

# Audit of economic efficiency and security of IT after outsourcing

## Parliamentary Services

### Key facts

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The Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) audited the economic efficiency and security of IT in Parliamentary Services (PS) after the network, telephony, WLAN, mail and system servers and the collaboration platform database areas were outsourced. In this regard, the SFAO makes a distinction in its findings and assessments between the ICT application area of *Council members (ICT Parl area)* and that of *Parliamentary Services (ICT PS area)*.

#### **Provider change resulted in significant improvement in economic efficiency**

By switching provider from the Federal Office of Information Technology, Systems and Telecommunication (FOITT) to Swisscom, the total annual network and telephony costs predicted by the FOITT were reduced from CHF 3 million to CHF 700,000. Expectations were thus considerably exceeded with both the transfer of the original services and expansions. The decision-making basis for the Federal Assembly was correctly and transparently presented in the proposal "Business partner for ICT services for Parliamentary Services" and the project study "Operation and costs of the basic ICT infrastructure for the Federal Assembly" of 7 October 2010. However, there is no post calculation for the implementation of the business case. In order to prove its economic efficiency, the SFAO first had to gather the implementation and operating costs at the time of the audit and compare them with the earlier costs.

#### **Appropriate IT governance in Parliament's ICT security area is challenging**

IT governance as a tool for defining the framework conditions and as a supporting tool for IT management at managerial level is not strongly developed structurally in the *ICT Parl area*. There is no clear allocation of responsibility for IT governance. Risk assessments and the determination of the security requirements are carried out primarily by the IT Section and the IT security officer (ISBD Section) of PS. The security measures taken are therefore based largely on the assessment of PS. When new IT services were being developed for the Councils, this was done in consultation with the Administration Delegation (ADel). There is also high acceptance by users (Councils) of necessary security precautions that affect them directly in the use of ICT services. As a result of this situation, it is difficult for both the ADel and the IT and ISBD Sections to require and implement some important technical and organisational security measures which are now widely recognised as good practice in the *ICT Parl area*.

The draft of the new Information Security Act (ISA draft) explicitly lists PS. It remains to be seen to what extent corresponding powers which facilitate the implementation of IT governance can be derived from the new law.

### **Technical ICT security should be improved selectively**

The PS ISBD and IT Sections have a good level of security awareness. The IT Section repeatedly has selective assessments carried out by external specialists in sensitive areas. Even though they are not obliged to do so (except for the parliamentary network's connection to the Fed. Adm. network – VPN-Fed. Adm.), PS and the ISBD and IT Sections are oriented towards the federal standard. The *ICT PS area* is generally at an appropriate level. During the audit, some deviations from the technical specifications were still identified in the case of server configurations. Controls should be carried out more systematically in this area, and monitoring should be improved.

**Original text in German**