HID Designs Kingdom of Bahrain's New ePassport Solution to Reflect Its Rich Culture

Located in the Arabian Gulf, the Kingdom of Bahrain is an island country consisting of several islands and islets that are popular travel destinations in the region. With a population of almost 1.6 million people, the country is an important financial hub for the region and a popular tourist destination due to its historical and ancient sites, as well as thriving art and food scene.

CHALLENGE

Bahrain needed to modernize its current travel identity infrastructure and help its citizens have safer and better travel experiences.

Upgrading the existing machine-readable passport (MRP) system to a modern ePassport would require a comprehensive solution for enrollment, adjudication, personalization and issuance of identity documents.

To help in its passport modernization journey, Bahrain's Ministry of Interior, Nationality, Passports and Residence Affairs looked to HID's proven expertise.

SOLUTION

Bahrain worked with HID's award-winning design team — which has won various awards for the physical and digital identity solutions provided to Estonia, Malta, Tanzania, Ireland and Argentina — to develop a robust, end-to-end ePassport solution.

HID's team went through an extensive workshop with Bahrain's officials to determine the new design reflecting every aspect of the country's rich culture. Bahrain's ePassport visa pages feature ten distinct designs, each highlighting a different aspect of the Bahrani culture and history such as the rich sea life, Formula One racing and Arabian horses. It is also the first passport in the world to incorporate a hashtag, #teambahrain.

The polycarbonate datapage includes market-leading security features — HID Mirage and HID Safelink — in addition to a color portrait, which aligns with the current industry trend for identity documents.

HID Mirage is a window-based security feature that uses negative laser engraving and combines five layers of security to protect against forgery and counterfeiting at a higher standard.

HID Safelink secures the structure of the datapage's hinge and window(s), providing optimal resistance to datapage replacement attempts or attacks. It consists of a continuous ultraviolet (UV) print pattern that runs through the entire datapage construction, appearing in and augmenting any window features in the main body of the datapage, even those already containing security mechanisms.

Encrypted biographical and biometric data is stored on a chip that runs HID's SOMA chip operating system, making the passport more secure and more accepted worldwide.

SOMA integrates with HID Integrale, a software management platform that supports issuance and verification systems for ePassports. The software securely manages the data captured from citizens at enrollment through the full application cycle, including the adjudication and quality control processes. Once the application is approved, HID Integrale manages the physical and electronic personalization of the passport, including the encryption of the electronic data via the Integrale PKI solution, which also allows the government to manage the keys through the International Civil Aviation Organization's (ICAO) central repository.

"We are proud of the collaboration with HID that resulted in an outstanding ePassport that embodies the spirit of team Bahrain."

His Excellency Sheik Hisham bin Abdulrahman Al Khalifa,
Undersecretary of the Ministry of Interior for Nationality, Passport & Residence Affairs

Solutions

- HID Integrale™
- HID® SOMA™
- HID Mirage™
- HID SafeLink

RESULT

Thanks to HID's expertise, Bahrain has been able to underpin passport applications more efficiently, as well as enroll, personalize, issue and verify citizens' data more securely and effectively.

The ePassport has facilitated visa applications for Bahraini travelers, simplifying the immigration process and enabling the use of automated border control systems, such as eGates, to make the experience for travelers coming in and out of countries easier and more secure.

Additionally, with the new ePassport deployment, Bahrain has been able to join the ICAO Public Key Directory (PKD) group of 180 countries that can access and read the data on passport chips. Being part of ICAO PKD allows Bahrani citizens to pass border control quickly through automated border control systems (ABC), and potentially reduces the number of countries for which they need a visa to visit.

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