

Follow-up audit of the implementation of key recommendations

General Secretariat of the Federal Department of Home Affairs and Federal Statistical Office

Key facts

In 2017, the Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) audited the implementation of the Confederation's Open Government Data (OGD) strategy¹, which aims to make open and freely usable government data available to the public. On the one hand, OGD is important for making the work of the administration transparent to the outside world; on the other hand, it harbours economic potential, since innovative new business models can emerge from this data. However, it is still not possible to precisely quantify this potential. Seven recommendations resulted from this audit.

The audit at that time took place at the Swiss Federal Archives, which was then in charge of implementing the strategy. However, there was a change in responsibilities shortly afterwards, and the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) is now the competent body. The FSO set up the OGD Office, which today has 4.5 FTAs. The OGD forum also brings together other federal offices, in particular those that have experience in working with OGD, such as geo-data (swisstopo) and meteorological and climate data (MeteoSwiss).

All recommendations have been implemented

The Federal Act on the Use of Electronic Means to Conduct the Tasks of the Authorities created the binding, effective framework that the SFAO had recommended. The strategy applicable in 2017 (2014 to 2018) was replaced by a follow-up strategy (2019 to 2023). This was approved by the Federal Council and is being achieved by the FSO by means of an implementation plan and a report to the Conference of Secretaries General (CSG).

It was possible to strengthen the dialogue with users via various platforms. Their level of satisfaction was assessed in a survey, which generally produced positive results. The potential for improvement identified is being integrated into the portal migration project. As part of this project, accessibility will be implemented in accordance with the federal standard. It is not possible to precisely measure the benefits in monetary terms. The FSO resolves this issue indirectly by publishing 89 show cases (products created with OGD) on the opendata.swiss website. This portal provides access to around 8,400 government data sets from all federal levels.

The positions required for the OGD Office are financed by the FSO (1.9 FTAs) and by Digital Public Services Switzerland (DPSS; 2.6 FTAs). However, funding by the DPSS is only secured until the end of 2025. The FSO and the General Secretariat of the Federal Department of Home Affairs are currently looking for a follow-up solution.

¹ "Implementation of the Open Government Data Strategy for Switzerland at the Confederation – cross-section audit" (audit mandate 17491), available on the SFAO website

The new platforms show that it has been increasingly possible to establish an open data culture. Potential synergies have also been found and exploited. For example, the national data management programme offers synergies in the area of infrastructure and organisation.

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