

Audit of subsidies – synthesis report

Pro Helvetia

Key facts

The public law foundation Pro Helvetia (PH) is charged with promoting Swiss art and culture with a view to diversity and high quality. The culture dispatch for 2016 to 2020 set a payment framework for PH. After cutbacks, this amounts to CHF 202.8 million, which corresponds to an average of around CHF 40.5 million per year.

The Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) planned a subsidy audit of PH with the objective of assessing the efficiency of culture promotion and the indicators for implementation control. The audit was awarded externally to Interface Politikstudien Forschung Beratung (Interface). This report summarises the most important findings and provides recommendations.

The promotion of culture by PH is generally assessed positively. PH can implement the strategy of the Federal Council in an efficient manner. The existing indicator system allows for statements on the implementation of tasks. PH has regularly further developed and critically questioned its promotional practice. However, despite a positive basic tenor, there is potential for optimisation in various areas.

Efficiency versus a wide range of tasks

PH can generally implement its tasks and goals efficiently with the current process design. There are indications that efficiency has been increased over the past few years in the examination of applications, for example. With the breadth of the range of tasks and target groups, the challenge lies in using resources in a focused and efficient manner without jeopardising the fulfilment of the statutory mandate at the same time. PH can check the scope for a possible focus and make wise use of it.

It is important that PH's critical practice is pursued in the future and that alternative promotional tools in particular are regularly examined.

The indicators do not allow for quantitative verification or the measurement of effects

When formulating the indicators, no targets were set. However, quantitative values are important as a basis for supervision. The SFAO recommends determining the quantitative data to be included in ex-post reporting and taking it into account for management purposes.

The indicators do not permit an assessment of the effects on the target groups or of the achievement of the overarching objectives of the culture dispatch. Impact indicators are indispensable for measuring the sustainability and long-term effects of the promotion. Since the measurement of effects can increase the credibility and acceptance of promotion, the SFAO recommends examining which impact indicators should be formulated.

There is only partial communication about the evaluation activities of the foundation. The SFAO recommends openly providing information about evaluations conducted internally and externally.

Original text in German

Generelle Stellungnahme der Geprüften

Pro Helvetia bedankt sich bei der EFK und bei Interface für die konstruktive und wertschätzende Zusammenarbeit im Rahmen der Subventionsprüfung. Sie begrüsst die grundsätzlich positive Beurteilung ihrer Kulturfördertätigkeit und ihrer Umsetzung der strategischen Ziele des Bundesrates. Pro Helvetia beabsichtigt, ihre Förderpraxis auch künftig kritisch weiterzuentwickeln und das Optimierungspotenzial wahrzunehmen.