

Digital transformation: Audit of process efficiency in the replacement of the Land Forces CIS

Defence Group – Armed Forces Staff

Key facts

The Land Forces command information system (Land Forces CIS) supports operations planning, command and control, and current intelligence in Armed Forces tactical operations by displaying situation maps that facilitate the preparation of command and control documents and enable their level-appropriate distribution within a military unit. The Land Forces CIS, which was approved as part of the 2006 armament programme at a cost of CHF 736 million, is now showing its age. Moreover, it meets the Armed Forces' needs only to a limited extent: contrary to the original intention, the control of mobile units is restricted as no sufficiently high-performance communication infrastructure exists. The Defence sector's subsequent decision in 2012 that it would no longer equip the lower hierarchical level of the Armed Forces (up to section vehicle level) with the Land Forces CIS resulted in CHF 125 million worth of write-offs. It is now planned to replace the Land Forces CIS and three other command information systems with the IPLIS integrated planning and situation information system by 2023. The Armed Forces Staff is reckoning on investment costs of CHF 250 million.

The preparatory work on IPLIS began in 2020 with modest staff resources. According to HERMES DDPS/CODA, the project has been at the concept stage since July 2022.

The work on the IPLIS project is not yet at an advanced stage. For this reason, the Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) discontinued its audit. The identified risks are presented in this summary report in order that they can be taken into account during the further work on the IPLIS project.

The IPLIS successor project carries high risks

IPLIS wants to use only established standards and products, and avoid high costs and risks associated with a customised solution (Swiss specificities). In addition to technological aspects, the standards it intends to use also cover operational elements such as plans, processes and organisational structures. These would have to be revised for the whole Armed Forces. The SFAO perceives a risk in the fact that the decision by the Armed Forces management to apply these standards throughout the Armed Forces was taken too late, which significantly reduces the benefit of IPLIS. The SFAO therefore recommends that a binding decision be made for the entire Armed Forces before starting with the implementation of IPLIS.

Like the Land Forces CIS before it, IPLIS is also dependent on a well-performing ICT infrastructure. This includes the new digitalisation platform¹, the Swiss command network² and

¹ "Audit of the DTI key project data centres 2020 ICT architecture and infrastructure" (audit mandate 23155), available on the SFAO website (www.sfao.admin.ch)

² "Audit of the DTI key project Swiss command network" (audit mandate 22122)

the Armed Forces telecommunications project³. The Armed Forces management wishes to avoid another failure like the Land Forces CIS and has taken measures to work around the dependencies with other projects. The Armed Forces is still in the process of establishing a complete overview that includes dependencies for all Armed Forces-wide projects. As long as these and other centralised management tools do not exist, the SFAO sees a risk of the necessary infrastructure not being available when IPLIS is introduced.

Original text in German

³ "Follow-up audit of the key ICT project Armed Forces telecommunications" (audit mandate 16613), "Audit of key ICT project Armed Forces telecommunications" (audit mandate 17619), "Audit of key ICT project Armed Forces telecommunications" (audit mandate 19258), "Audit of DTI key project Armed Forces telecommunications" (audit mandate 22121)