

Key ICT project audit: IAM Bund

Key facts

At the start of 2015, the Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) audited the IAM Bund programme at the Federal IT Steering Unit (FITSU). The audit's aim was to assess the project status and risks with regard to the achievement of targets.

Identity and access management (IAM) programme is duly justified and its budget and schedule are on track

The IAM Bund programme is geared toward and directly supports the Confederation's overriding strategies. The massive increase in the extent to which information is used on a cross-organisational basis and the demands this entails in terms of protection and functionalities can only be efficiently guaranteed with comprehensively coordinated services. This is particularly true whenever identities, authorisations, attributes, profiles and data are intended for trusted use above and beyond organisational limits in Switzerland and abroad. The IAM Bund programme was launched to develop these services for use by the entire Federal Administration.

A cost-efficiency analysis conventionally geared toward return on investment was not performed, which is something the SFAO understands given that it is not possible to determine the basis required for the analysis.

At the time of the audit, the programme's schedule and budget were on track. The milestones defined were reached and the financing was secured up to the end of the programme. The approved CHF 11.4 million was financed with a guarantee credit of CHF 10.7 million. The difference was contributed from GS-FDF department resources to speed up the launch phase.

IAM Bund programme is politically challenging and depends on a broad acceptance

A decisive factor in this context is that the market model version 2 is fully developed and, in particular, contains binding regulations on the following points:

- Which service providers provide which services and how do the service providers create a distinction between themselves and for potential service procurers?
- What are the migration paths, what exceptions are possible and who will finance what?

In addition, it is essential to set clear and binding regulations for the areas of compliance, governance and standardised processes.

Major challenges in communication and stakeholder management

Communication and stakeholder management significantly influence the acceptance of IAM Bund and therefore contribute to its successful implementation considerably. Relations with both the future service providers and the future owner of the standard service ought to be strengthened. Communication must be more structured in that the service providers are also included. In this context, an important role is played by the project officer, who is available to the programme for a short time only. It is important that this role is filled with a skilled professional as quickly as possible. The programme must also find a way to ensure that projects with higher IAM demands automatically appear on the IAM Bund radar.

An IAM project has been launched in the Armed Forces Command Support Organisation (AFCSO) with the "Identity, Credential and Access Management" (ICAM) project. Even if the AFCSO sees a separate IAM project as duly justified, attention must be paid consistently to exploiting a maximum of synergies. The ICAM project should rely on IAM Bund standard services and should only develop its own services as a last resort.

Modifications to quality assurance (QA) and risk management (RM) required

Despite the fact that QA and RM are included in the programme, the actual situation does not correspond to what's on paper. The guidelines need to be revised (QA) or expanded (RM) and then implemented consistently. The quality assurance and risk manager (QARM) must be kept clearly separate from the management and operational levels and must focus on control tasks. At present, there is no inspection plan, but one must be drawn up.

Multiple roles putting a strain on quality

At the time of the audit, one person was taking care of the project office, deputising for the programme manager and managing the IAMB and ABA/MIAMI projects. This reduces quality, evidence of which the SFAO saw in an outdated project filing system and document and lifecycle management that is not being implemented consistently. Furthermore, there is a conflict of roles in that the project office is attending to control system duties. The project control system and project management should not be carried out by the same person. Multiple roles must be eliminated.

Programme requires a lot of external expertise

Work on a procurement plan that complies with the regulations must be started at an early stage for necessary follow-up procurements. Moreover, appropriate measures for the external-to-internal transfer of knowledge ought to be defined.

A WTO procedure at the start of the programme would have rendered several contract extensions unnecessary

In the SFAO's view, the initial procurements in the invitation to tender procedure were undertaken correctly. However, a realistic cost estimate at the start of the programme would have shown that a WTO procedure was advisable from the very beginning. The awarding of successive contracts and the exploitation of options resulted in the thresholds and the FITSU's procurement authority as delegated by the FOBL being exceeded. By carrying out WTO tenders to procure replacements of external service resources, the programme management took effective measures to ensure compliance.

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