



CASE STUDY

Gemalto Iris Recognition Solution Speeds Immigration in Colombia

Anyone who's ever travelled outside of his or her country knows the drill: after a long and stressful day of travel, you arrive home only to endure another long wait in the airport immigration queue. Such is the case for Colombian citizens age 12 and over, who comprise up to 70% of airport arrivals at El Dorado International Airport in Bogota. For the majority of travelers passing through the airport, the first stop after landing is re-entry processing resulting in congestion, bottlenecks and frustration. This is a huge challenge for travel-weary citizens as well as airport and immigration personnel, whose constant battle is to maintain safety and equanimity while processing each citizen as quickly as possible.

How can we uphold safety, security and peace while speeding immigration?

As globalization continues its unstoppable forward progression, airports and customs authorities around the world share a common goal: maintaining or increasing safety, security and peace while simultaneously simplifying and speeding up immigration and re-entry for international travelers. Balancing these two seemingly opposite goals has posed a long time challenge. The good news is innovative digital solutions are providing powerful and pivotal solutions to even the scales and meet urgent goals.

For several years, Gemalto has supported Migración Colombia, the customs and migratory control agency of Colombia, delivering state of the art secure document authentication, biometric solutions and software integration for their border operations. When the agency wanted a new solution to improve and speed airport immigration at El Dorado International, it turned to its trusted partner for support.



Speeding immigration in the blink of an eye

Gemalto and Colombian technology partner INCOMELEC SAS worked together, alongside Migración Colombia to transform airport immigration and border crossing for Migración Colombia by leveraging biometric iris verification technology. They developed a new Automated Border Control (ABC) solution that speeds identity authentication and significantly reduces immigration bottlenecks at El Dorado while maintaining strong security control for each traveler. The solution is known locally as "BIOMIG" and it verifies personal identity through iris recognition technology, which is renowned for accuracy, easy of use and scalability. The human iris encompasses complex, unique and stable patterns that can be identified from a distance to accurately verify an individual's identity.

The Eyes Have It - Gemalto Iris Recognition Solution Speeds Immigration in Colombia

How does it work?

The Gemalto ABC Iris solution for Migración Colombia integrates a highly intuitive iris recognition terminal by CMITech that allows swift long-range iris capture from 35 to 45 centimeters away. This eliminates physical contact with the scanning terminal and improves comfort, speed and ease of use for users.

To participate in the program, Colombian citizens age 12 and older visit one of 30 BIOMIG enrollment stations positioned throughout the airport as they exit the country. In less than one minute, they securely register their unique iris scan with Colombia's Border Management System (BMS). Each traveler's data is instantly verified and their identity is compared against databases from Interpol, police records and other government authorities. This ensures that each individual is clear of any issues with official agencies and is free to cross international borders. This is an essential step in complying with the security requirements of the migration authority. This verification can be previously made using API (Advance Passenger Information) or it can be made in real time.

When these travelers return to Colombia, they simply enter their national ID number on a touchscreen connected to an automated door barrier by Incomelec, SAS. After a quick glance at the iris reader terminal, the person's identity is authenticated via a secure digital process and once again compared against a variety of official government and police databases. In just moments, the individual's status is assessed and approved for re-entry, allowing the automatic doors to swing open. The BIOMIG system allows speedy entrance into the country while maintaining strictest security during the immigration process.



"The challenge with border control solutions is to minimize and simplify immigration procedures while improving ease, speed and convenience for end users - without compromising security. This is exactly what the ABC Iris solution achieves," said Francesc Ortado, Sales Director for Government Programs Latin America at Gemalto. "Colombian citizens can now benefit from strong biometric security within a trusted environment."

Easy as ABC

The program began as a two-week pilot program and it was comprised of 30 BIOMIG enrollment stations, 10 automatic doors and iris scanners, a monitoring station and a secure server plus training and professional services. In addition, Gemalto provided systems integration and the solution itself including hardware integration and biometrics. The successful pilot program marked the first time iris recognition technology was used in Latin America for border control.

No time to wait, security maintained

The Automated Border Control solution was greatly successful in mitigating re-entry challenges for citizens while complying with Colombia's stringent border control security requirements. For travelers, this means fewer lines, faster re-entry, and increased satisfaction. During the two week trial, Colombian citizens returning home and using the BIOMIG system saved up to 30 minutes in the re-entry process. In addition, immigration personnel reported a significant drop in crowds and bottlenecks along with improved traveller and worker satisfaction. Based on the pilot program's success and positive reviews and results, Migración Colombia plans to expand the implementation at other airports and immigration centers throughout the nation.

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