

Follow-up audit on the implementation of key recommendations

Federal Roads Office

Key facts

The installations needed to operate motorways safely are manifold. Antennas for mobile communication in tunnels are just as essential as emergency call boxes or signalling systems. Over the years, this widely ramified infrastructure has grown under cantonal sovereignty. As a result, the systems are incompatible with each other, resulting in high operating and maintenance costs. The system architecture Switzerland (SA-CH) programme initiated by the Federal Roads Office (FEDRO) aims to put a stop to this proliferation. It is estimated that CHF 504 million will be invested as part of this initiative – an amount that also includes regular maintenance measures. These will be carried out according to the new specifications and are therefore included.

As part of this follow-up, the Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) reviewed the implementation of four recommendations it made in 2018 during an audit of the SA-CH programme¹. Three recommendations have been or are being implemented. One recommendation has not been implemented but is now obsolete.

The programme organisation established under new management

Since 2019, SA-CH has been managed as a programme organisation. In May 2022, responsibility was transferred to the new programme manager. A roadmap, milestone planning and status reports are evidence of a more streamlined approach, which the SFAO had advocated in 2018. The financial requirements for SA-CH are reflected in FEDRO's financial and investment planning. The relevant recommendation has therefore been implemented.

The business architecture and the process model for the new SA-CH system layout were revised in detail. This laid an important foundation for the new operational responsibility. It covers the operational control of the operational and safety equipment as well as the associated data network. FEDRO closely involved all stakeholders in finding this solution. The path to a uniform system solution is well illustrated. This concerns two recommendations that have been implemented.

As of 2022, the traffic management centre in Lucerne could only view or partially control about half of the installations throughout Switzerland. Large-scale traffic management is therefore severely limited. Projects such as Traffic Management Switzerland and the standardisation of video systems are being pursued with increased urgency. These are important early wins for SA-CH and will help to promote the harmonisation efforts in a targeted manner. The corresponding recommendation has been implemented.

¹ Audit of the business case for the system architecture Switzerland project (audit mandate 17181), available on the SFAO website (www.sfao.admin.ch)

Benefits management should be strengthened in the new programme set-up

The first edition of the cost-benefit analysis was revised in 2019. The study does not add any significant value and the conclusion falls short. It does not set out the financial consequences of different approaches and does not show the impact on the savings potential. In addition, there is no overall cost planning that summarises investments that have already been made and those that will be made in the future. The SFAO considers the corresponding recommendation to have not been implemented and retroactively no longer beneficial.

The new programme management has since transparently presented the investment sum for SA-CH for the period 2018-2032, which is an important step forward. However, a comparison with the monetary and non-monetary benefits is still not sufficiently clear. This is nonetheless necessary in order to keep an eye on the attainment of objectives given the complex project and the long programme duration. A new recommendation addresses this issue.

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