

Audit of the tender process and contract management of a construction project

Swiss Federal Railways

Key facts

Léman 2030 is currently the Swiss Federal Railways' (SBB) largest railway programme in French-speaking Switzerland. By 2030, around CHF 3.9 billion is to be invested in the expansion of the railway infrastructure between Geneva and Lausanne, and around CHF 2 billion in maintaining the existing system.

The Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) conducted its first project audit in the context of the Léman 2030 programme. The audit focused on the work contract for the construction of the overpass (saut-de-mouton, SDM) between Renens and Prilly-Malley, with a contract total of around CHF 29.5 million.

The SFAO found that the tender documents had been quality assured prior to publication and that the implementation work had been completed by the time of the audit without any major adjustments. The overall impression was positive also with regard to aspects of contract management (e.g. accounting controls, directorial work, quality assurance), despite isolated areas for improvement.

Simple organisation enables project management involving few documented specifications

In the SDM project, the SBB project manager (SBB PM) has to manage and assume responsibility for only two contracts: he or she manages the planner contract directly and the work contract is managed operationally by the local site management.

For the coordination of planning and implementation between the construction site and the SBB specialist services (e.g. track, electrification, operations, etc.), the SBB specially created a function in the project organisation. This enables the interfaces between the parties involved in the project to be well managed. In the case of the project under review, implementation is therefore possible even without comprehensively documented specifications such as a project manual or interface document.

Certain possibilities for improvement in contract management, but SDM project is well on track

At the time of the audit, implementation work amounting to around CHF 20.4 million had been charged. The final cost forecast for the work contract assumes a cost underrun of approximately CHF 200,000. Against this backdrop, it can be said that the project is well under way.

In general, contract management in the SDM project is working well. However, there is room for improvement in specific areas (e.g. individual differences between applications and Excel tables, presentation of risks on the construction site). However, these issues do not require any immediate measures.

For this reason, the SFAO decided not to make any recommendations.

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