

Second follow-up audit of the key ICT project UCC Federal IT Steering Unit

Key facts

Following the initial audit in May 2014¹ and a follow-up audit in February 2015², the Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) conducted a further follow-up audit on the Unified Communication & Collaboration (UCC) programme at the Federal IT Steering Unit (FITSU). The audit focused on the project's progress, financial controlling and reporting as well as the implementation of previous SFAO recommendations. In short, the programme has made considerable progress since the last audit and has successfully completed many rollout projects, but it has also experienced another delay. The financial reporting could be improved and not all of the recommendations made to date have been implemented.

Additional costs due to extension of deadline to end of 2017

According to the FITSU and the status reports of the service providers and service procurers of all of the administrative units concerned, UCC has been rolled out in 45% of the administrative units and is operating for 20,000 users. The UCC DDPS rollout project is currently in the implementation phase and should be completed by 30 June 2017. The prospective deadline has thus been extended once again. The resulting additional costs for the UCC programme of some CHF 100,000 per month from 1 January 2017 on will be borne by the Defence Group. While this does not affect the guarantee credit for UCC, it does increase the total costs of UCC, and the financial benefit will take effect later than planned. Furthermore, double operating costs will have to be borne for longer than planned. At the end of 2015, CHF 34 million of the UCC guarantee credit of CHF 54.6 million had been used. Of the original reserve of CHF 5 million, CHF 400,000 has not yet been earmarked.

UCC DDPS project a top priority – delays impact on UCC programme

In September 2015, the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (DDPS) made the UCC DDPS rollout project a top priority in order to secure the necessary support from management. The SFAO considers this an effective measure. It has stressed that the rollout project should progress as scheduled and be completed by 30 June 2017 at the latest. In the event that not all traditional telephone systems in the Federal Administration can be replaced on time due to the deadline extension, the FITSU must take fallback measures in a timely manner.

More transparent financial reporting required

At the end of 2014, the SFAO had already recommended posting the total costs for the UCC programme. This list of all costs is still incomplete and inconsistent. The semi-annual reports still do not fully meet the requirement of accounting for the overall situation in respect of the Federal Council directives for ICT projects and the handbook for budgets and accounting in the Federal

¹ PA 14458: Audit of the key ICT project UCC

² PA 15474: Follow-up audit of the key ICT project UCC



Administration. It has also been recommended that the unutilised financial resources of completed projects be transferred to the UCC programme reserve.

The DDPS plans to invest CHF 21.85 million in the UCC DDPS rollout project and to finance this through the current budgetary credit. No mention was made of the transfer from the UCC programme (CHF 7.2 million) in the proof of financing. It is therefore not clear if the DDPS has planned too many resources. The SFAO recommends determining the actual financing requirements and posting them transparently. Furthermore, it has found that the financing of the UCC DDPS project would have required a guarantee credit. While it considers a late claim for such a credit to be legally above board, it is nevertheless uneconomical. Instead, obstacles surrounding the project that are jeopardising the project's success should be swiftly eliminated.

Recommendations still not fully implemented

11 of the total 19 recommendations made by the SFAO to date have been implemented. Four of the still outstanding points should have been implemented already. They concern financial transparency and traceability, data protection regulations and the AFCSO operations manuals. All outstanding recommendations continue to be relevant.

Original text in German