

Press release

Swiss Federal Audit Office publishes its 2018 annual report

Bern, 29.5.2019 – The Finance Delegation and the Federal Council have acknowledged the annual report of the Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO). In 2018, the SFAO published around 50 audit and evaluation reports. It had to inform the Federal Council about serious shortcomings on only one occasion. The number of reports from whistleblowers is continuing to rise.

The SFAO published 46 audit and evaluation reports in 2018. The supreme financial supervisory body of the Swiss Confederation also granted access to eight reports requested by journalists on the basis of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

SFAO employees answered complex audit and evaluation questions in 2018. How good is the Confederation's supervision of the unemployment insurance system? Is it efficient and cost-effective to support the country's agricultural biogas facilities with taxpayers' money? Are the costs of withdrawing from nuclear power, e.g. those for decommissioning nuclear facilities and managing their waste, transparent and correctly estimated? What about major federal IT projects, e.g. in the area of taxation, telephone tapping, official publications and Armed Forces management? Is the public data in the commercial register reliable for economic players? What added value is provided by the some thirty small Swiss embassies abroad? Are the beneficiaries of supplementary benefits treated equally in the different cantons? Some answers can be found in the SFAO's annual report published today.



Many audits, but only one serious shortcoming reported to the Federal Council

By supervising the federal finances, the SFAO fulfils its task as auditor of the authorities, federal enterprises and subsidy recipients. In 2018, its audits highlighted many areas for improvement for auditees. It is encouraging to note that only one serious shortcoming had to be reported to the Federal Council, as opposed to three cases in 2017.

In contrast, the number of reports from whistleblowers is continuing to rise, with 164 reports in 2018, versus 122 in 2017. The SFAO carries out verification work based on this information. 101 reports were used for audits already under way or future audits, or else triggered new investigations in the not-too-distant future. According to the SFAO's estimates, more than 60% of the reports are thus useful and help to improve how the Administration functions.

Over the last decade, the SFAO's audits have generated nearly half a billion Swiss francs in receipts for the Confederation. In 2018, the SFAO cost Swiss taxpayers CHF 24.3 million, versus CHF 24.2 million in 2017. The institution employed 114 people (105.1 FTEs) as at 31 December 2018.

Information: Michel Huissoud, Director of the SFAO, tel. 058 463 11 11

The 2018 annual report is published in French, German, Italian and English on the SFAO's website (www.sfao.admin.ch).