Audit of business continuity management in the operations service sector Federal Office of Information Technology, Systems and Telecommunication

Key facts

The Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) checked whether or not the operations service sector of the Federal Office of Information Technology, Systems and Telecommunication (FOITT) can ensure the core business of its customers in all major crisis situations in accordance with the contractual agreements. Overall, the operations service sector and the FOITT made a good impression with their measures in the event of a crisis. Tools, processes and documents allow a systematic and controlled restoration of normal operations after an incident.

After two serious incidents in 2011 and 2013, management regulated business continuity management (BCM) at office level in the form of a policy and strategy. The possible failure scenarios were categorised and the crisis organisation was determined. The framework conditions for the operations service sector within which the preventive measures are defined are derived from this. In principle the operations service sector is service-oriented in accordance with the IT infrastructure library[1]. Accordingly, the response to incidents and restarts are regulated via IT service continuity management (ITSCM). In the overall context of FOITT BCM, ITSCM is part of business continuity planning. As soon as an incident can no longer be resolved within a specialist sector, it is escalated to a major incident (MI). A responsible MI manager takes over so that coordination and monitoring of the activities to resolve the incident can be completed. Should further problems emerge, a task force will be deployed in addition. The task force is authorised to assign experts across units to provide assistance with problem solving. In both cases, the FOITT as an office will still operate normally. Only when the task force cannot find a timely solution for a problem which has occurred will the FOITT director or his deputy trigger the BCM crisis mode.

The checklists and procedures are not yet entirely complete. The deadlines for finishing the work have been set, however. The SFAO sees room for improvement with regard to completing the test scenarios. A major training exercise took place in May 2016 during a management workshop. What is lacking is multiannual planning of further tests so that all sectors can be covered in the medium-term cycle. The SFAO has made corresponding recommendations.

Original text in German

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[1]　IT infrastructure library is a collection of predefined and standardised processes, functions and roles as they typically occur in every IT infrastructure in medium-sized and large-scale companies.