

AN14060

How to use the PN76 family cryptographic features

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Application note

Document information

Information	Content
Keywords	Cryptography, MbedTLS, AES, GCM, PN7642, KeyStore
Abstract	Within this application note it is shown how to use the internally stored keys, in the PN7642 secure key store, with the mbedTLS APIs.



Revision history

Revision history

Rev	Date	Description
v.1.0	20230914	Initial version

1 Introduction

This document shows how to use the PN7642 cryptographic features, particularly AES, by using the provided SDK examples.

Within this document, only keys from the PN76s key store are used. The mbedTLS can also be used without using the internal keys of the key store, but this is considered to be straight-forward and not covered in here. Make sure to have the key store provisioned with at least one APP_MASTER_KEY or APP_FIXED_KEY, as the APP_ROOT_KEY cannot be used for cryptographic operations.

How to provision the key store is not covered in this document, and explained in another application note: [\[1\] AN13720](#)

The PN7642s cryptographic features are abstracted by ROM APIs (mbedTLS nsc API). All these APIs are described in the [\[2\] PN7642 NFC Controller User API Documentation](#). On top of these APIs, NXP has created an abstraction layer (mbedTLS Crypto) which wraps these APIs to make them MbedTLS compatible.

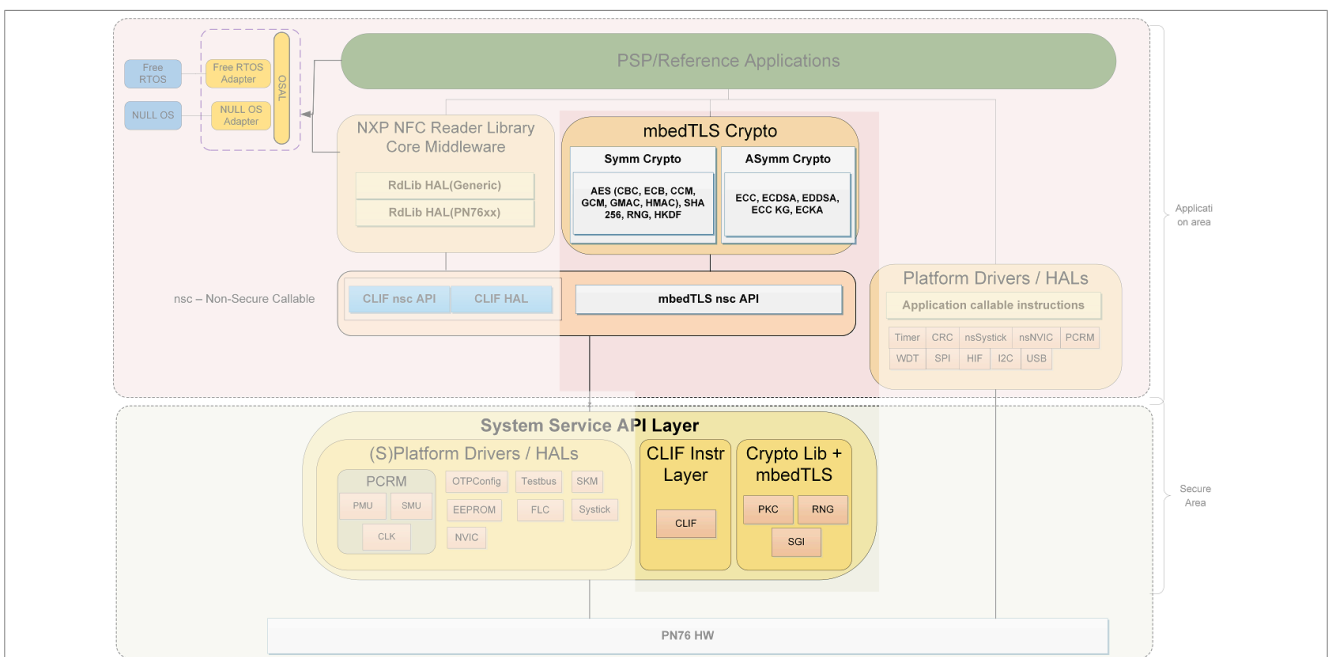


Figure 1. PN7642 system software architecture

Where to find the crypto interfaces in the [\[2\] PN7642 NFC Controller User API Documentation](#):

The screenshot shows the NXP PN7642 NFC Controller User API Documentation website. The page title is "PN7642 NFC Controller v02.01.00" and the subtitle is "PN7642 NFC Controller User API Documentation". The navigation menu includes "Main Page", "Modules", "Data Structures", and "Files". The left sidebar shows a tree view of the documentation structure, with "SYS Crypto Interfaces" highlighted in a red box. The main content area displays the "SYS Crypto Interfaces" section, which includes a list of modules: "SYS AES Interface", "SYS CMAC Interface", "SYS CRYPTO Interface", "SYS DES Interface", "SYS SHA Interface", "SYS ECC Interface", "SYS EDDSA Interface", and "SYS RSA Interface". Each module is followed by a brief description of the system service API's. Below the list is a "Detailed Description" section.

Figure 2. PN7642 User API documentation crypto interfaces

2 General usage

2.1 Initialization of modules

Before the crypto modules and the key store can be used, they have to be initialized. Initialization is done by the following APIs. The codeblocks show a snip of the "pn_mbedtls_demo" example.

Both methods calls must be successful for further operation.

API: phmbedcrypto_Init()

```

/*Initialize the crypto modules */
InitStatus = (PN76_Status_t)phmbedcrypto_Init();
if (InitStatus != PN76_STATUS_SUCCESS)
{
    PRINTF("Crypto initialization failure\r\n");
    while (1)
        ;
}

```

API: PN76_Sys_KeyStore_Init(&bKeyStoreStatus)

```

eKeyStoreStatus = PN76_Sys_KeyStore_Init(&bKeyStoreStatus);
/* bKeyStoreStatus 6th bit means fatal error. */
if ((eKeyStoreStatus != PN76_STATUS_SUCCESS) || ((bKeyStoreStatus & 0x40U) !=
0U))
{
    PRINTF("Crypto initialization error\r\n");
    while (1)
        ; /* if Failed Do not go further */
}

```

2.2 Context initialization

Before any crypto operation can be used, the context has to be initialized.

```

/*!
 * @brief      This function initializes the specified AES context.
 *
 *            It must be the first API called before using
 *            the context.
 * \note      Only 1 AES context is supported at any time. Use mbedtls_aes_free/
 *            mbedtls_ccm_free before initializing the next context.
 * \param ctx The AES context to initialize. This must not be \c NULL.
 */
void mbedtls_aes_init( mbedtls_aes_context *ctx );

```

Figure 3. mbedtls AES Init

The aes context as a member "key_index", which is very important, if a key of the key store shall be used. This variable, key_index, has to be set to the "KeyIndex" of the key to be used.

How to use the PN76 family cryptographic features

Default PN76xx KeyStore map The diagram below shows the keystore map on PN76xx device, after APP_ROOT_KEY (both 128-bit and 256-bit) are provisioned.

KeyIndex	KEY Data	Description		
00	APP_ROOT_KEY_128	128-bit APP_ROOT_KEY data	Keys stored in PN76xx Secure Key Store enclave. For storing 256-bit key, two KeyIndexes are used and must provide even numbered KeyIndex	
01		Free for APP_MASTER_KEY		
02	APP_ROOT_KEY_256	256-bit APP_ROOT_KEY data		
03	APP_ROOT_KEY_256	256-bit APP_ROOT_KEY data		
04	:	Free for APP_MASTER_KEY		
05	:	Free for APP_MASTER_KEY		
:	:	Free for APP_MASTER_KEY		
:	:	Free for APP_MASTER_KEY		
:	:	Free for APP_MASTER_KEY		
15	:	Free for APP_MASTER_KEY		
16	:	Free for APP_FIXED_KEY		Encrypted fixed keys stored in PN76xx Secure Flash. 128-bit or 256-bit key can be stored in one KeyIndex.
17	:	Free for APP_FIXED_KEY		
:	:	Free for APP_FIXED_KEY		
26	:	Free for APP_FIXED_KEY		
27	:	Free for APP_ASYMM_KEY		Encrypted Asymmetric keys stored in PN76xx Secure Flash. 256-bit or 384-bit key can be stored in one KeyIndex.
:	:	Free for APP_ASYMM_KEY		
33	:	Free for APP_ASYMM_KEY		

Figure 4. PN7642 key store map

```

mbedtls_aes_init(&ctx);
ctx.key_index = AES128_KEY_POS;
    
```

Figure 5. mbedtls AES context set key index

The member "key_index" of the context can be accessed and set by referencing to it by "ctx.key_index". Where "ctx" represents the name used by the declaration of the "mbedtls_aes_context" variable.

```

307 static int APP_AES_ECB(int mode)
308 {
309     mbedtls_aes_context ctx;
310     const uint8_t key[32] = {0}, src[16] = {0};
    
```

Figure 6. mbedtls context declaration

Note: Setting of "key_index" is crucial for further operations.

The same concept has to be applied wherever a key from the KeyStore shall be used. For using GCM, the context has to be initialized using the GCM init function:

```

mbedtls_gcm_init(&ctx);
ctx.key_index = AES128_KEY_POS;
    
```

Figure 7. AES GCM set key index in context

2.3 Set keys

To prepare the crypto modules for operation, the key has to be set. For this, the according API has to be used.

```

/*!
 * @brief      This function sets the encryption key.
 *
 * \param ctx  The AES context to which the key should be bound.
 *             It must be initialized.
 * \param key  The encryption key.
 *             This must be a readable buffer of size \p keybits bits.
 *             NULL if key stored in SKT is used
 * \param keybits  The size of data passed in bits. Valid options are:
 *                <ul><li>128 bits</li>
 *                <li>256 bits</li></ul>
 *
 * \return     \c 0 on success.
 * \return     #MBEDTLS_ERR_AES_INVALID_KEY_LENGTH on failure.
 * \return     #MBEDTLS_ERR_AES_BAD_INPUT_DATA on failure
 */
int mbedtls_aes_setkey_enc( mbedtls_aes_context *ctx, const unsigned char *key,
                           unsigned int keybits );

```

Figure 8. mbedtls set key encryption

To highlight is the second parameter "key". It shall be set to "NULL" if we want to use a key from the key store. The key to be used is determined by the variable "key_index" of the AES context.

The parameter "keybits" is set to the length of the key.

For encryption and decryption different keys can be used and a different "setkey" API must be used.

In the 'pn_mbedtls_demo' example the key input must be changed to **NULL** as showing in the following figures:

```

if (mode == MBEDTLS_AES_ENCRYPT)
{
    result = mbedtls_aes_setkey_enc(&ctx, NULL, keySize);
    refOutput = s_AesEcbEncRef[i];
}
else
{
    result = mbedtls_aes_setkey_dec(&ctx, NULL, keySize);
    refOutput = s_AesEcbDecRef[i];
}

```

Figure 9. SDK example set key AES ECB

```

result = mbedtls_gcm_setkey(&ctx, MBEDTLS_CIPHER_ID_AES, NULL, keySize);

```

Figure 10. SDK example set key AES GCM

2.4 AES encryption and decryption

After the context has been initialized, see [Section 2.2](#), and the keys have been set, see [Section 2.3](#), the encryption and decryption method is ready to be used.

```

/*!
 * @brief This function performs an AES single-block encryption or
 *        decryption operation.
 *
 *        It performs the operation defined in the \p mode parameter
 *        (encrypt or decrypt), on the input data buffer defined in
 *        the \p input parameter.
 *
 *        mbedtls_aes_init(), and either mbedtls_aes_setkey_enc() or
 *        mbedtls_aes_setkey_dec() must be called before the first
 *        call to this API with the same context.
 *
 * \param ctx The AES context to use for encryption or decryption.
 *            It must be initialized and bound to a key.
 * \param mode The AES operation: #MBEDTLS_AES_ENCRYPT or
 *            #MBEDTLS_AES_DECRYPT.
 * \param input The buffer holding the input data.
 *            It must be readable and at least \c 16 Bytes long.
 * \param output The buffer where the output data will be written.
 *            It must be writeable and at least \c 16 Bytes long.
 *
 * \return \c 0 on success.
 */
int mbedtls_aes_crypt_ecb( mbedtls_aes_context *ctx,
                          int mode,
                          const unsigned char input[16],
                          unsigned char output[16] );

```

Figure 11. mbedtls AES encryption or decryption

In the "pn_mbedtls_demo" example, the method "mbedtls_aes_crypt_ecb" is called first for encryption and after for decryption.

```

result = mbedtls_aes_crypt_ecb(&ctx, mode, src, output);
if ((result != 0) || (0 != memcmp(output, refOutput, sizeof(output))))
{
    PRINTF("Failed\r\n");

    APP_DumpArray("Reference result", refOutput, sizeof(output));
    APP_DumpArray("Actual result", output, sizeof(output));
    break;
}
else
{
    PRINTF("Pass\r\n");
    result = 0;
}

```

Figure 12. mbedtls AES ECB

The "memcmp" in the if-else statement is comparing the output against the previously set reference data. If it is matching, "Pass" will be printed. Else the reference value and an actual result is printed for comparison.

2.5 GCM encrypt, tag, and decrypt

For GCM, the same concept is applied. After initializing the context, see [Section 2.2 "Context initialization"](#), and setting the keys, see [Section 2.3](#), the functions `mbedtls_gcm_crypt_and_tag(...)` and `mbedtls_gcm_auth_decrypt(...)` can be used with the keys from the key store:

```
/* Encrypt and Tag. */
result = mbedtls_gcm_crypt_and_tag(&ctx, MBEDTLS_GCM_ENCRYPT, sizeof(plainData), iv, sizeof(iv), add,
                                   sizeof(add), plainData, cipherData, sizeof(tag), tag);
```

Figure 13. GCM encryption and tagging

```
/* GCM Auth and Decrypt */
result = mbedtls_gcm_auth_decrypt(&ctx, sizeof(plainData), iv, sizeof(iv), add, sizeof(add), tag, sizeof(tag),
                                  cipherData, decryptPlainData);
```

Figure 14. GCM authenticate and decrypt

3 Preparing 'pn_mbedtls_demo' example

This chapter explains how to work with the mbedtls example "pn_mbedtls_demo" and using the PN76 key store.

The prerequisites to work with the AES module by using keys from the KeyStore are:

- mbedtls initialized
- KeyStore initialized
- KeyStore provisioned with an APP_MASTER_KEY or APP_FIXED_KEY.

Per default the example is executing a lot of crypto operations, in this application note only the AES operation is shown. Other methods are not executed.

```
196 /*!  
197  * @brief Main function  
198  */  
199 int main(void)  
200 {  
201     int errors = 0;  
202     /* Board pin init */  
203     BOARD_InitBootPins();  
204     BOARD_InitBootClocks();  
205     BOARD_InitDebugConsole();  
206  
207     PRINTF("\r\nPN mbedtlscrypto example started\r\n");  
208  
209     APP_InitMbedCrypto();  
210  
211     errors += APP_AES_ECB(MBEDTLS_AES_ENCRYPT);  
212     errors += APP_AES_ECB(MBEDTLS_AES_DECRYPT);  
213
```

Figure 15. Example main(void)

In the method APP_AES_ECB(...) the reference data has to be changed. The default key is all '0'. The key of the reference data has to be changed to the actual provisioned key within the key store. The CT (cipher text) and PT (plain text) can be left to all '0'. But, the array has to be changed to the actual new encrypted/decrypted message. See [Section 4](#) how to generate new reference data.

```

/* clang-format off */
const uint8_t s_AesEcbDecRef[][16] =
{
    /*
     * AES-ECB-128
     * KEY=9AA0255E371836EE0BD2C3CEDACB9542
     * CT=00000000000000000000000000000000
     */
    {0x33, 0x2f, 0x99, 0xe4, 0x78, 0xc7, 0xb0, 0xef, 0x10, 0xde, 0xcb, 0xb0, 0xb2, 0x72, 0x5b, 0xd3},
    /*
     * AES-ECB-256
     * KEY=207D74CF3EED13AE1373D61E134592F226AE1112590461623CF76EB27EF9B55C
     * CT=00000000000000000000000000000000
     */
    {0xef, 0xd4, 0x08, 0x07, 0x32, 0x5b, 0xb1, 0xdf, 0xfe, 0x40, 0xcb, 0x24, 0xa5, 0x81, 0xc4, 0xa3},
};

const uint8_t s_AesEcbEncRef[][16] =
{
    /*
     * AES-ECB-128
     * KEY=9AA0255E371836EE0BD2C3CEDACB9542
     * PT=00000000000000000000000000000000
     */
    {0x8c, 0x2f, 0x4e, 0x29, 0xef, 0x2a, 0x19, 0x16, 0x60, 0x45, 0x81, 0x51, 0x27, 0xdf, 0x9c, 0x3b},
    /*
     * AES-ECB-256
     * KEY=207D74CF3EED13AE1373D61E134592F226AE1112590461623CF76EB27EF9B55C
     * PT=00000000000000000000000000000000
     */
    {0x5a, 0x14, 0x62, 0x39, 0xd5, 0xa8, 0x60, 0x5f, 0x2d, 0xef, 0x68, 0x3e, 0x72, 0xda, 0x38, 0x13},
};
/* clang-format on */

```

Figure 16. Example reference data

In [Figure 16](#), the reference data has been newly encrypted and decrypted with the key that shall be used. Not only the reference data has to be updated. Also, the key to be used has to be set. After the context initialization (see [Section 2.2](#)), the keys have to be set according to their length.

```

mbedtls_aes_init(&ctx);
if(keySize == 128) {
    ctx.key_index = AES128_KEY_POS;
}
else if(keySize == 256) {
    ctx.key_index = AES256_KEY_POS;
}
else {
    /* no valid key set */
}

```

Figure 17. mbedtls example set key_index

After these small modifications, the example uses the key from the PN76 KeyStore. The defined "AES128_KEY_POS" and "AES256_KEY_POS" represent the index of the keys in the key store.

After these modifications, the example is ready and using the keys of the KeyStore. Let the example run, if everything has been set correct it should pass:

```
PN mbedcrypto example started
AES-ECB-128 ENC: Pass
AES-ECB-256 ENC: Pass
AES-ECB-128 DEC: Pass
AES-ECB-256 DEC: Pass

Project success
```

Figure 18. AES example pass

4 Annex A: Python code for new reference data

The 'pn_mbedtls_demo' does not use keys from the key store. It passes plain keys directly. Those are all zero. By using keys from the key store, which are not all zero, the reference data has to be updated to match.

Online calculators can be of great help, but a very short python script can do the same. In this chapter, a short python script to generate those reference data is shown.

In the below codeblock the generation of the reference data for ECB 128-bit keys is shown:

```
def mbedtls_aes_ecb():
    print("AES ECB 128")
    bKey = bytes.fromhex('9AA0255E371836EE0BD2C3CEDACB9542')
    bIv = bytes.fromhex('000000000000000000000000')
    bPlainText = bytes.fromhex('00000000000000000000000000000000')
    bCipherText = bytes.fromhex('00000000000000000000000000000000')

    c = cipher.AES.new(bKey,
                       cipher.MODE_ECB,
                       bIv)

    enc = c.encrypt(bPlainText)
    print("ECB encrypt:", bArrayToHex(enc))

    dec = c.decrypt(bCipherText)
    print("ECB decrypt:", bArrayToHex(dec))
```

To generate reference data with a 256-bit key, the variable "bKey" has to be changed accordingly to the 256-bit key.

In the below codeblock the generation of the reference data for GCM with a 128bit key is shown:

```
def mbedtls_gcm_128():
    print("AES GCM 128")
    bKey = bytes.fromhex('9AA0255E371836EE0BD2C3CEDACB9542')
    bIv = bytes.fromhex('000000000000000000000000')
    bAd = bytes.fromhex('00000000000000000000000000000000')
    bMsg =
    bytes.fromhex('000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000000')

    c = cipher.AES.new(bKey,
                       cipher.MODE_GCM,
                       bIv,
                       bAd)

    enc = c.encrypt(bMsg)
    print("GCM Cipher Text Reference:", bArrayToHex(enc[0]))
    print("GCM Tag Reference:", bArrayToHex(enc[1]))
```

The method "bArrayToHex" is to beautify the output and make it more readable and easier to copy:

```
def bArrayToHex(list_val):
    result = ''.join(' 0x{:02x}'.format(x) for x in list_val)
    return (result)
```

5 Annex B: FAQ

Q: What key is used if in the context a key index is set (`ctx.keyIndex = 0x01`), but the key parameter is not NULL?

A: The given key in the parameter is taken. To use a key from the key store, the key-index in the context has to be valid and the parameter must be NULL. Both conditions have to be met.

Q: Can I use APP_ROOT_KEYS for cryptographic operations?

A: No, the APP_ROOT_KEY cannot be used for cryptographic operations. Any other key can be used. The APP_ROOT_KEY is purely for authentication at the secure key store and deriving keys from it.

Q: Can the key store be used also for asymmetric keys?

A: Yes, the key store can store asymmetric keys from index 27 onwards. These keys can be used for cryptographic operations the same way symmetric keys are used.

6 Abbreviations

Table 1. Abbreviations

Acronym	Description
AES	Advanced Encryption Standard
API	application programming interface
CT	chiper text
ECB	electronic code book mode
GCM	Galois/Counter Mode
PT	plain text
SDK	software development kit

7 References

- [1] AN13720 PN7642 Secure Key Mode demo application
- [2] PN7642 NFC Controller User API Documentation

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Please be aware that important notices concerning this document and the product(s) described herein, have been included in section 'Legal information'.
