

Digital transformation: Audit of the replacement of E-ZIVI

Federal Office for Civilian Service

Key facts

E-ZIVI is the centralised specialist software application for handling civilian service implementation processes at the Federal Office for Civilian Service (CIVI). The application has reached the end of its life and is due to be replaced by end-2024. The CIVI has launched a digitalisation project to develop a new specialist application. Total project costs are estimated at CHF 13.3 million. The project was approved in May 2022 and was at the design stage when the audit took place.

In connection with the replacement of E-ZIVI, the Swiss Federal Audit Office audited the digital transformation. The results show that the project is generally on track, but that certain key conditions still need to be clarified in order to ensure that the digital transformation is successfully implemented.

Aiming to fully exploit the potential of digitalisation

The application which is due to be replaced, E-ZIVI, is based on obsolete technology and has a number of shortcomings, such as media discontinuity, missing interfaces and performance problems. As a result, over the years, the application has grown into a complex and hard-to-maintain system. The planned, newly developed replacement is intended to tackle these problems and weaknesses in a targeted way, and create a future-proof and adaptable application.

For this purpose, the implementation processes are to be digitalised and provide seamless operation. The redefinition of processes, which has already begun, shows that the expected exploitation of innovation and digitalisation potential is not yet ensured across the board owing to legal and technical requirements, and that further clarification work is needed. This involves not only consistently identifying the potential within existing parameters but also perhaps reviewing the framework conditions as a whole.

The new application should improve efficiency and effectiveness tangibly. However, not all the stated targets are defined clearly and measurably, and they should be made more precise to allow clear performance assessments. By the same token, quantified project objectives, such as expected savings of some 10% or the reduction of operating costs by at least 20%, must be closely monitored and managed.

In order for digitalisation to realise its potential, there needs to be end-to-end digitalisation of processes and interfaces with all the relevant stakeholders. The CIVI intends to involve the existing stakeholders more closely in the project, but it should also use this opportunity to include new stakeholders. Since the new application has an open and adaptable architecture, the technical prerequisites are met.

Central components of the digital transformation are being addressed outside the project

In its strategy, the CIVI defines digital transformation as a comprehensive change process which, in addition to the operational transformation of processes, methods and technology, also involves an organisational transformation. In 2023, as part of the current digitalisation project, the CIVI will carry out a project to identify possible organisational adjustments.

Effective data management is another key element of digital transformation. This is the only way for digitalisation potential to be fully exploited when redefining business processes from an end-to-end perspective. The CIVI has recognised the importance of this aspect and will address the definition of end-to-end data management as part of an internal project in 2023.

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