

## AUDIT

# Cross-sectional audit of the implementation of the harmonised procurement process at federal level

Federal Office for Buildings and Logistics

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## KEY FACTS

In 2020, the Federal Council approved the 'Implementation strategy for the total revision of public procurement law for the 2021–2030 strategy period'. The purpose of this was, amongst other things, to strategically manage federal procurement across six focus areas.

The fifth focus area of the Federal Administration's procurement strategy stipulates that procurement processes must be digitised, standardised and user-friendly. The nationwide digitisation and standardisation of processes is being carried out by the Federal Office for Buildings and Logistics (FOBL) on two systems: SAP (value flows) and Acta Nova (document management). The harmonised procurement solution at federal level (HBB) was rolled out in the Federal Administration on Acta Nova in the spring of 2023. The SAP procurement and award management project (BVML) is still being implemented and is due to be introduced in October 2025. From then onwards, BVML and HBB should be used in conjunction with each other. In 2023, the Federal Administration procured services above the WTO threshold with a volume of CHF 6.39 billion.

The Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) audited whether HBB was efficiently supporting the award process. The effect of HBB is difficult to assess. Firstly, because the original HBB project goals are only described in qualitative terms and there is no basis for comparison. Secondly, the use of HBB is a recommendation and is not used for the majority of procurements. This means that the desired standardisation of procurement processes across the entire Federal Administration is not guaranteed.

### There is no solid management basis for the procurement strategy

No measurable effect can be derived from the qualitative objectives formulated in focus area 5. This means that there is no fundamental basis for identifying deviations from strategic goals at an early stage and taking appropriate action. This topic is to be addressed in the planned 2025 strategy review by the Federal Procurement Conference (FPC) and the Coordination Conference for Public Sector Construction and Property Services (KBOB), which is responsible for this area.

At the end of 2023, the FPC and the KBOB carried out a survey amongst the administrative units on the implementation status of the Federal Administration's procurement strategy. The results reveal areas for improvement in the procurement process and system. Neither the FPC nor the FOBL has made use of these findings to date.

### The aim of nationwide standardisation will not be achieved with HBB

The HBB was designed for the procurement of good and services. Use is not mandatory. The FOBL does not have an overview of which administrative units are using HBB. Furthermore, an adapted version of HBB was supposed to be created for procurements in the property sector. However, this has not yet happened, and the FOBL is not sure whether or how it should be done. Neither is HBB being used for procurement of construction services for motorway construction, due to an agreement between the central procurement units (armasuisse, FOBL and the Federal Roads Office). Procurement in the property and building sectors accounted for approximately CHF 2.6 billion in 2023. As such, around 40% of the total federal procurement volume is being transacted outside of HBB. We are a long way from achieving the target of national standardisation for procurement processes. The FOBL needs to review the necessity, effectiveness and efficiency of the interaction between

BVML and HBB. It should be decided, based on the results of this, whether and to what extent, and in which areas of procurement, the use of both systems should be mandatory.

### **Interfaces between SAP and Acta Nova have not yet been defined**

The interfaces between BVML and HBB are of utmost importance to ensure a cross-system end-to-end procurement process with as little media discontinuity as possible. The fifth focus area of the Federal Administration's procurement strategy can only be successfully achieved through the seamless interaction of the two systems. Currently, the interfaces have not been defined. Use of BVML is mandatory. The FOBL must decide whether the use of HBB together with BVML needs to become mandatory. As mentioned above, the first phase involves demonstrating the necessity and effectiveness of the dual solution.