

Moroccan biometric passport

||||| The first biometric ePassport to be issued in Africa



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With a population of nearly 34 million, the Moroccan economy is characterized by free market practices and encourages private and public investments from local and foreign companies. Under King Mohammed VI's reign, economic policies introduced have achieved continued growth and low inflation. Steady progress has also been made in recent years to improve financial sector performance and develop the services and industrial sectors.

A new era in travel document security

In 2008, the Ministry of Interior of the Kingdom of Morocco launched an ambitious project in order to upgrade and modernize the Moroccan passport. Actually, the former issuance process for passports was considered as out-dated. Decentralized personalization performed at prefecture level relied on manual entry of data using a pre-printed passport booklet that was then laminated.

Key players of the project were the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation and Bank Al-Maghrib (the Central Bank of Morocco, of which Dar As-Sikkah division has been manufacturing and issuing passports since 1989).

Demonstrating Bank Al Maghrib's firm and ongoing commitment to modernization and innovation, authorities decided to introduce a next-generation biometric passport. The country had previously introduced eID cards and electronic driver's licenses and registration.

Forming a consortium with local partner Netopia, Gemalto won contracts for the supply of ePassport inlays and covers and an enrollment solution in December 2008, followed by a contract for an issuance and personalization solution



The ministry of Interior's goal

To deploy an end-to-end solution for the enrollment and issuance of EAC-enabled ePassports in less than one year's time

The Gemalto solution

The end-to-end ePassport enrollment and personalization solution for Bank Al Maghrib comprises:

- > Sealys eTravel Inlay & Sealys eCover
- > Sealys eTravel Operating System
- > Coesys Issuance
- > Coesys Enrolment

Quick facts on the Moroccan ePassport

- > 1.5 million enrollments per year
- > 83 prefectures and provinces
- > 125 embassies and consulates

in January 2009. The challenge lay in significantly enhancing travel document security by adopting ICAO's highest standard—Extended Access Control (EAC)—as stipulated by Bank Al Maghrib's tender specifications. Morocco's new ePassport is the first outside the European Union to feature the EAC mechanism.

From paper to biometric in less than one year

In addition to raising the bar on travel document security, the Moroccan government set an ambitious one-year time frame for rollout of the complete solution. Working in close collaboration with the Bank Al Maghrib personnel who were to take over production following their training, the Gemalto-Netopia consortium completely re-engineered an end-to-end issuance procedure incorporating the very latest digital security technologies and processes.

To remedy the stock management and security issues posed by the supply of preprinted booklets to multiple locations, centralized production and personalization were instituted at the national printing facility in Rabat. Personnel training and provision of ongoing maintenance services accompanied installation and deployment of the Coesys Issuance personalization solution.

Transferring expertise to partner Netopia Gemalto also installed and deployed the Coesys Enrollment solution designed to gather citizen details and data. Intervening at every stage of issuance—from data gathering to data entry, application processing and ePassport printing—the Gemalto-Netopia consortium fulfilled each of the three contracts by December 15th, 2009, well within the one-year time frame.

An all-new vocation for Bank Al Maghrib personnel

State-of-the-art facilities measuring 4400 m², complete with production center and a high-security vault, were built expressly to house the brand-new production line equipment. This showcase for Bank Al Maghrib's compelling new technology offers a fitting metaphor for the tremendous change the national printer has undergone since introduction of Morocco's ePassport.

No longer have mere printers of blank passport booklets, Bank Al Maghrib personnel now oversee all stages of production resulting in the finished passport. Their skilled operation of systems and machinery governs tasks ranging from the stitching of electronic covers to personalization of the highly sophisticated travel document, which incorporates multiple visual and logical security features.

Faster ePassport application and issuance procedures for end-user convenience

Morocco's 34 million citizens can apply for an ePassport that is processed in very short delay. The issuance program's dedicated web portal enables applications to be assembled ahead of time, while bar-coded forms significantly expedite processing at each phase of issuance.

Citizens already in possession of an eID card need not have their fingerprints taken, as these centrally stored data can be transferred to the individual's ePassport. The contactless chip also stores descriptive data, a digitized passport photo and two fingerprints.

An issuance pilot program started in December 2009 was expanded to 83 prefectures and provinces and 125 embassies and consulates in

An online "passport office" open 24/7

Moroccan citizens can now apply for a passport anytime, anywhere. Launched in tandem with the new enrollment program, a web portal outlining issuance requirements takes applicants through the procedure step by step, from the comfort of their keyboard. Once proof of identity has been gathered, the applicant can fill in an online form to print and submit in person at the prefecture. Downloadable forms for passports and temporary passports can also print for handwritten completion. A PDF file describes accepted photo formats, while a convenient tracking function enables applicants to trace the various stages of processing. <http://www.passeport.ma/>

April 2010. According to projections, the new ePassport will be issued at a rate of approximately 1.5 million per year. Gemalto's initial contract for the

supply of inlays and covers is for a period of three years.

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