

Guisanplatz 1 construction audit, Bern Federal Office for Buildings and Logistics

Key facts

The Federal Office for Buildings and Logistics (FOBL) is building a new administrative centre for the Federal Administration at Guisanplatz 1 in Bern. This is the biggest construction project for the FOBL since it was founded. Parliament has granted credits of CHF 420 million overall for the planning and realisation of the first stage. With the 2012 real estate dispatch, the FOBL submitted a project to Parliament which was subsequently further optimised in planning terms. The financial objectives set by the FOBL were duly achieved within the scope of the project revision, whereby the capacity of the three buildings was increased from 2,700 to 3,200 workstations with a new office space concept.

The occupancy of the entire site should be increased to an economical level

The planning of the FOBL and the user organisations makes provision for about 2,000 of the net 2,900 possible workstations to be occupied at the time of occupancy in mid-2019 (300 have already been deducted for the examination centre, among other things). Planned staff increases and workstations for external personnel have been taken into account. In the view of the Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO), the additional FOBL occupancy reserves of 15% (300 workstations) are too high and are not justifiable economically. Subsequent additional demand for workstations of that magnitude could probably be offset by densification or desk-sharing concepts.

The SFAO recommends that the FOBL should identify the difference between maximum workstation capacity and effective occupancy for densification potential and increase occupancy to an economical level in the first stage, or at the latest in the second stage, by accommodating additional administrative units.

The security standard is being adjusted to the current threat situation

For employees of the Office of the Attorney General and the Federal Office of Police (fedpol), the threat situation has changed in recent years due to various terrorist attacks in Europe. At the time of the audit, the two organisations were unprepared to move into the building intended for them if the site was accessible to passers-by during the daytime. In spring 2017, their project amendment request for a closed site was taken into account by the FOBL. However, a building permit procedure is required for the project amendment. The FOBL is convinced that the security measures can be implemented by the time the users move in in 2019. The additional costs can be covered by the existing construction credit.

Advance payments to firms to be avoided in future

The financing of the construction project is secured through the approved guarantee and project credits. The final cost prognosis is within the credits. In addition, the project has adequate financial reserves. The FOBL placed great emphasis on monitoring costs and credits. The monitoring is laborious given the size and complexity of the project, but it is nonetheless appropriate and effective. In spite of this, the SFAO identified invoicing of services not yet rendered and inadmissible advance payments to exploit unutilised budget credits. As a result, the SFAO recommends to the FOBL that in future it should implement the relevant requirements for cost allocation and the prevention of advance payments.



The SFAO informed the Federal Council in advance by letter dated 17 March 2017 about its findings on economic capacity utilisation of the buildings and pending clarification of the security precautions within the meaning of Article 15 paragraph 3 of the Federal Audit Office Act.

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