

Audit of the key ICT project SUPERB focusing on master data

Federal Office for Buildings and Logistics

Key facts

For around 20 years, the civil Federal Administration has been using SAP's standard software for its support processes (finance, personnel, logistics and procurement, and real estate). In 2015, SAP announced that it was completely overhauling this software and that the previous version would be neither further developed nor supported from the end of 2025. It is thus imperative that it be replaced. In 2017, the Federal Council decided to switch to the new SAP solution (S/4HANA). It launched two implementation programmes for this purpose: SUPERB for the civil Federal Administration, ERP systems D/ar for the operationally relevant administrative units (Defence, etc.).

The guarantee credits requested for both programmes were approved by the Federal Council at the end of 2019, submitted to Parliament and approved by both chambers. The guarantee credit for the SUPERB programme amounts to CHF 320 million and runs until 2027.

The Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) examined whether the shared use of master data is conceptually ensured via the support processes, as well as in the specialist applications. This objective is only partially achieved. The assessment of project management and progress was not part of this year's audit.

Implementation of once-only potential under threat

To date, the Federal Administration has refrained from centralised management of business partner master data. However, with the introduction of SAP S/4HANA, this will become mandatory and will be supported by SAP MDG (master data government). This change not only affects SAP, but will also have a considerable impact on specialist applications and the business processes they support. The administrative units must redesign the management of business partners' master data, adapt specialist applications and interfaces, and clean up and migrate data.

The centralisation of business partners' master data provides huge potential for optimisation, both for the Federal Administration and for citizens and the business community. This applies especially to the implementation of the once-only principle, which means that citizens and businesses need to report their data to the authorities only once, rather than several times to different offices. The Federal Council's explicit digitalisation target can also be supported to a great extent as a result.

So far, SUPERB has addressed the centralisation of business partner master data and the implementation of the once-only principle only sporadically, since access to MDG is likely to be confined to support processes under SUPERB. As a result, all non-support processes can either try to achieve the use of MDG through their own legislative process or manage their local business partner master data in parallel with MDG. This gives rise to considerable extra effort and greater complexity in the systems and the master data management processes. Uncontrolled redundancies and much more complex, and hence more error-

prone, processes could result. The SFAO therefore recommends that access to MDG business partner master data management be expanded for all specialist applications that require it.

New project sponsor drives significant improvements in leadership and governance

Both the project sponsor and programme management changed at the end of 2019 and the beginning of 2020, respectively. This should bring the SUPERB programme closer to the specialist offices responsible for the support processes once the conceptual preparatory work has been completed. The programme manager reorganised the programme and introduced an agile development process. He was able to accelerate the generation of work results and has started working on the detailed programme planning.

With regard to governance, the Federal Council responded to the repeated demands of the Finance Committees, the Finance Delegations and the SFAO. The SUPERB project sponsor now has the necessary powers to steer the programme in all essential areas.

Major challenges in terms of working with specialist applications

The migration of support processes in the civil Federal Administration to SAP S/4HANA also affects a large number of specialist applications outside SAP that likewise assist support processes or have interfaces to them.

The specialist applications project within SUPERB compiled an inventory of the specialist applications that have interfaces to the support processes. Subsequently, the large or complex specialist applications were identified and given top priority. Proof of concept studies are carried out with selected, particularly complex applications to verify the concepts.

On the one hand, many administrative units underestimate the extent of the adjustments they will have to make. On the other hand, essential basic concepts for SUPERB that they need to carry out the necessary detailed analysis, budgeting and planning are not yet available. The SFAO recommends that SUPERB should prioritise the rapid creation of these basic concepts.

The interplay with relevant major projects is working well, the SFAO recommends exploiting potential synergies

Coordination between SUPERB and ERP systems D/ar, the sister programme for the operationally relevant administrative units, is regulated in the SUPERB governance directive and is working well. The interplay with GENOVA, the programme for the introduction of the GEVER business management system, has to be ensured by the two project sponsors in accordance with the governance directive. There is no coordination, so contradictory or incompatible solutions are possible, which can lead to additional work and inconsistent data. The interplay between SUPERB and DaziT, the transformation programme of the Federal Customs Administration, is not regulated in the SUPERB governance directive. The most important thing for DaziT, or the transformation of the Federal Customs Administration, is MDG legislation that allows all specialist applications to use the data stored in them and does not restrict access to support processes alone. The interplay between SUPERB and Core IT (formerly the Fiscal IT project), the Federal Tax Administration's solution that is already in operation, is not regulated either. Here, too, there is considerable potential for synergies that is not analysed and steered.

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