

Audit of supervision of cantonal integration programmes

State Secretariat for Migration

Key facts

In 2015, the Confederation spent a total of CHF 132.4 million on the integration of foreigners. This is around CHF 48 million more than the previous year due to the increase in the number of asylum applications. The bulk of the Confederation's contribution, approximately CHF 120 million, was paid to the cantons under programme agreements.

This was the first time that the State Secretariat for Migration (SEM) used programme agreements. At the same time as they were introduced, internal responsibility for integration measures and resources and supervision thereof was reorganised and transferred to the Integration Division in 2014. The Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) audited supervision of the cantonal integration programmes in the Integration Division and took part in audit activities in three cantons.

Resources were not adjusted

Within the scope of the reorganisation of responsibilities, the budget responsibility of the Integration Division rose by almost 400% in 2014, going from about CHF 17 million to CHF 84 million. In addition, the supervisory role was introduced. The SEM decided to establish everything with the same number of jobs with the existing employees. The employees do not have any specific training or experience in the area of supervision.

The Integration Division has already achieved a great deal in promoting integration and supervision in the short period of time. The team is very motivated and is constantly striving to make improvements. However, supervision has still not reached the level required.

The SFAO believes that this is primarily due to the lack of specialist resources and time constraints. A reorganisation of the supervisory functions at the SEM will thus be unavoidable. There are various possibilities for doing this, and it should analyse them, particularly against the backdrop of the SEM now having two divisions, both of which have a supervisory role concerning the cantons and have not yet optimised their coordination and potential synergies.

The coverage of the supervisory areas is unbalanced

The Integration Division has divided supervision conceptually into four areas. These are inconsistently taken account of and implemented in the concept.

The cantonal integration programme controlling and monitoring is well advanced in terms of its concept and implementation. For the SFAO, there is no need for further action to be taken.

The risk-oriented system audits are already well covered conceptually. A tool for risk analysis and assessment of the cantons has not yet been developed. There are weaknesses in implementation. So far, instead of the planned three to four audits per year, only four have been carried out in three years. In order to be able to audit all cantons within a period of four years, the SEM should implement the already designed permanent management process for audit planning. Furthermore, the existing resources will have to be used more efficiently in the future, so that not only the quantity of audits can be increased, but also the quality. The system audits must be supplemented with specific audit



activities and spot checks. In addition, adherence to all specifications made by the SEM in the implementing ordinance and in the contractual basis must be audited periodically.

None of the cantons audited to date has its own supervisory concept for exercising its supervisory responsibility. The SEM must therefore ensure as soon as possible that a supervisory concept is drawn up and implemented in all cantons, as agreed.

The impact system is not consistently implemented to the end

The impact analyses (evaluations) and revisions (accounting audits) have not been sufficiently taken into account in the concept and implementation so far; there is a need for action here.

The programme agreements with the cantons and the cantonal integration programmes are fully geared towards achieving an impact. Consequently, supervision would have to be equally impact-oriented for the SFAO. However, the supervisory concept expressly excludes impact analyses and leaves it to the cantons to carry out evaluations at their own discretion. In order for the SEM and the cantons to measure the impact of the cantonal integration programmes and the achievement of the strategic objectives, it is necessary to have a clear SEM evaluation strategy which must be implemented together with the cantons.

The SEM has decided not to carry out revisions in the stricter sense of the term (classical accounting audits), as the employees do not have the necessary expertise. Instead, external orders should be placed if necessary. This procedure makes sense, but the SEM must define when such a requirement exists and act accordingly if necessary.

The programme agreement findings have already been communicated

The programme agreements were not the focus of this audit. Nevertheless, the SFAO made some observations. These were already brought to the SEM's attention in advance during the preliminary consultation on the basis of the 2018–2021 cantonal integration programmes so that they can be incorporated into the next period in good time. Particularly noteworthy here is the lack of regulations in the event of non-compliance or inadequate fulfilment of the agreements by the cantons.

In an earlier report, the SFAO had made six recommendations in connection with the promotion of integration. Two of these have not been implemented.

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