

## AUDIT

# Follow-up audit of main recommendations: Key project Polycom value preservation 2030

Federal Office for Civil Protection

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## KEY FACTS

The Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) conducted a follow-up audit of the implementation of key recommendations from 2016 to 2023 at the Federal Office for Civil Protection (FOCP), the Federal Office for Customs and Border Security (FOCBS), the General Secretariat of the Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (GS-DDPS) and the Federal Chancellery (FCh)<sup>4</sup>.

Polycom is Switzerland's security radio network of the authorities and organisations for rescue and security (AORS). By 2016, the Confederation and the cantons had invested a total of around CHF 1 billion. The "Polycom Value Preservation 2030" project, which was launched in 2016 with a total credit of CHF 159.6 million, aims to ensure Polycom's service life until the end of 2035. The ten recommendations examined address issues related to the Polycom system, six of which have been fully implemented.

## Gaps in the strategic framework for alert and telecommunication systems in crisis situations

In 2018, the SFAO identified significant risks relating to the uncoordinated development of information and communication resources for crisis situations. The Federal Chancellery, as the office responsible for the federal government's communication in crisis situations, has developed a targeted approach to identifying and implementing the requirements for these resources. The new Ordinance on the Crisis Organisation of the Federal Administration regulates the Federal Administration's tasks in this area. In future, critical offices are to validate their information and communication resources in integrated federal security exercises, the first of which will be the "Integrated Security Exercise 2025". The offices are to adapt their resources as required based on the findings of these exercises. The SFAO can only assess the overall implementation of the strategy for the development of these resources once this process has been introduced. The corresponding recommendation 18550.002 therefore remains open.

The strategy for the implementation of telecommunications, alert and information systems in the area of civil protection called for by the FOCP in 2021 is not yet complete either. However, the FOCP has made substantial progress with its multi-channel strategy. One of the aims of this strategy is to recognise service gaps for the national partners in the Swiss Security Network (SSN). It must also be able to set up projects for the replacement of existing systems in good time. The multi-channel strategy covers the alert, warning and information systems, but does not include telecommunication systems such as Polycom. An overall view of all ICT systems in the area of civil protection will only be developed by the FOCP through portfolio management. Recommendation 21539.005 therefore remains open.

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<sup>4</sup> "Audit of the key ICT project Polycom value preservation 2030" (audit mandate 16375); "Audit of the key ICT project Armed Forces voice system" (audit mandate 18550); "Audit of the Polycom Value Preservation 2030 and National Secure Data System key ICT projects and the Mobile Broadband Security Communication Systems project" (audit mandate 21539); "Audit of the DTI key project Polycom Value Preservation 2030 with a focus on the border security subnetwork" (audit mandate 23538).

## **The foundation for the management of the implementation of ICT systems at the FOCP has been laid**

In order to be able to fulfil its future tasks, the FOCP has positioned itself as a service broker in line with its strategic approach. In this role, it wants to bundle the business requirements of its partners in the SSN and provide the required systems via suitable ICT service providers. In this way, it intends to focus its skills and resources in future and thus assume system responsibility from procurement through to decommissioning. In order to assume this responsibility, the FOCP has restructured its portfolio and programme management. In future, it intends to use this to manage the implementation of strategic requirements in terms of time and content. The FOCP has been able to create the necessary job positions for this purpose.

The content elements of this portfolio management are primarily determined by the business and technology architecture. The FOCP was able to fill the necessary positions related to architecture. However, the business and technology architectures have not yet been developed, which means that recommendation 16375.006 remains open. Until this portfolio and architecture management is established, the risk of significant gaps in the overall management of the ICT systems remains.

In the meantime, the FOCP will have to coordinate the temporal and technical dependencies between the systems on a project-specific basis. Accordingly, it has also coordinated the solution concept developed for the mobile security communications system (MSC) with its partners, in particular the Armed Forces.

## **The FOCP has reduced risks associated with achieving the objectives of the Polycom value preservation 2030 project**

Reliable manufacturer support is a key element to ensure that the Polycom system remains stable until 2025. This applies to both the basic technology TETRAPOL and the radio devices. To this end, the FOCP has once again obtained written assurances from Airbus that support will be extended. However, this assurance is tied to a service contract yet to be agreed. Recommendation 23538.004 remains open until the first service contract is signed.

The FOCP is maintaining a reliable and resilient overall plan for the completion of the project by the end of 2025. The FOCP updates the plan on a weekly basis based on feedback from the suppliers' project managers and the cantonal migration projects. Work is progressing according to plan, with around 77% of base stations having been migrated by mid-August 2024. This reduces the risk of protracted parallel operation. In addition, the FOCP is actively monitoring the safeguarding of Polycom operations in the Polycom value preservation 2030 project's risk and quality management programme.