

Audit of construction projects as part of property renovations (Monbijoustrasse 40, Bern)

Federal Office for Buildings and Logistics

Key facts

Parliament has approved a guarantee credit of CHF 38.8 million for the complete renovation of the administrative building at Monbijoustrasse 40 in Bern. Aside from the structural renovation measures, the Federal Office for Buildings and Logistics (FOBL) is planning office densification and is reckoning on an increase of 45% in the number of workstations. The 1950s building is listed and will continue to be used by the Federal Customs Administration (FCA) after the renovation.

Launched as a "reserve project", planning has been interrupted and implementation has been deliberately postponed. However, the Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) believes this presents opportunities that need to be exploited. For example, some identified risks that could have considerable implications must be clarified quickly and comprehensively. The same applies to the possibilities for making the future use of the building more flexible. The project organisation and its instruments must be reviewed and completed in good time.

Need for clarification regarding the extent of the renovation

The FOBL planned the project internally as a so-called reserve project. It was intended to fill a possible gap in a major project. If the construction at Guisanplatz 14 had been delayed, the annual funds would have been used for Monbijoustrasse 40. Because of the Guisanplatz project being carried out as scheduled, the implementation date of the audited project has been postponed by six years. At the time of the audit, only part of the urgently required roof renovation had been carried out. The SFAO expects the schedule and any options to be presented transparently and realistically in real estate dispatches as early as possible. Moreover, there is the issue of whether this project is a total or partial renovation.

The SFAO found that the 2005 seismic safety assessment has to be updated, as it can have a major direct impact on the magnitude of the renovation. Depending on the result, the economic efficiency of the entire building will have to be re-evaluated. Furthermore, additional analyses of occupancy variants should be used to identify possible preliminary measures from a structural and technical viewpoint. This will create opportunities for even more flexible use of the building. The SFAO also sees the evaluation and implementation of new office and working forms as part of this project.

⁴ «Bauprüfung Guisanplatz 1, Bern» (PA 16515), available on the SFAO website (www.sfao.admin.ch)

Project management gaps such as cost monitoring are to be closed quickly

Important instruments for cost, risk and quality monitoring and control have not yet been comprehensively introduced due to the suspension of the project. The project organisation must be adapted accordingly with regard to governance. The SFAO additionally recommends integrating the FCA's change process, e.g. from conventional to new, mobile forms of working, into the project organisation as change management. The historical preservation aspects have been given appropriate consideration in the project so far.

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