

The Faroe Islands – Creating a Future-Proof National e-ID



To better support a globally connected society, and a more diversified domestic business sector, the Faroese government is driving an ambitious digitalisation program. A key enabler is a state-of-the-art and eIDAS-compliant national e-ID, based on PrimeKey PKI.

Located halfway between Scotland and Iceland in the Northeast Atlantic, the Faroe Islands is a self-governing nation under the external sovereignty of the Kingdom of Denmark. This archipelago nation provides visitors with an idyllic escape, but there is more to the Faroe Islands than lush green valleys, imposing basalt cliffs and grand treeless moorlands. The Faroese economy is ranked amongst the highest in the world based on GDP per capita, with a growing business sector.

To support its growth, the Faroe Islands government initiated a digitalisation program in 2015, aiming to bring

the nation's digital maturity level to the global forefront. While the program includes a range of initiatives, the Faroese government considers the national e-ID to be the most important and complex component. The Faroese e-ID offers all citizens a single, secure authentication mechanism for all government services. In addition, 3rd party service providers such as banks, online merchants and more, can leverage the e-ID for secure authentication, stimulating digital innovation and increasing ease-of-use for the Faroe Islanders. But the Faroese government's ambition for its e-ID extends far beyond the nation's borders.

The Faroe Islands set the bar for the national e-ID on European standards, with a key criterion being that the national scheme had to be eIDAS compliant. This means the national e-ID will not only lower thresholds for domestic businesses to digitalise operations, it will also enable secure and seamless digital transactions across the whole European single market.

To deliver on the objectives for its national e-ID, the Faroese government needed a flexible, scalable and proven PKI solution. After a public tender, the Faroese government found PrimeKey EJBCA and SignServer to be the robust and battle-tried PKI solution they demanded, fulfilling the nation's rigorous requirements in areas such as ease-of-use, integration capabilities and out-of-the-box compliance.

"EJBCA is a modern software, easy to integrate and with an intuitive administration module. It has lived up to all our expectations serving as a core component of our eIDAS-compliant e-ID."

- Janus Helgi Læarsson, IT architect, The Faroe Islands National Digitalisation Program

Key characteristics of the Faroese e-ID architecture is modularity, scalability and the ability to be extendable over time, with core PKI functions being handled by the PrimeKey EJBCA and SignServer.

Facts

Customer: The Faroese Government

Challenge: Establishing an eIDAS-compliant national e-ID

Solution: PrimeKey EJBCA Enterprise and SignServer Enterprise for Time Stamp Authority and XML signing

Benefits: A scalable and future-proof eIDAS-compliant e-ID

The development and integration process have so far been seamless and currently in a test and auditing phase, the goal is to go live with the Faroe Islands national e-ID in the second of half of 2020.

"Going forward is all about getting more service providers to leverage the system," says Janus Helgi Læarsson, IT architect with the Faroe Islands National Digitalisation Program. "Our goal is to join the European e-ID gateway system, so that our national e-ID can be used to access other national ID systems, and potentially other services abroad". Based on PrimeKey EJBCA and SignServer, the Faroese government can rest assured that the PKI and signing solution at the heart of their national e-ID solution will scale as usage grows, and new use cases appear.

About Digital Faroe Islands

The National Digitalisation Programme of the Faroe Islands was established in 2015 to digitalise services for citizens, industry and the public sector. The objective is to modernise welfare and public services and ultimately create competitiveness, growth and production capacity. The programme is divided into four individual projects: a Data Exchange Layer, Basic Data, Digital Services and an e-ID. Read more about the programme at www.talgildu.fo/english

About PrimeKey

PrimeKey Solutions AB is one of the world's leading companies for PKI solutions. PrimeKey has developed successful solutions, such as EJBCA Enterprise, SignServer Enterprise and PrimeKey PKI Appliance. PrimeKey is a pioneer in open source security software that provides businesses and organisations around the world with the ability to implement security solutions such as e-ID, e-Passports, authentication, digital signatures, unified digital identities and validation.