

## AUDIT

# Audit of the key project ASALfutur with a focus on operational transfer

Supervisory Commission for Unemployment Insurance and State Secretariat for Economic Affairs

## KEY FACTS

The Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) has carried out a sixth audit at the Unemployment Insurance Compensation Office of the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO-UI) on the key project 'Payment of unemployment insurance benefits' (ASALfutur).<sup>4</sup> In the previous audits, the SFAO had repeatedly found weaknesses in the management and control of the project. The subject has not been sufficiently addressed to date. Various recommendations aim to address these shortcomings.

The payment system ASAL 2.0 was introduced in some areas between 2023 and 2024. At the time of the audit, the benefits for compensating short-time working, bad weather and insolvency are being paid through the new system. The project is now at a point where the payment of unemployment benefits is due to be introduced shortly. Putting these payments into operation as of 6 January, 2026 will present a much greater challenge compared to the other types of payments already introduced, given that unemployment benefits are complex and extensive: unemployment benefit accounts for around 90% of unemployment insurance payments. The aim of the audit is to ascertain whether both the project and the parent organisation are ready for the introduction of the new payments. The SFAO also reviewed the implementation of the recommendations which are relevant to their introduction.

In its audit, the SFAO identified that the project had made progress in management and leadership and the operating organisation was currently being set up. Many of the recommendations can be classed as having been completed. However, bringing external resources in-house remains a challenge for operations. The various measures, some of which are far-reaching, are having a positive effect, which suggests a cautious level of optimism about the successful introduction of unemployment benefit payments. Successful completion of the project remains a challenge for SECO, however, due to the significant backlog. Success is dependent on the project consistently addressing the identified challenges in migration, IT security, and implementation planning, and ensuring operational organisation.

## The chances of an introduction going according to plan are better than ever

Various changes in the project organisation have significantly improved communication and transparency. Decision-makers prioritise and make the necessary decisions at the appropriate level. More attention is being paid to risk management. The risk mitigation measures are monitored and regularly evaluated. However, the structured recording of problems could still be improved. In the upcoming training sessions, the project managers are expecting to receive reliable information on the maturity stage of the new payment service by means of various tests and based on the simulation of the new service by two unemployment insurance funds.

Two external bodies have approved the plan. The schedule is considered realistic, subject to the implementation of certain measures. For example, the requirements must be strictly prioritised and the speed of implementation must be kept high. The project is scheduled for completion in June 2026.

<sup>4</sup> "Governance audit of unemployment insurance" (audit mandate 17540), "Audit of the key ICT project ASALfutur" (audit mandates 19409, 21304 and 23622), "Implementation of key recommendations: key ICT project ASALfutur" (audit mandate 24607), available on the SFAO website

The scope of the project was reduced to include the introduction of international unemployment benefits and the ERP migration. Transparent communication will be necessary and the required financial resources for this will need to be ring-fenced.

### **For an introduction to be successful requires close monitoring of important issues**

Some issues require special attention. The implementation plan should ensure a smooth transition to the new system. Although the detailed plan is in line with expected progress, it has not yet been completed.

Setting up the operational and support organisation for the support phase which will follow the roll-out (hypercare phase) is on track. The support will be provided by employees of the unemployment insurance funds, internal SECO employees and external support services. The necessary resources have not yet been fully secured.

Migrating data and documents correctly is absolutely crucial for putting the payment of unemployment benefits into operation. There are plans for several test migrations in order to ensure that the processes are secure, and to gain experience with them. Various checks are planned for verifying the completeness and accuracy of the migrated data. The size of the samples is still to be determined. In addition, initial experience of carrying out the checks is to be gained during the test migrations. This still needs to be confirmed by the project. The documentation does not describe the individual migration steps in sufficient detail, and adequate transparency and traceability are not yet guaranteed.

The IT architecture and IT security have been through external checks. Both the external body and the SFAO identified significant shortcomings in IT security. SECO initiated immediate measures to ensure the introduction date was not jeopardised.

### **ASAL 2.0 needs to be developed further**

SECO intends to tackle optimisation and automation of the process once the project has been completed. Whether this will happen in a follow-on project, or be carried out by the operational organisation has not yet been decided. The proportion of external employees at SECO-UI is unfavourable. Reliance on external service providers is currently high, and this limits the ability of the organisation to be managed. The Supervisory Commission for the Unemployment Insurance Compensation Fund has approved a request to build up internal staff, but doing so is proving difficult. The required skilled workers cannot be recruited from the labour market as planned, meaning that SECO remains dependent on external support.