

AUDIT

Audit of the progress of the project to widen the A1 between Le Vengeron and Nyon

Federal Roads Office

DISCLAIMER

The audit by the Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) took place before the federal popular vote on 24 November 2024. In the vote, the people rejected the federal decree on the 2023 development stage for motorways by 52.7%. The six motorway projects will therefore not be implemented.

As a result, the Vengeron-Coppet-Nyon (VCN) project, which was audited by the SFAO, will not go ahead. However, the audit findings can be used for other projects currently underway or planned by the Federal Roads Office (FEDRO). The recommendations should be used to continuously improve road infrastructure project management, drawing on the best practices referred to in this report.

The recommendations in the report were adapted in consultation with the FEDRO after the final discussion so that they could provide added value to the FEDRO for its other motorway projects. A deliberate decision was taken not to rewrite the report itself.

KEY FACTS

The FEDRO had planned to widen the motorway between Le Vengeron and Nyon to three lanes in each direction. The section concerned is approximately 20km long. The aim of the widening was to eliminate existing bottlenecks and it was also intended to improve traffic flow and increase safety.

The Federal Council approved the general project in October 2023. The project was scheduled to be completed in 2032 at the earliest and the estimated cost of the project was nearly CHF 1 billion.

The SFAO assessed the progress of the project as part of its audit. The project was on track until the vote on 24 November. Improvements were needed in the areas of organisation, cost management and quality.

Necessary adjustments to project management and organisation in the next phase

The FEDRO project manager has to manage a large number of contractors. The FEDRO plans to group contractors into sub-projects based on theme in order to limit the number of people the FEDRO project manager has to deal with. This grouping must be completed by the next phase of the project at the latest.

The meetings are well structured and documented. However, the project manual has some gaps that need to be filled. The tried-and-tested tools and templates provided by the FEDRO central office must be introduced and implemented quickly for this project. The Estavayer-le-Lac branch must ensure that its project and area managers are familiar with and use these templates and tools designed by the central office.

The overall PQM concept is not being implemented

The FEDRO guidelines provide for the implementation of project quality management (PQM) The relevant standards and templates are available from the central office. The PQM is specified in the planning contracts and the tasks are described in the project manual. At the time of the audit, the PQM had not been implemented in the project and had not been requested by the client from the contractors. The FEDRO should have developed the PQM and implemented it as quickly as possible for this project. Risk management, which is an integral part of the PQM, exists and is being implemented.

Improving the reliability and transparency of cost management

The final cost forecast is poorly managed, as different values appear simultaneously in different reports, including in the project cockpit. The cockpit cannot therefore be used as a reliable management tool.

Furthermore, there is no overview of the costs of relevant project changes and optimisations.

The lack of visibility of the total reserves undermines transparency. These are not systematically quantified, but are partially included in the costs. This complicates project management for the project manager and the steering committee.

FEDRO should have quickly ensured that the costs were updated and reliable, and that the reserves were transparent.