

Strategic management of the Confederation's real estate portfolio

Cross-section audit of construction and property bodies

Key facts

The Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) estimates that the Confederation spends around CHF 1.7 billion per year on maintaining and operating the existing real estate portfolio, new investments and rent. Consolidated figures are not available. The real estate replacement value is over CHF 29 billion. This means that the Confederation is likely to be one of the largest property owners in Switzerland. Three federal construction and property bodies¹ see to the real estate management tasks and responsibilities.

The aim of the audit was to assess the strategic management of the real estate portfolio. The SFAO believes that closer and more binding cooperation should be sought in strategic federal real estate management. It sees the cross-divisional office FOBL as the pacesetter for promoting more binding cooperation between the construction and property bodies.

The divisional solution in real estate management is supported by the Federal Council and Parliament

Parallel to the SFAO audit, the Federal Council (FC) reacted to the 2012 Vitali postulate entitled "A single office for civilian and military real estate". It instructed the construction and property bodies to examine the advantages and disadvantages of a central unit. Prepared with external support, the report concluded that the current divisional solution optimally supports the Confederation's real estate management. The postulate was abandoned in the spring of 2017.

The SFAO can generally subscribe to the FC's view that an organisational merger of real estate management would not have any significant advantages for the Confederation at present.

However, the SFAO has concluded that the individual construction and property bodies are highly focused on their own real estate business and that no uniformity can be discerned in important areas, which makes an overview impossible.

It is only together that the challenges in real estate management can be tackled

In the SFAO's view, the lack of concrete joint objectives, corresponding sets of key figures and uniform real estate data management makes it difficult to compare the construction and property bodies with each other, with other real estate administrations in the public sector or with private companies. According to the construction and property bodies and the FC, the individual solutions are due to the high weighting of the specific customer focus and the concerns about the manageability and efficiency of a single real estate organisation.

Original text in German

¹ The Federal Office for Buildings and Logistics (FOBL), armasuisse Immobilien (ar Immo) and the Board of the Swiss Federal Institutes of Technology (ETH Board).