

Key ICT project audit: CMS.nextgen

Key facts

In accordance with the Federal Council's directives for key ICT (Information and Communications Technology) projects, the Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) audited the program CMS.nextgen at the Federal Office of Information Technology, Systems and Telecommunication (FOITT) from July to October 2014. The audit's aim was to assess the project status and risks with regard to the achievement of targets.

The system currently used for managing some 100 federal internet and intranet sites has reached the end of its lifecycle and needs to be replaced. The content management system (CMS) "Imperia" used in the Federal Office of Information Technology, Systems and Telecommunication (FOITT) for the past ten years supports the business processes of the offices in the areas of publications, communications and virtual collaboration. It is no longer adequate for the current technological and functional requirements, as enshrined in the Federal ICT Strategy 2012-2015.

Financing is mixed and secured. A part of the program budget amounting to CHF 5.1 million will be financed by central ICT resources and a credit transfer from the General Secretariat of the Federal Department of Finance (GS-FDF), the rest will be covered by the FOITT's operating account. The cost-benefit/effectiveness calculation could not be coordinated with the business case as this only included the operating costs and not the software or licence costs.

The invitation to tender was carried out in compliance with the regulations, but no variants were checked beforehand. The software Adobe Experience Manager (AEM) and the provision, integration and migration services were procured through a WTO invitation to tender. The invitation to tender was conducted in accordance with the applicable legislative and organisational requirements and the SFAO considers the award to be justified based on the evaluation report and other documentation inspected. The architecture of the winning solution is state of the art. However, a structured, documented evaluation of the variants was not performed beforehand, such as purchasing a service as an alternative to self-build.

The scope of the program does not cover the complete scale of the undertaking. The project brief and the project procedure support the FOITT's overarching objectives. To reduce the complexity, the replacement of "Imperia" was divided up into separate stages. The program represents only one part of the undertaking, which is why a full financial overview of the complete scale can only be achieved indirectly. Thus, for instance, the initiation, parts of the concept development, the procurement and the subsequent provision of intranet functionality are not part of the program scope.

The program is on track overall, but there is room for improvement in the details. The risks concerning the program's provision of internet functionality are under control and the milestones, in particular going live with the pilot site of the State Secretariat for International Financial Matters (SIF), were met as planned. The program structure is appropriate, the key positions have been filled in a targeted manner and the most important stakeholders are involved via the program committee. At the time of the audit, some project documents, including the program management plans, had not been updated and deviations from HERMES had been detected in the procedure.