eGovernment transformed with Mobile ID

Case Study Oman

Oman's national electronic ID card program is the first smart card-based eGovernment system to be deployed in the Middle East. Its first phase, which began in January 2004, has enabled more than 1.2 million Omani citizens and residents to benefit from a secure and convenient means of identification that stores personal credentials. The second phase involved combining this high security with use of a cell phone. Now, Gemalto LinqUs Mobile ID expands the possibilities still further

The Middle East's first eGovernment system, thanks to Mobile ID

The Sultanate of Oman at the forefront of eGovernment

With a population of 2.9 million, the Sultanate of Oman has seen rapid economic and social development in the last three decades. In October 2002, the state and the Royal Omani Police 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, simplify and speed up administrative processes, provide higher-quality public services to Oman's citizens and residents, promote the use of information technology, provide better internal security, and pave the way for eGovernment services on cell phones.

Mobile ID enhancing the eID card

Complementing the national electronic ID card, the mobile PKI SIM card adds true mobility for eGovernment services. Services can now be accessed from anywhere with the SIM-based Mobile ID – providing truly safe and convenient authentication for eGovernment.

Oman's Information Technology Authority

A PKI-based system helps to make online transactions secure. The system's PKI infrastructure, set up in 2013, enables multi-channel access to eGovernment services at the highest identity assurance level (level 4). It addresses the public sector need for secure eGovernment services, enables convenient authentication for a vast array of sectors, and supports the nation's digital transformation program.

Recognizing that not everyone has the same proficiency with technology, the Information Technology Authority (ITA) has taken a citizen-centered approach with a solution that is as easy to use as the text message. Omani users can simply respond to authentication and authorization requests sent to their cell phone with a no-fuss secret code to make secure connections to services and to sign documents and authorize electronic transactions.

This Mobile ID application is tied in with the national ID system and Oman's Civil Register. The national ID provides unique and strong evidence of the subscriber's identity, bringing trust to Oman's overall eServices program while allowing convenient user registration for the Mobile ID service at the same time.
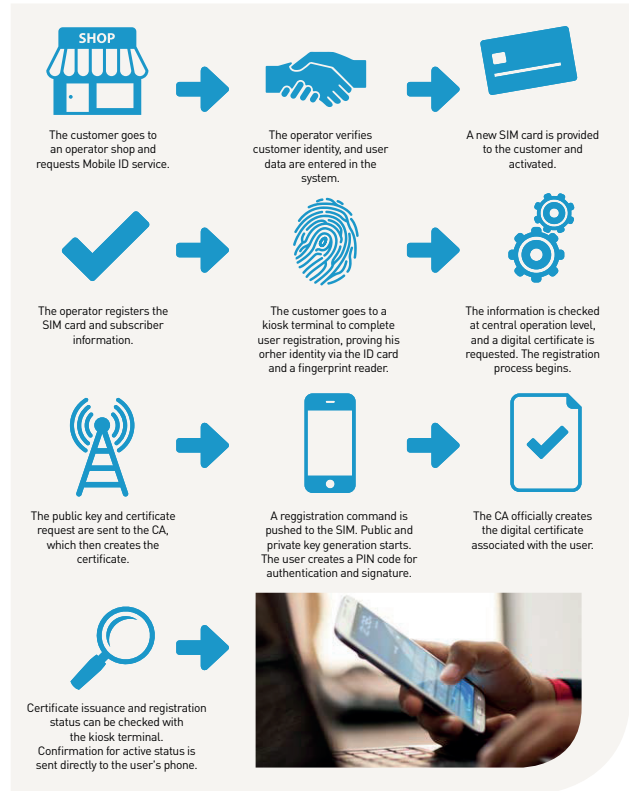
User-friendly connectivity

The ITA has taken a citizen-centered approach: any citizen can easily register for the solution and use it with a mobile device. People in Oman are just a few clicks from registering and using Mobile ID to access eGovernment services while they are on the move. Mobile ID transforms day-to-day use of these services, giving freedom of access to services at anytime, anywhere.

New service providers

A new service provider has recently started to utilize Mobile ID: BankDhofar. One of the most rapidly growing banks in the Sultanate of Oman, BankDhofar has a strong presence in corporate and consumer banking, treasury work, and project financing. BankDhofar has entered into an agreement with the Information Technology Authority (ITA) to use the authority's Mobile ID service for its Internet banking services. The introduction of Mobile ID will give BankDhofar customers an added measure of security, particularly if they are frequent users of the bank's online banking facility. The bank uses Mobile ID for customers' authentication to mobile banking services and and also offers possibilities for digital signing - for instance, to authorize money transfers.

Mobile ID promotes the use of high-security infrastructure endorsed by the Central Bank of Oman; supported by the ITA and mobile operators in Oman. Upon activation, customers receive a dedicated SIM card that allows them to perform secure login and transaction authentication from any national mobile network. And a Mobile ID signature has all the force of a hand-written signature.

BankDhofar has started to implement this service through its Internet banking portal: customers can sign in by logging in to the bank's Web site and then authenticate securely through their registered mobile devices.

The customer goes to an operator shop and requests Mobile ID service.

The operator verifies customer identity, and user data are entered in the system.

A new SIM card is provided to the customer and activated.

The operator registers the SIM card and subscriber information.

The customer goes to a kiosk terminal to complete user registration, proving his orher identity via the ID card and a fingerprint reader.

The information is checked at central operation level, and a digital certificate is requested. The registration process begins.

The public key and certificate request are sent to the CA, which then creates the certificate.

A reggistration command is pushed to the SIM. Public and private key generation starts. The user creates a PIN code for authentication and signature.

The CA officially creates the digital certificate associated with the user.

Certificate issuance and registration status can be checked with the kiosk terminal. Confirmation for active status is sent directly to the user's phone.

Key benefits of Mobile ID in Oman

01 Digital signature for authentication and transactions 24/7

02 Convenient use, with accessibility from any location

03 The high security of PKI-based eID systems,now in the mobile domain

04 Mobile ID that is available for everyone, at any time

05 eGovernment services that are now accessible on the go, leveraging eID

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