

Follow-up audit of the implementation of key recommendations

Federal Office for the Environment

Key facts

The Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) conducted a follow-up audit of the implementation of the recommendations made in two audits performed at the Federal Office for the Environment (FOEN) in 2017 and 2020¹. The FOEN is required to provide information on the state of the environment, and any changes to it, using indicators. The two recommendations audited concern this environmental monitoring work, which costs around CHF 20 million per year. The first recommendation called on the FOEN to introduce a tool for examining cost-saving measures in data collection. The second recommendation concerned the introduction of an application process for a new indicator or new data collection. This follow-up audit concluded that the two recommendations verified have been implemented and can therefore be closed.

An SAP-based concept, control plan and application process to ensure better management of environmental monitoring work

In 2021, the FOEN, and more specifically the Environmental Data Section, introduced the control plan, a tool designed to inform management of the savings potential within the divisions' respective measurement networks. The divisions are now required to complete the control plan every year. This tool encourages them to assess their costs regularly and systematically, and to develop an awareness of potential savings measures. It also enables management to maintain close contact with the divisions on this subject. In addition, the FOEN has achieved some savings, in particular by halving the number of indicators it manages. This was a recommendation made by the SFAO in 2017. This is reflected in the reduction of around CHF 2 million in costs generated by environmental monitoring between 2019 and 2022.

To apply for new monitoring, the person responsible for the activity must submit a SAP request in order to receive the necessary financial resources. This new application process then goes through a number of defined approval stages. The application is examined by the Environmental Data Section according to the environmental monitoring concept, which came into force in 2021. The reorganisation currently taking place will allow the section to gain more expertise in the environmental areas, enabling it to take on a more important role as a cross-cutting section.

Original text in French

¹ "Audit of environmental observation" (audit mandate 17408) and "Follow-up audit on the implementation of main recommendations" (audit mandate 20242), both available on the SFAO website (www.sfao.admin.ch).