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Ghana's e-Immigration solution
Controlling borders to shape a bright future

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Identity & Biometric Solutions

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Ranked among the world's top–ten fastest growing economies, Ghana has outstripped growth in African countries annually since 2008. Improving oil production and a stable political landscape leave the country poised to undergo even more explosive growth in 2013.

For a country with a population of 23 million and GDP of $16 billion, much is riding on the next phase of growth and development. The country authorities plan to mainstream and promote ICT in the national life, part of the eGhana initiative is to target four governance institutions—eParliament, eProcurement, eJustice and eImmigration.

To steward the country's booming economy through the years ahead, the government has moved migration to the top of its agenda. Ghana's migration profile continues to evolve as it becomes an increasingly desirable destination for business investment and tourism.

Ghana is now in the process of devising its first national migration policy.

A complete overhaul of current immigration procedures

The issue of migration has never been more at the forefront. Embarkation and disembarkation have ncreased incrementally in Ghana in the last five years. Unless Ghana maintains the required capacity to meet current and projected demand, the country's staff, facilities and infrastructure risk becoming overstretched.

Ghana's current immigration system is operated manually using a system that is neither centralized, nor interconnected. The government will have to resolve all three issues if it is to make good on its mandate to manage migration. Infrastructures will have to be modernized and mainstreamed to cope with demand in the years to come.

Ghana immigration service

> Ghana Immigration Service (GIS) aspires to gain recognition as a positive force in regional and international migration and as a leader in the deployment of innovative technologies. The agency will play a central role in both the development of a national migration policy and subsequent implementation. GIS aims to devise effective measures that will serve as a template for modernization in other African nations.

Goals to reach to maintain control over Ghana's borders

The government aims to build a stronger country by operating fair but firm immigration controls that regulate and facilitate the movement of people through its borders. The idea is to create a positive sign to generate trust in both the travelling public and investors and to show that Ghana is a safe place in which both tourism and investments can thrive. New measures will be also required to support visitors and migrants to Ghana and welcome back an increasingly homeward-bound diaspora.

The goals of the new system are to enhance service delivery to travelers and improve both operational and management reporting. Border intelligence is key to providing information and statistics to governmental authorities. The system will be interconnected with external stakeholders like INTERPOL and APIS (Advanced Passenger Information System) and with country's authorities such as the National Identity Agency.

Modernization of all ICT will therefore be necessary to enable government agencies to collect and share reliable, timely data. Immigration services will need to be delivered in a broader range of circumstances, including locations poorly serviced up to now, such as the offshore oil industry environment.

E-immigration: part of the overall eGhana project

The Ghanaian government is highly aware of the importance of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) to improving citizens' lives and streamlining government services. In 2006, the World Bank approved $40 million in funding to support the eGhana Project, which forms a key framework for growth and employment. The policy's overall objective is to build a modern IT infrastructure that can support sustainable development by:

- Fostering an enabling environment for ICT sector growth
- Supporting local ICT businesses and IT-enabled services
- Promoting eGovernment applications and communications

Thales' solution

Recognizing the need to improve the security and efficiency of its existing, paper-based procedures, GIS turned to Thales for a centralized electronic border control solution. At the heart of this system lies biometric identification technology, which will enable the biometrics of all foreign nationals to be captured to facilitate information flow and tracking.

Selected for its robust design and the guaranteed reliability of Thales as a trusted provider, the solution will be deployed at two seaports and four border entries. Thales is acting as prime contractor and systems integrator for the entire project. Thales is to integrate the state-of-the-art visa and border management solution, providing transitional training and maintenance services.

Client benefits

As Ghana consolidates its place as a middle-income country, the government can count on GIS to fulfill its new mandate. The eImmigration solution is expected to promote and improve intelligence sharing, especially between GIS officials and other security agencies. In a single click, border management systems will supply GIS with comprehensive information while checking the validity and integrity of travel documents. Other overall benefits include:

Faster, more efficient services
- Expedited immigration processing of travelers at borders
- Faster, easier process to apply for visas upon arrival
- Automated border control entry and exit for registered citizens and travelers

Improved quality of service to the public
- Improved efficiency of citizen and foreign traveler services
- More efficient visa and permit processing with online application submission
- eGate registration for citizens and frequent foreign travelers

Vastly improved security
- Prevention of identity theft and fraud through biometric data capture
- Immigration tracking with detailed records of who enters and leaves
- Centralized design for speedy resolution of mission-critical issues

Key components of the Ghana E-immigration solution

- Fixed and mobile border management systems deployed in 6 main ports of entry
- Digital visa and permit application processing and issuing
- Implementation of an online portal for visa and permit requests
- Necessary datacenter and network upgrades
- 10 eGate systems for automated border control at Accra International Airport
- A robust centralized Automated Fingerprint Identification System (AFIS)

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