



# e-ID at work

Putting the Sultanate of Oman in the front line of eGovernment implementation

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### > The context

With a population of 2.9 million, the Sultanate of Oman has seen rapid economic and social development in the past three decades. In October 2002, the Sultanate and the Royal Omani Police (ROP) launched a project to deploy a smart card-based national ID program for its people.

The core objectives were to modernize the National Registry System (NRS), simplify and speed up administrative processes, provide better qualitative public services to Omani citizens and residents, promote the use of IT technology, provide better Homeland Security and pave the way to e-Government services.



### > The challenges

The first challenge was to build a National Registry System - a central population repository with data collected from different databases and to link it to twelve enrolment and issuance centers spread throughout the country.

Next, the ROP needed to select a technology versatile and open enough to allow for future upgrades, which would give the secure

e-ID document a longer lifespan and eliminate the need to issue a new card every time a citizen's personal data changed.

Lastly, the chosen partner had to comply with an ambitious time plan that aimed for issuance of the first e-ID card early 2004 with nationwide rollout in the summer of the very same year.

### > The solution

The ROP appointed Gemalto to provide consultancy, project management and integration services as well as software and the delivery of highly secure ID cards.

The Sultanate has invested in a modern system that uses open Java Card technology, in order to deliver a versatile e-ID solution that can easily accommodate future eGovernment applications.

Omani citizens and residents securely store their personal credentials on the cards, including name, address, digital photo and fingerprints. The national ID card provides secure access to three main applications that include identity, driver's license and border control.

### > The results

Oman's national e-ID card program is the first smart card-based eGovernment system to be deployed in the Middle East.

The first phase of the e-ID program that began in January 2004 has enabled more than 1.2 million Omani citizens and residents to benefit from a secure and convenient identification means that stores personal credentials. The e-ID cards also include biometric recognition that allows for verification by portable terminals and automatic electronic validation, for example, at airport immigration checkpoints.

**The national ID card provides secure access to three main applications that include identity, driver's license and border control.**

Through the new National Registration System, authorities can now register details for each Omani and resident in a single centralized database. Data is collected in real-time in 12 regional offices where each citizen can receive their ID document in less than 30 minutes.

Gemalto also delivered an extensive training and skills transfer program to the Royal Omani Police force to support them in managing their e-ID program.

### > Future

In September 2006, the Sultanate of Oman announced its decision to implement the second phase of the country's national e-ID program. In this phase, Gemalto was appointed to update the current National Registry System and upgrade e-ID cards to enable the Sultanate of Oman to provide faster and more secure public services to its population. The program involves over 2.5 million national secure ID cards.

This new step is one aspect of the ambitious eOman initiative. It outlines the strategy for improving the delivery of public services and puts the Sultanate of Oman in the front line of eGovernment development.

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