

# TALGILDU FØROYAR

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# A local digital solution for Faroese society

Digital Faroe Islands may sound like a bold project title, but the objective is precisely to digitalise the country. It launched nearly four years ago and aims to facilitate access to public and private services, as well as to save society money by enabling online access to public services and administration.

## FOUR MAIN COMPONENTS

Digital Faroe Islands is divided into: Digital ID, Service Portal, Communication Platform and Basic Data. The flagship Digital ID will allow individuals to access their digital services and data. The solution is intended for both public and private services, such as banking and insurance. An e-signature, as legally binding as your physical signature, is also in the pipeline.

Digital Faroe Islands is developing systems that are largely in line with international standards, meaning that a Faroese digital ID could, in time, enable access to services in Denmark and other EU countries. Very handy if you are moving.

The Service Portal will give you an overview of data held about you and your children: address, children, spouse, cars, etc. It will also be where you access public and private services like applying for study grants, public pensions, building permissions, banking and insurance. Everything centralised in one location.

The service is expected to launch in late 2019 or early 2020. It relies on Heldin the communication platform for secure transfer of data between local government, public bodies and companies, as well as Basic Data. This data encompasses basic information on the Faroe Islands its residents with

digitised population, company and land registers, as well as maps. The aim is to make data easily available for free to anyone entitled to use it, and thereby facilitate the development of new services.

## DIGITALISATION FOR EVERYONE

The goal is to get as many people on board as possible, though the Programme Director, Nicolai Mohr Balle, recognises that there is no use in forcing anyone to sign up.

“We think this product is so good, that it ought to sell itself. It is so much easier and more flexible than having to call or visit an office.”

He is aware, however, that going digital may be daunting for some. The team is looking for digital ambassadors, for example to the national pensioners’ association and trade unions, who would offer training and guidance on how to use these digital services.

Digital Faroe Islands is also very happy about its collaboration with MEGD, which represents users with disabilities. And the team is actively trying to pre-empt any challenges different user groups might face.

## MODERNISING SOCIETY

Digitalising a whole country is a major undertaking. But at Digital Faroe Islands they are convinced it is a step in the right direction with services that are more secure, more accurate and faster. Ultimately, for Nicolai Mohr Balle it is about underpinning democracy.

“By improving access to the data held about you,



your communication with public bodies becomes more transparent, this increases trust between the public and the authorities. You will be able to correct your own data more readily, and the solutions we are developing will make it possible to vote electronically in a few years.”

*But is it safe to have so much information about me in one place?*

“Security is the cornerstone of what we do. Though it may appear that way, the information is not all in one place. It is decentralised, meaning it is stored with the authorities responsible for them. When you log into the Service Portal with your ID the system uses the secure communication platform, Heldin, to collect all relevant information and display it as a whole,” explains Nicolai Mohr Balle.

After the first phase of the project launches, the next step will be expanding to healthcare and education. It is no easy feat to get all the stakeholders, national and local government, public institution and private companies, to work with each other on such a major project. The lofty goal of meeting international standards also made the task even more challenging than initially envisioned. The Programme Director compares it to “moving straight from Third Division to the Premiere League, but he is not daunted.

Nicolai Mohr Balle believes that by harnessing the potential of digital solutions, the Faroe Islands will become an even more advanced, competitive, and attractive place to live, work and do business. However, for this to happen both the public and private sectors must continually invest in developing new services for the shared platform developed by Digital Faroe Islands. □

## Main objectives of Digital Faroe Islands

- Enabling the public and companies to communicate and carry out their business with public bodies, for example through public and business portals
- Making public and private sector services available online
- Ensuring that public services and procedures are digitalised

## Overarching aims

- Modernising welfare and services available to the public in the Faroe Islands
- Creating the conditions for streamlining the public sector
- Fostering greater competitiveness, growth and production capacity

## Digital Faroe Islands

- A joint portal designed to make it easy, quick and secure to contact public and private services.
- Digital solutions are intended to promote streamlined, cost-effective administration.
- Communicating, buying and selling online should be safe and secure.
- Digital Faroe Islands aims to foster innovation and growth.
- A team of 12 work at Digital Faroe Islands.