

An audit of key programme: road traffic licensing information system

Key facts

In accordance with the Federal Council's directives for key ICT projects, in April and May 2014, the Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) audited the Federal Roads Office's (FEDRO) road traffic licensing information system programme.

The driver and vehicle licensing offices manage road traffic licensing data on vehicle drivers, vehicle owners and vehicles in decentralised databases. FEDRO makes copies of this data and makes them available to the authorised authorities, e.g. the police and customs, within the scope of its statutory mandate. The software solution (MOFAD) used to do this was introduced more than 30 years ago. The redundancies in data storage are uneconomic and prone to errors, and servicing of the software is now only possible at great expense. 2500 users use MOFAD to manage 12 million data sets and carry out 3 million searches daily; the volume of data is 2.5 terabytes. MOFAD is to be replaced by the road traffic licensing information system.

In spite of the need for action, overall the project is on course. In the course of the project audit, the launch date was postponed by 5 months to Easter 2015. Based on this new deadline, the road traffic licensing information system programme is on course. The risks associated with introduction are subject to appropriate controls. Project controlling is being carried out expediently. Apart from the fact that an in-depth preliminary analysis was dispensed with and the project was thereby placed on a shaky basis, the programme management is taking appropriate account of the complexity of the procedure and the associated launch risks.

The programme management tried to avoid postponing the launch date by overlapping project phases. This procedure cannot be circumvented even with the new deadline. Conducting development, testing and integration in parallel imposes high demands on the programme management, in particular on planning and quality assurance. A further risk factor for the timely launch is posed by the provision of the operational organisation by the Federal Office of Information Technology, Systems and Telecommunication (FOITT).

Scheduling and cost variances in the current project progression can be explained. It was recognised in the preliminary studies that nationwide application with central data storage would make the most sense in data and economic terms. However, this approach was rejected on account of the existing division of responsibilities between the Confederation and the cantons. Instead FEDRO opted for a functional one-to-one replacement; the road traffic licensing information system programme is to be modernised only in terms of software and data architecture. MOFAD is composed of dozens of modules and interfaces, there are no descriptions of their functionalities, and even the 1.7 million lines of extensive programme code is scarcely documented. The programme planning drawn up on this unstable basis had to be adjusted several times. Today, the project has a delay of two years and it will cost approximately CHF 13 million more than originally anticipated. The scale of the project could have been highlighted much earlier with an in-depth code analysis in the initialisation phase. Bearing in mind the framework conditions and the project process, the project duration and cost are, from the perspective of the SFAO, in line with a project of these dimensions and complexity.

Risk management and quality assurance do not cover entire programme. Risk management and quality assurance are carried out professionally but do not, however, extend formally to the integration and implementation of the solution. The delayed launch date affects the ceiling limit of the expenses of the respective lots. To compensate for the foreseeable additional costs, the project management is planning to cut back on quality assurance and risk management among other things. This would represent a considerable risk for the success of the project and should be reexamined.

The pending final stage requires closer monitoring. The degree of detail of the planning for project progression up to now was adequate. It should, however, be enhanced for the final phase which is very demanding in planning terms.

Security requirements have not yet all been drawn up. Protection requirements have been determined and security requirements are known. However, the security concept is behind schedule. Its completion should be given high priority. The authorisation concept must be implemented before putting the road traffic licensing information system programme into operation.

In the current phase of the project, investments will generate only limited benefits. The benefits of the road traffic licensing information system programme are restricted to the life cycle management of hardware and software and the creation of requirements for later integration of cantonal data sets. Direct added value has not yet been created. Cost effectiveness can be improved after the launch if the planned data check and integration of the cantons is pressed ahead with consistently and if the cantons share the costs of the project. It is recommended to examine now whether or not any legal bases need to be created to achieve this.

Original text in German