Audit of the harmonisation of personnel processes
Federal Office of Personnel

Key facts

Federal personnel data is processed mainly in the information system for personnel data management (IPDM). This an application from the SAP product family. Other non-SAP applications are used as upstream systems or subsystems (e.g. eRecruiting) in the Federal Administration. To date, personnel processes supported by this multiplicity of systems have not been fully harmonised across departments and offices.

IPDM, an SAP R/3 application, will be maintained only up to the end of 2027. The eRecruiting tool will already have to be replaced by end-2021. As part of the SUPERB project, aimed at replacing the entire federal SAP landscape, the information systems for personnel data will also be replaced. At the same time, personnel processes are to be harmonised and aligned with the SAP standard. Around CHF 32 million was budgeted for the HR project.

The Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) audited the harmonisation of personnel processes planned under the HR project. The project is underway and processes are being harmonised and aligned with the SAP standard. However, further improvements are necessary.

Harmonisation of personnel processes is underway, but the resulting risks must be reduced further

In the SFAO's view, the greatest risk of continued inconsistency in Federal Administration personnel processes is posed by the planned dual-system landscape. The civil Federal Administration will have no choice but to adopt SAP standards, given its chosen cloud solution. However, for its mission-critical system, the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport has opted for different technology with "on premises". The SFAO takes a particularly critical view of the lack of concept for merging the data sets from both systems after a mission.

Requirements from other support processes (e.g. announcing new arrivals, in order that the IT equipment can be made available) are not systematically recorded and embedded into the processes. Likewise, the requirements of the internal control system have not yet been included in the process design. The SFAO issued recommendations on both these subjects.

Other recommendations concern the fact that, at the time of the audit, there was a lack of implementation mandate (project mandate) and process descriptions were incomplete.

The SAP standard is simultaneously largely complied with and criticised

Compliance with the SAP standard is a Federal Council requirement. The aim is to achieve cost-effective operation by means of a few adjustments to the standard products. This objective is widely accepted and supported by the departments. However, if the standard is applied too strictly, this can cause day-to-day operations to become uneconomical. The SFAO observed that the very limited options for adjustments in the selected cloud solution allow virtually no deviations from the standard, and none had been requested up the time of the audit's completion.

Another time-critical element is the implementation of the applicant management process, as the existing application will have to be shut down by the end of 2021. Although the implementation work is well underway, there are still gaps in the design of the requisite training; these must be remedied quickly.

The Federal Office of Personnel should better record end-user needs expressed by the line and integrate them into the project. This involves the recording and modification of items such as working hours, expenses, etc. The corresponding specialist knowledge and the expectations must be appropriately incorporated into the project work.

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