

Audit of the key ICT project FITANIA Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport

Key facts

The Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) assessed the FITANIA¹ programme of the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (DDPS), which consisted of three projects at the time of the audit. The DDPS wishes to invest at least CHF 3.3 billion in command infrastructure, information technology and network connections with the programme (excluding internal personnel expenses within the Confederation)².

A regional fixed transport network based on fibre optic cables and radio relay connections has been under construction since 2005 (Swiss command network project, Fhr Netz CH). The initial conceptual work on a uniform telecommunications platform for needs-based mobile and partially mobile data and voice transmission started in 2008 (Armed Forces telecommunications project, TK A). Finally, the DDPS launched the DDPS/Confederation data centres project (RZ VBS / BUND 2020 project³) in 2011. The three projects were brought under the umbrella of the FITANIA programme in 2014.

The SFAO believes that the individual projects are set up appropriately and that the project management is focused. The programme and project leaders have the necessary resources, expertise and skills in the SFAO's opinion.

The structure of the FITANIA programme is to be reconsidered

The programme carries out coordinating tasks and has no power to issue instructions. Accordingly, the individual projects have their own guarantee credits and report on their status independently.

The SFAO found that neither the programme mandate nor the project management specifications applicable in the DDPS are fully complied with by the FITANIA programme in terms of tasks, powers and responsibilities. The DDPS does not intend to extend the programme's powers. Consequently, the SFAO recommends refraining from calling the programme a key ICT project and instead registering the projects individually.

A FITANIA specialist committee advises the Commander-in-Chief as the programme principal. The committee has hitherto assessed the FITANIA programme, the overall Armed Forces telecommunications project concept and the architecture options. In the SFAO's view, technical expertise at project level would be necessary for military procurements on this scale. This is not ensured with the current FITANIA specialist committee and therefore would have to be obtained in another manner.

¹ Command infrastructure, information technology and connection to the network infrastructure of the Armed Forces

² Plus approximately CHF 500 million for value preservation and/or recurring investments, bringing the total costs to at least CHF 3.8 billion

³ See "Audit of the DC DDPS/Confederation 2020 project" (mandate 15511), available on the website of the SFAO.



Specification-compliant monitoring of progress still has to be established

An earned value analysis as required for progress measurement by the Finance Delegation (FinDel) in the report on the status of key federal ICT projects has existed in the Swiss command network project since June 2015⁴. However, it contains errors and assesses the schedule and cost situation to the detriment of the project. In the SFAO's view, this has to be rectified as soon as possible.

Moreover, the SFAO believes that an up-to-date presentation of all planned, approved, used and still required funds should be submitted to Parliament regularly for all projects in the FITANIA programme.

The procurement of new generation devices must be put out to tender

In the first of six procurement stages in the Armed Forces telecommunications project, the Armed Forces are buying current generation directional beam devices with more extensive functionality (legally compliant direct contract). Parliament approved CHF 118 million for this and services for the following procurement stages in the additional armament dispatch of 2015.

The SFAO considers that the procurement procedure in the Armed Forces telecommunications project is appropriate overall, but believes that future procurement stages should be independent of the manufacturer and put out to tender insofar as possible as intended by the DDPS and as assured to the SFAO. Furthermore, realistic tests are to be planned accordingly for procurement maturity and militia and troop suitability.

Coordination with further projects is to be settled

At least one other DDPS project could have potential synergies with the FITANIA programme because of its dependencies and targets, i.e. the secure data sharing network (SDVN) project. SDVN initialisation is under way and should have been completed by the end of May 2016 with an overview to form the basis for the next steps. The DDPS intends to decide on possibly coordinating this project in the FITANIA programme once the initialisation phase has been completed. The SFAO considers this clarification to be urgent and recommends agreeing on a binding arrangement by October 2016 at the latest.

Original text in German

⁴ The DDPS/Confederation data centres project also started an earned value analysis in December 2015. As the SFAO audited this project already in 2015, it is taken into account in the audit of the FITANIA programme where expedient, but it is not assessed in depth.