

AUDIT

Audit of secretariat management

Supervisory authority for the Office of the Attorney General

KEY FACTS

The Supervisory Authority for the Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland (SA-OAG) consists of seven members who supervise the legality, compliance, fitness for purpose, effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of the activities of the Office of the Attorney General of Switzerland (OAG). Established in 2011, it is independent, determines its own organisation and is directly accountable to the Federal Assembly. The SA-OAG has a permanent secretariat. The main task of this body is to support the authority's members, who perform this role on a part-time basis. In 2024, the SA-OAG's functional expenses were CHF 1.38 million. Around 60% of this amount was personnel expenditure, including remuneration for the authority's members.

The Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) conducted its first-ever audit of the SA-OAG, focusing on the secretariat. The authority's supervisory activities were not examined, as a bill to amend the legal basis of the OAG and the SA-OAG is currently being drawn up for the attention of the Federal Council.

The audit findings are generally positive. The secretariat's operating expenses are reasonable, and most procurements are carried out cost-effectively. Nevertheless, the SFAO identified scope for improvement.

Optimise use of AI and procurement

The SFAO identified some slight potential to enhance efficiency in the future use of artificial intelligence (AI) and in logging. In addition, there is a service contract in which monthly basic flat rates are not always fully utilised. The SA-OAG should take a critical look at whether this contract is necessary. As regards procurement, there must be systematic and succinct documentation of needs analyses and specifications in future to ensure transparency and traceability.

Declarations of independence and impartiality required

Neither secretariat staff nor SA-OAG members sign declarations of professional independence and impartiality. Given the SA-OAG's status as an independent supervisory authority, the SFAO considers that such declarations should be mandatory for secretariat staff and recommended for SA-OAG members. Even the mere appearance of partiality or lack of independence carries the risk of significant reputational damage.

Replacement notebooks and VIP service unnecessary

IT expenditure includes a VIP service at the Federal Office of Information Technology, Systems and Telecommunication and the cost of replacement notebooks for six of the seven members of the SA-OAG. These benefits, which are not the norm in a federal government context, must be cut back, taking cost-benefit considerations into account.