

Mühlbauer's Government Solutions for Mozambique

This month, in the *ID & Secure Document News™* case study series, we take a look behind the scenes at what is really going on in Mühlbauer's project to deliver an eGovernment document issuing and border management system to the Republic of Mozambique.



Mozambique is a country located in Southern Africa bordered by the Indian Ocean to the east, Tanzania to the north, Malawi and Zambia to the northwest, Zimbabwe to the west, and Eswatini and South Africa to the southwest. The agriculture industry employs more than 80% of the labour force and provides livelihoods to the vast majority of over 23 million inhabitants. Mozambique is reported to have the fourth largest reserves of natural gas in the world and is hoping to benefit from the growth of tourism in Africa.

Project scope

In 2018, the authorities of Mozambique awarded a concession to Mühlbauer with a contract period of seven years on the basis of a public-private partnership (PPP) model. The project's scope is to deliver, distribute, install and ramp-up a modern system for issuing multiple types of identification documents for citizens and residents. The project also includes a border crossing and visa solution, including extensive staff training and know-how transfer.

According to Mr. Matthias Karl Köhler, Vice President *TECURITY®*, which is the Mühlbauer business unit that handles government projects, 'the project required a swift and efficient execution to meet the tight project timelines set by the government of Mozambique. From contract signature, it took Mühlbauer six months to implement the ID/ePassport issuance solution and 12 months to implement the entire project.'

To give some idea of the scale of the project, the management systems were distributed nationwide to 12 provinces and 177 districts, to all 13 airports, to 31 land, river and sea borders and to 45 embassies and consulates worldwide.

The system operates online and offline (depending on network availability) and has tight IT security standards regarding data security, data transfer and data loss.

The system consists of four independently operable databases for four independent authorities (citizen data, foreigner data, travel documents and border management) which are all interlinked and interoperable for national security and information purposes. To date, 800 people have been trained in all aspects of maintenance and operation of the system.

In 2018, Mühlbauer established its own business location in the capital Maputo, staffed with 60 employees, to handle contract delivery and ongoing technical support and training.

ID and travel documents

On a nationwide basis, the government issues biometric national ID cards and electronic travel documents, as well as biometric emergency travel documents for all citizens of Mozambique. In embassies and consulates, the issuance of travel documents, ID cards and emergency documents for Mozambique nationals is also supported.

For visitors, biometric visa documents can be issued at all airports and border posts, as well as in consulates and embassies. Furthermore, resident alien cards and biometric emergency travel documents for foreigners as well as United Nation travel documents are produced.

Mühlbauer's approach to document redesign was one of evolution rather than revolution. 'We maintained the colour scheme of the previous issue of the passport and respected the national identity of the country – using the coat of arms and other national symbols as well as colours of the Mozambican flag', Mr Köhler explained. 'But we pushed through a major technology upgrade, changing the material used for the data page from paper to polycarbonate, and introduced an eCover to the document.'



Border management system

As part of the contract obligations, Mühlbauer took over the running of the country's national eVisa and border management solution, along with installing and ramping up the system for issuing ID and travel documents to citizens from within and outside the country.

Apart from design, delivery, distribution, installation and ramp-up of the various systems, the project scope also covers extensive consultancy, technical assistance and training of the customer's organisation and workforce.

'Working with the Republic of Mozambique, Mühlbauer has been able to provide a border management and visa system that supports best-practice immigration processes at all border control points', commented Mr Köhler.

To overcome the distraction to border officers of page-turning and scrolling in search of relevant data, Mühlbauer developed border management software that displays all relevant data on a single page. Moreover, by means of a document reader, the border management software can perform a full document check of every passenger's travel document.

At the same time, in order to reliably determine the authenticity of a travel document's security features, the software accesses a database with the relevant security features for most ICAO-compliant travel documents and matches the document's security data with the data stored. Automatic stop lists and entry/exit checks with overstay handling support the Mozambican border officers in the detection of fraud or suspects. The system automatically alerts the authorities to any known undesirables attempting to enter or exit Mozambique, enabling appropriate action to be taken promptly.

The border management and visa system was officially put into operation on 22 May 2019 at Maputo International Airport, the country's biggest airport.

This marks a milestone in boosting legitimate entry and exit to Mozambique, preventing illegal immigration or identity fraud and, at the same time, tightening security measures at border crossings. Mozambican government authorities and airport operators now have control over the steadily growing number of travelers, while at the same time striking the right balance between open yet fully secure borders.