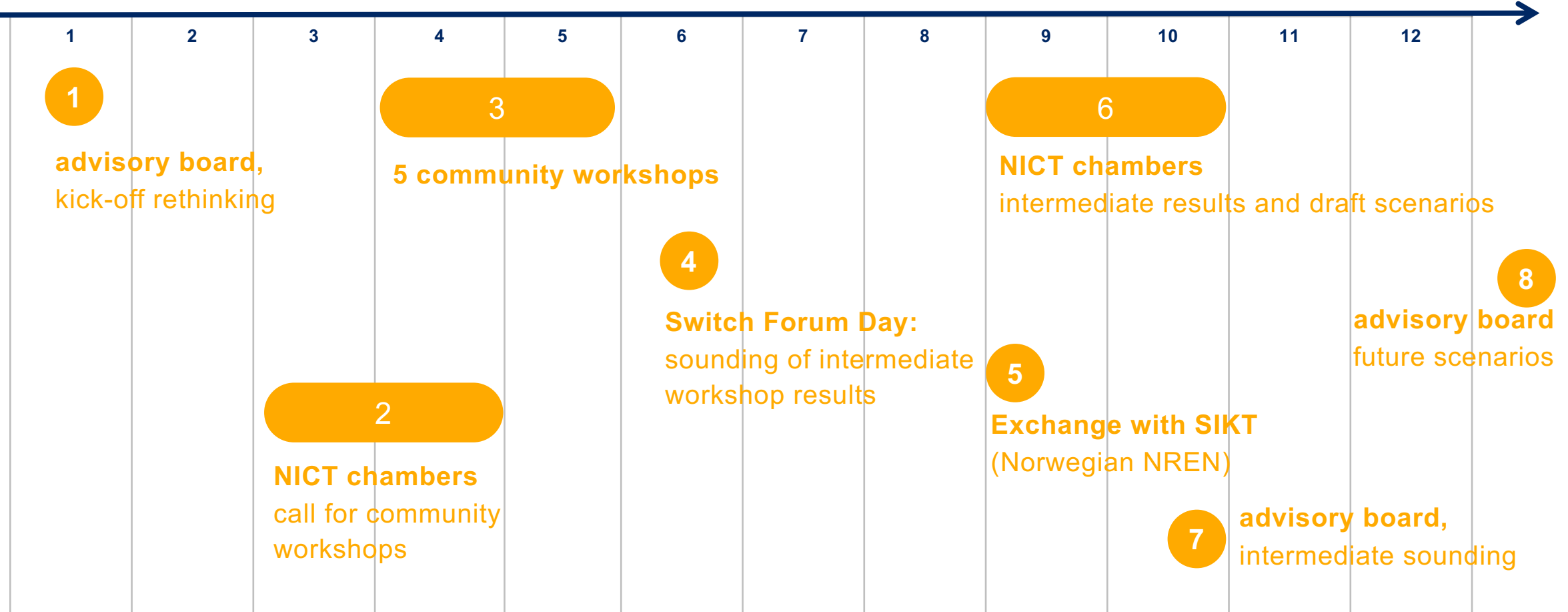
# Rethinking Switch edu-ID

From the Kick-off with our Switch edu-ID Advisory Board



# Re-thinking edu-ID: Steps taken so far

2025



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# Scenarios: Main influences for edu-ID



Strategic  
Digital  
Sovereignty

Identity  
Frameworks

Industry  
Standard

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**Strategic  
Digital  
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**Identity  
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**Industry  
Standard**

- **High tensions (geopolitical, platform dependencies)**
- **Unclear due to lack of requirements**
- **Backup scenario with missing weighting**

# Scenarios: Main influences for edu-ID



## Strategic Digital Sovereignty

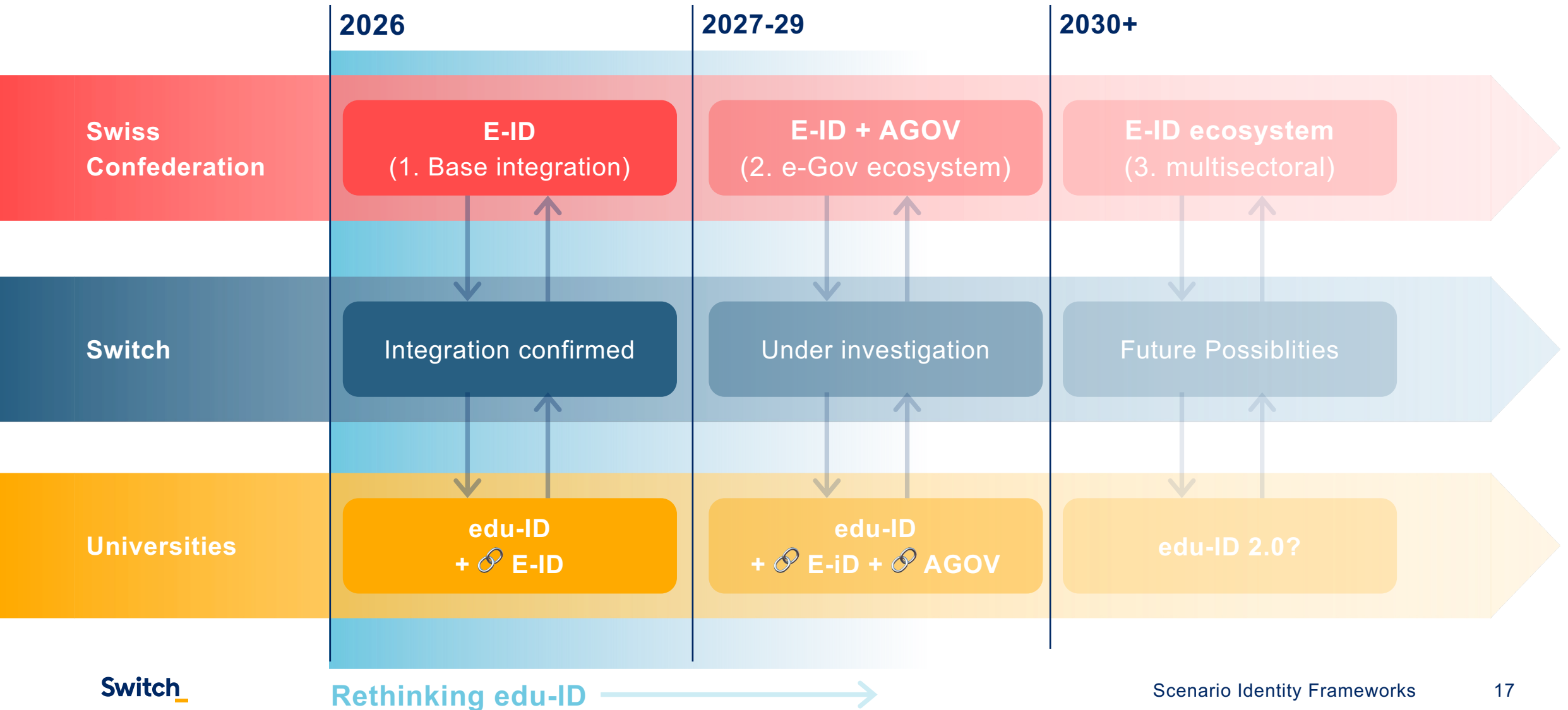
- High tensions (geopolitical, platform dependencies)
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## Identity Frameworks

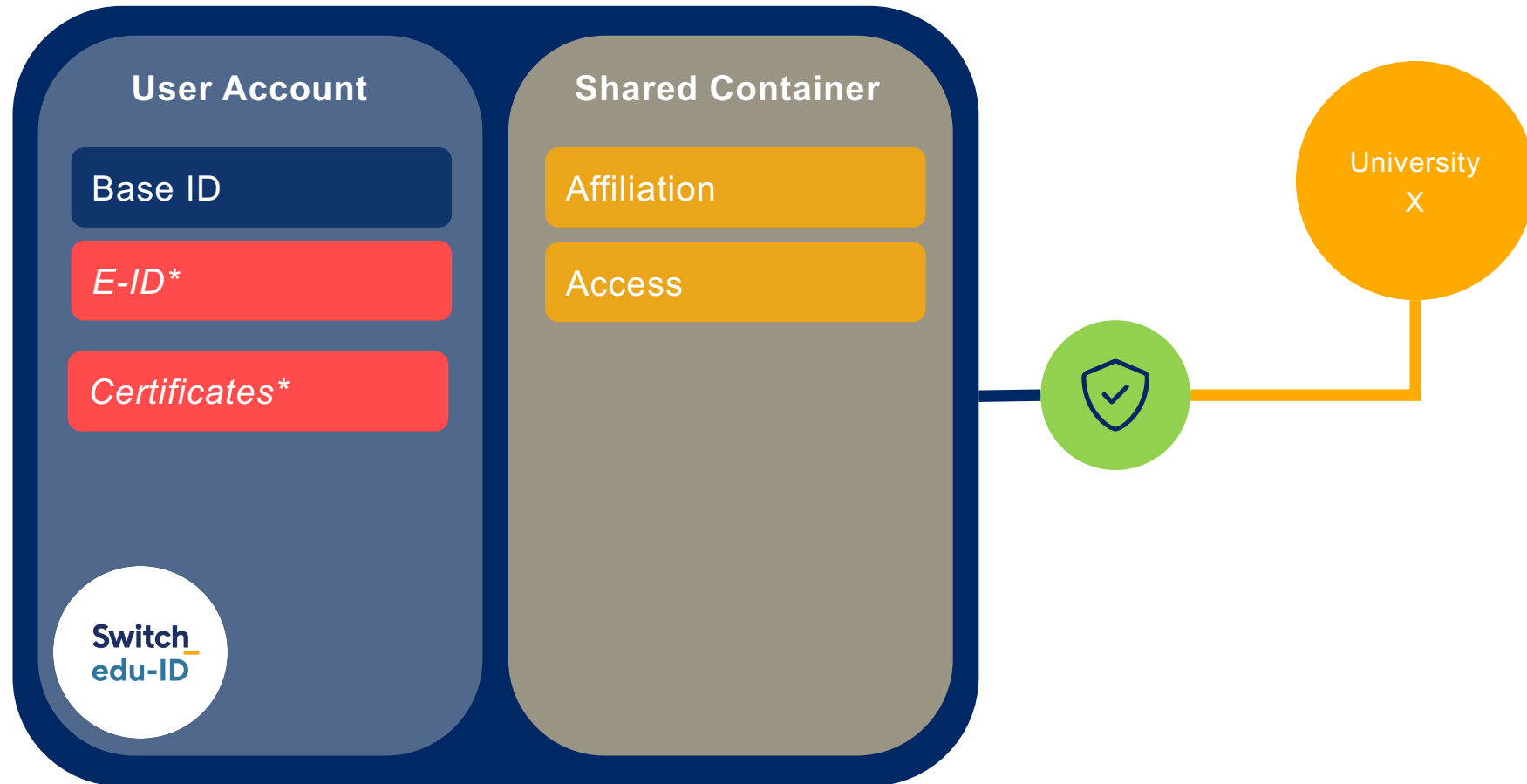
- E-ID case
- Integration of all relevant identity frameworks (CH/EU/GÉANT)

## Industry Standard

# The e-ID and edu-ID Relationship

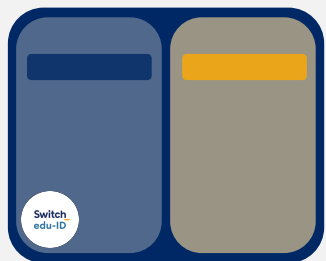


# Switch edu-ID



*\* = Future Potentials*

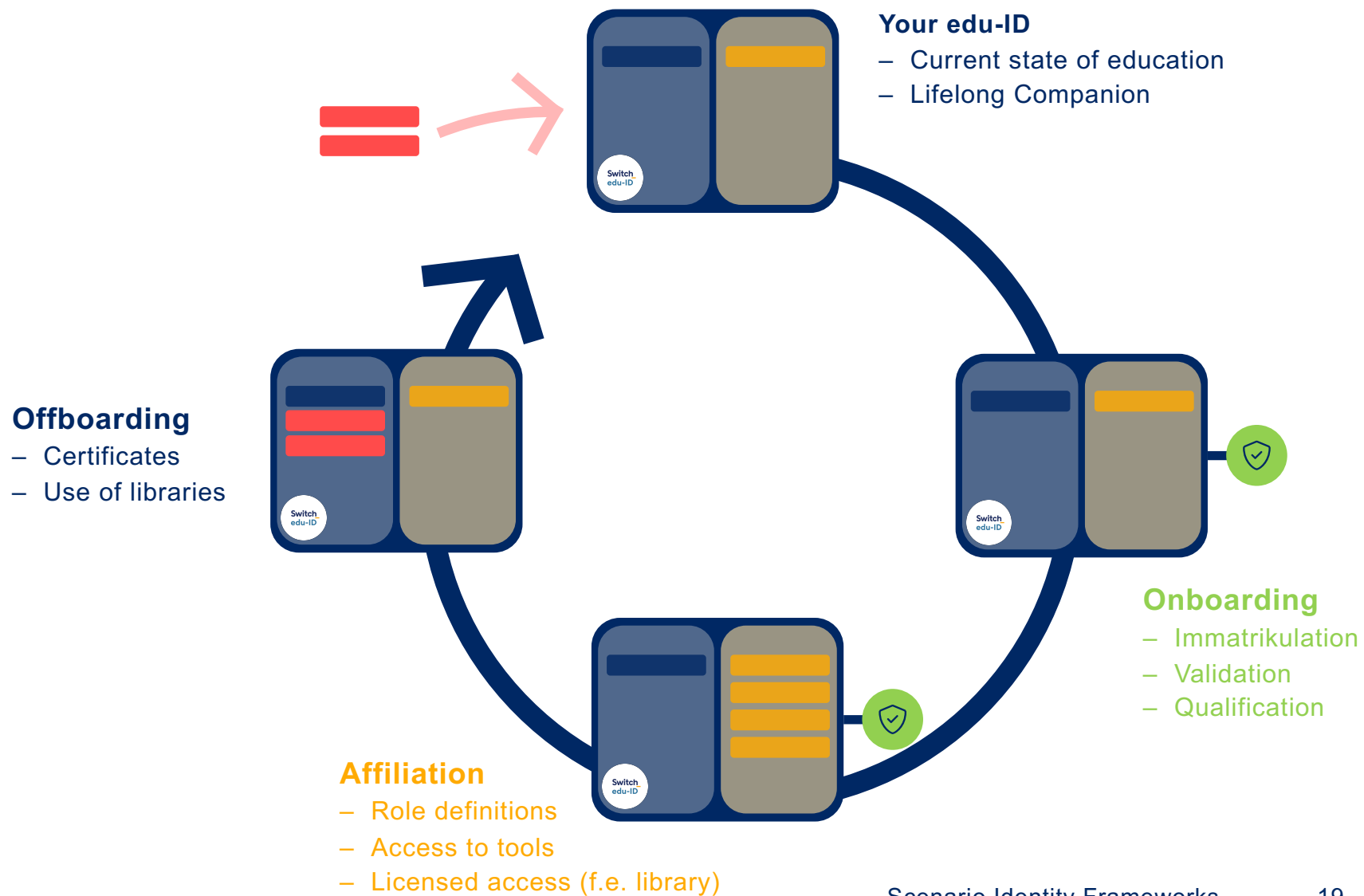
# edu-ID



## Base ID

- Self-Registration (individual)
- Personal Use of libraries
- Tools in Secondary level
- University application

# edu-ID Lifecycle

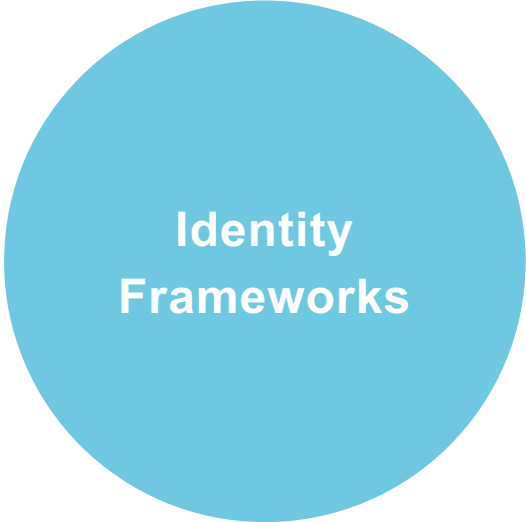


# Main influences for edu-ID



## Strategic Digital Sovereignty

- High tensions (geopolitical, platform dependencies)
- Unclear due to lack of requirements
- Backup scenario with missing weighting



## Identity Frameworks

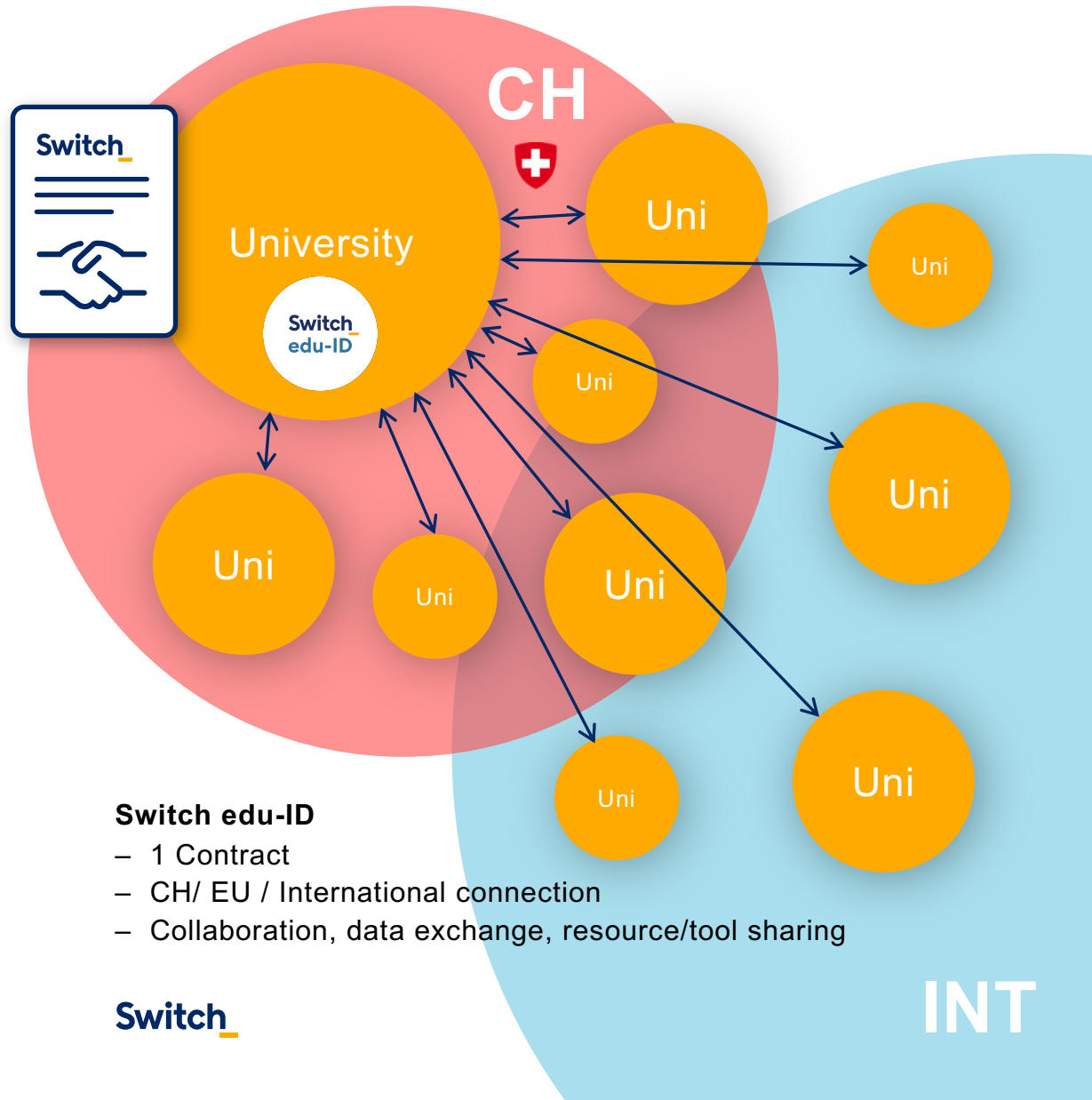
- E-ID Case
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## Industry Standard

- MS-Standards adoption (dominance)
- Follow our customer
- Future Interplay edu-ID + MS (e.g. Entra)

# Multilateral (sector-specific)



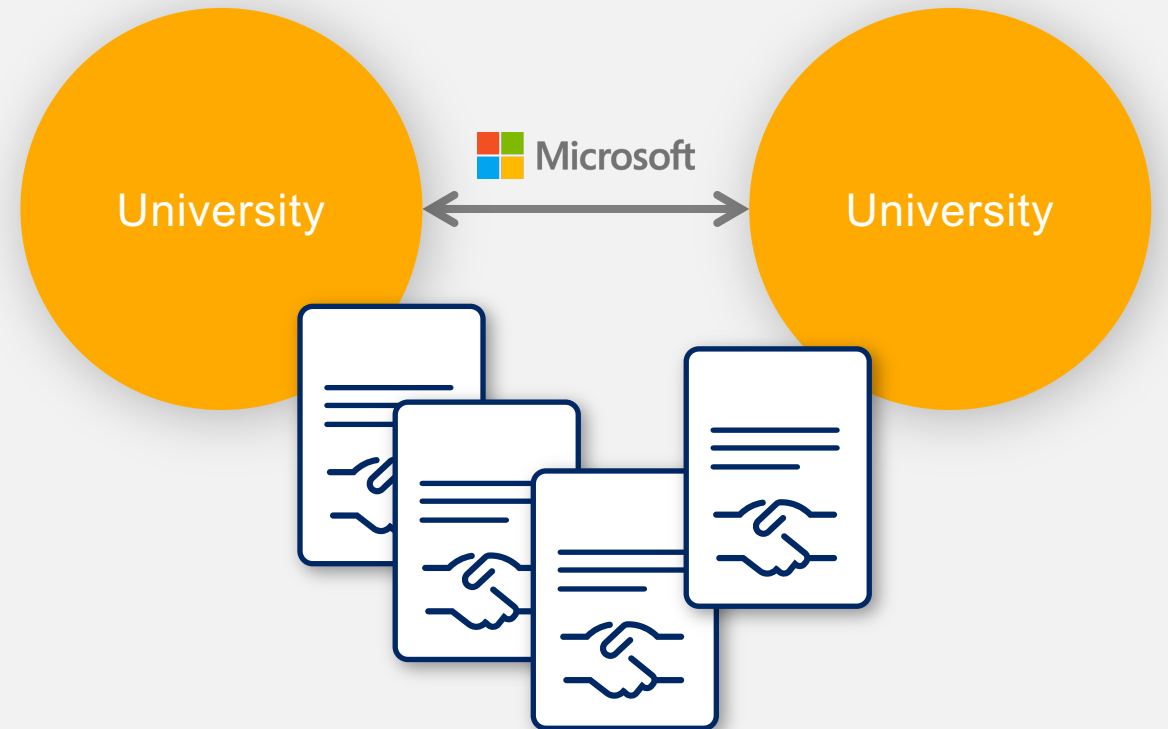
## Switch edu-ID

- 1 Contract
- CH/ EU / International connection
- Collaboration, data exchange, resource/tool sharing

Switch

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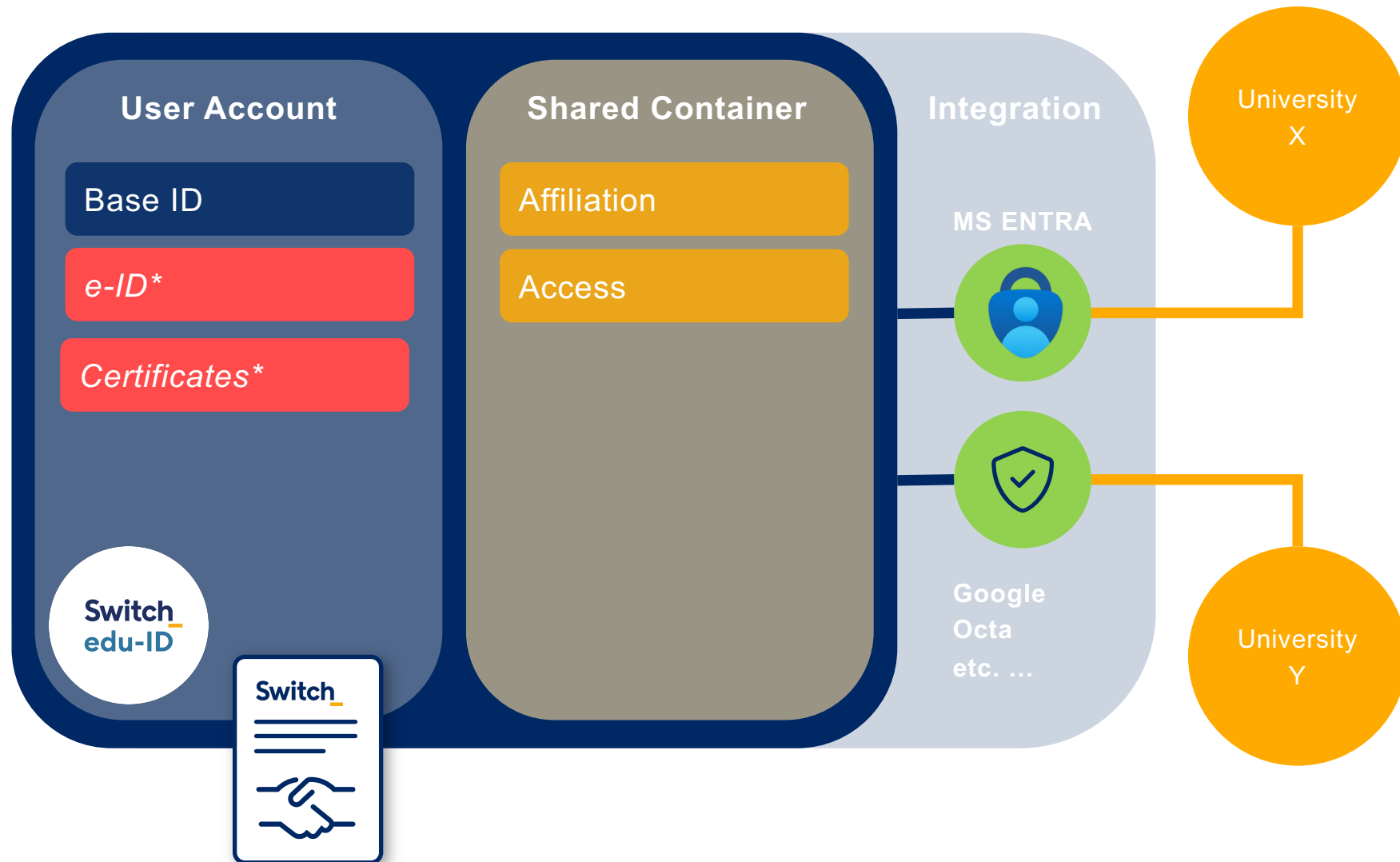
# Bilateral



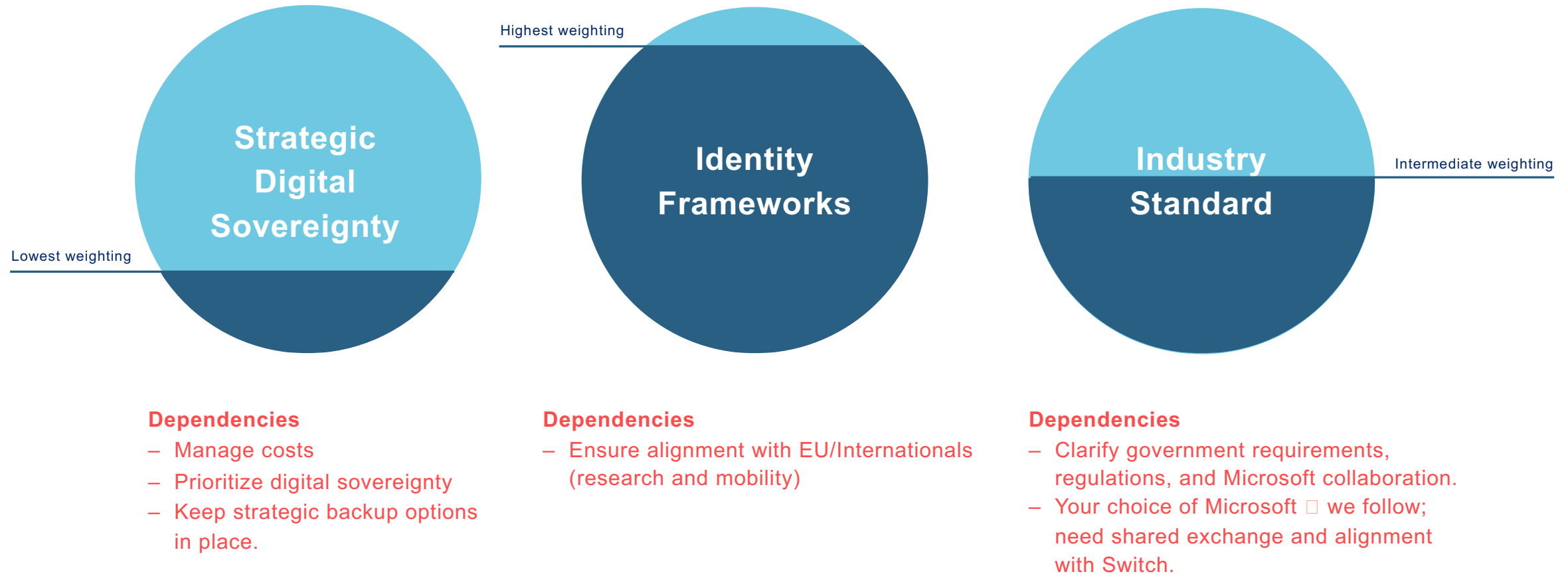
## Microsoft Suite

- Individual clarification with each university separately (B2B)
- Multiple Contracts

# Industry Standard Integration



# Weighting / Dependencies



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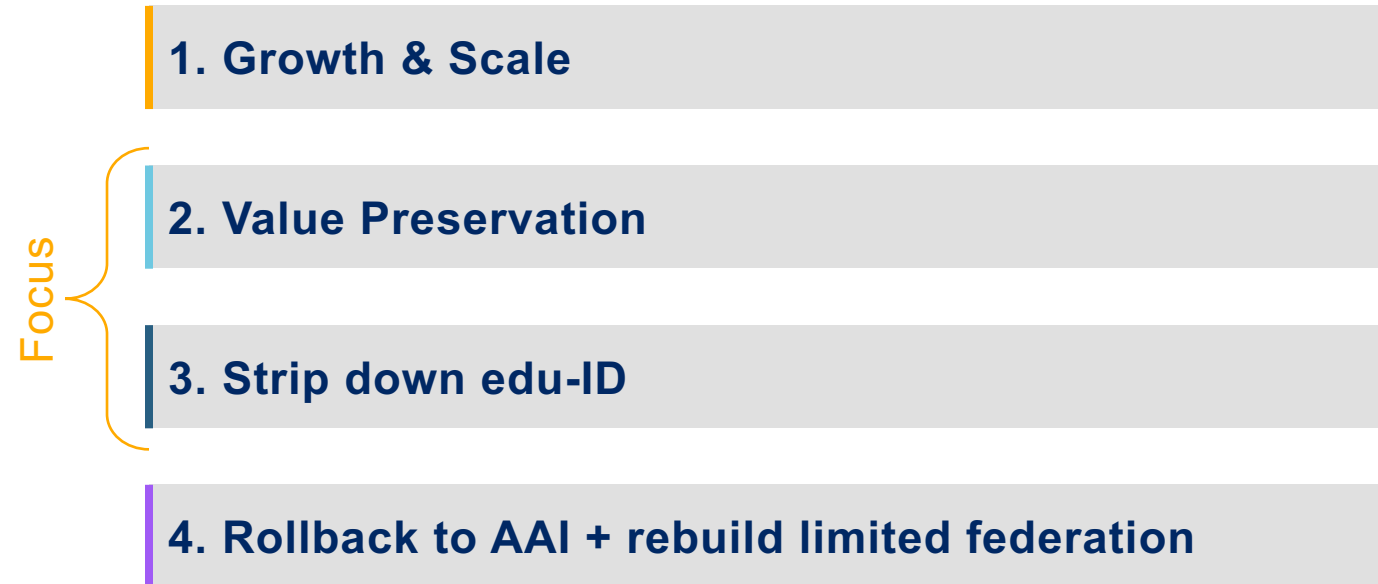


# 4 main financial scenarios identified

We identified 4 main possible financial scenarios, by using the 3 levers / financing principles available:

- Cost reduction
- Increase of tariffs/prices
- Discontinuation of services

The Advisory Board recommended to focus on scenarios 2 & 3, so we'll detail these ones further.



# Switch edu-ID value propositions

- in all scenarios
- at risk in scenario 3, lost in 4
- lost in scenario 4

## ● Lifelong identity

- – Returning users are easily recognized, helping organizational onboarding
- – Efficient and low-cost identity management for short education episodes (e.g. continued education)

## ● Trust, data protection, digital sovereignty

- – Community-governed service ecosystem ● with digitally sovereign central identity platform
- – Access to the emerging Swiss E-ID without integration work for universities
- – Offering a backup scenario for a sovereign authentication

## ● Seamless access and enabling collaboration

- – Low-effort sharing of resources with other universities (nationally and internationally)
- – Collaboration with third parties without organizational onboarding

## ● International compatibility without integration work for universities

- – Access to 3995 service providers in 84 federations worldwide (via eduGAIN/GÉANT as of 6 May 2026)
- – Access to research projects (EU flagship projects like EOSC) & mobility services (e.g. ERASMUS+)

## ● Pooling of efforts

- – Centralizing IT-systems required for federation purposes (extra IdP or proxies)
- – Shielding universities from exposure to external changes (e.g. protocol changes, new requirements)

# Scenario overview

## 1. Growth & Scale

Increase investments today to keep innovating and build a strong future proof solution



## 2. Value Preservation

Keep current FTE and budget. Increase tariff and/or prices to cover costs.



## 3. Strip down edu-ID

Reduce edu-ID services. Reduce costs to the current level of funding.

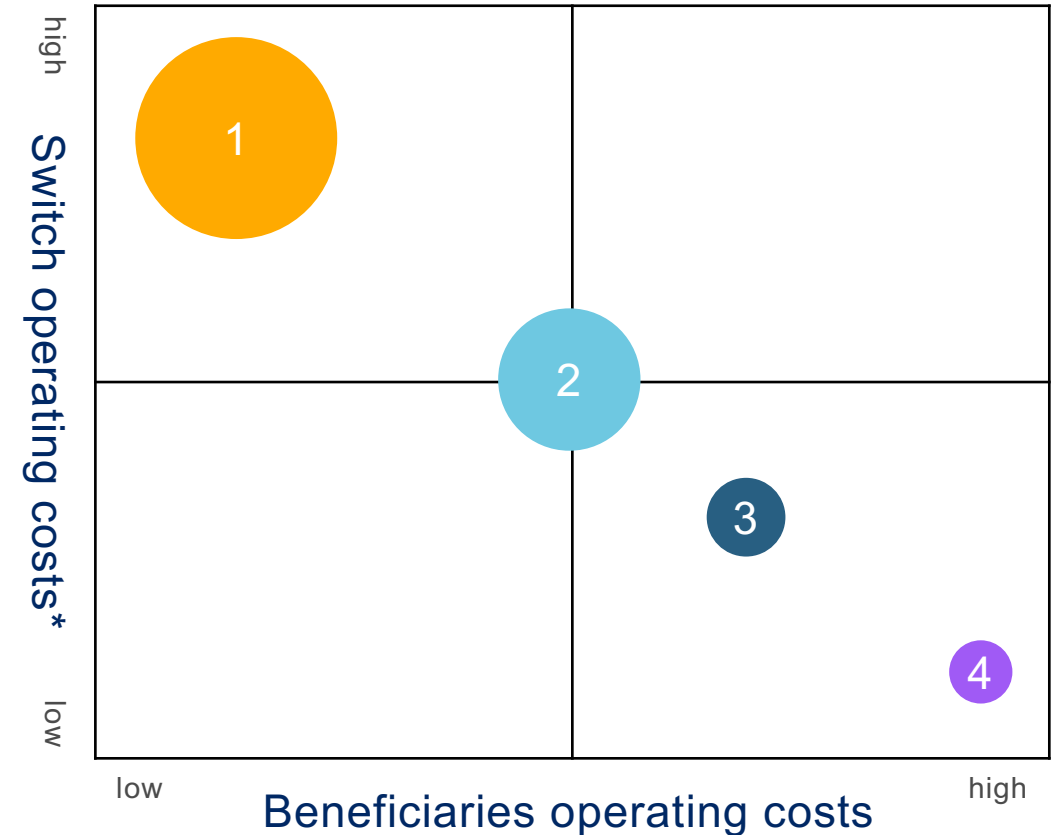


## 4. Rollback to AAI & rebuild limited federation

Roll back to AAI only functionalities



Bubble sizes: value provided by the solution



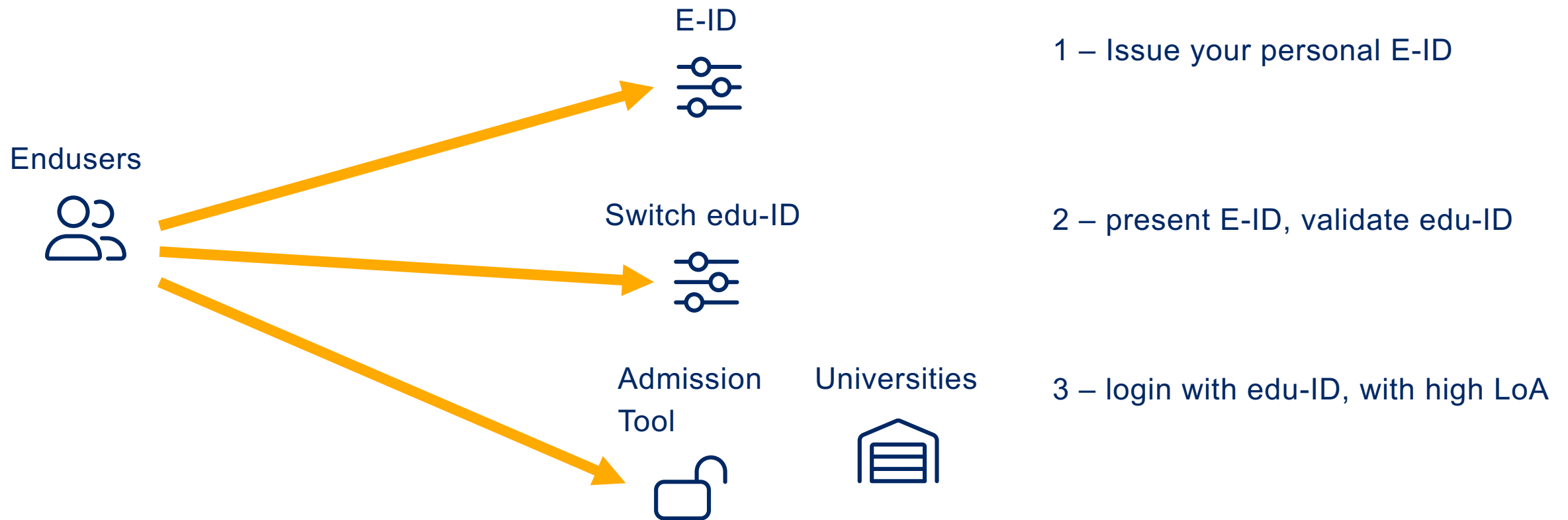
\*: estimation, compared to 2026 budget

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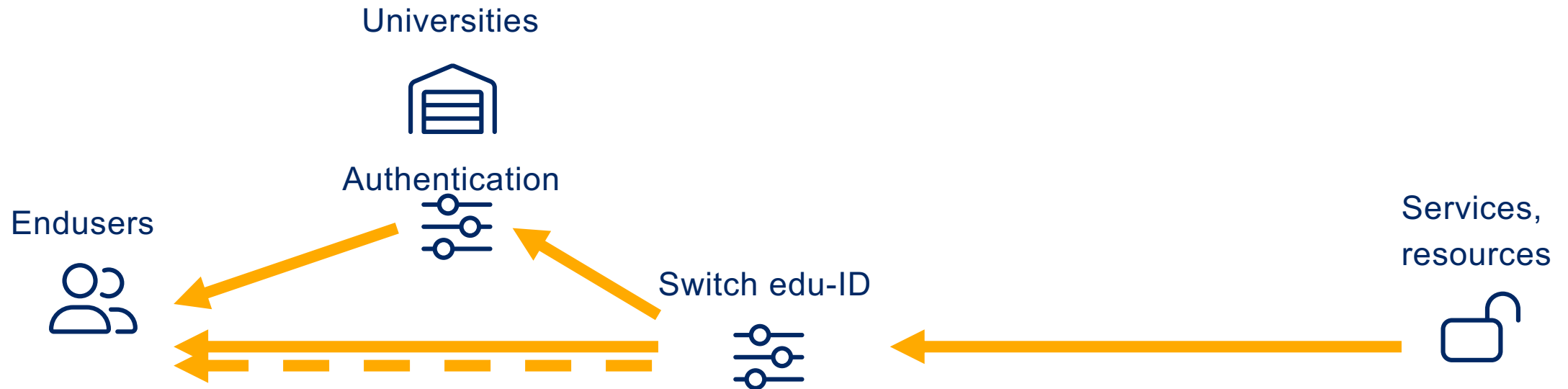
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# Short term «Rethink» action 1: integrate E-ID



# Short term «Rethink» action 2: externalise authentication



Selection of financial scenario pending ...

To be continued ...

Switch

