

Follow-up audit of IT governance

Federal Statistical Office

Key facts

As national competence centre for public statistics, the Federal Statistical Office (FSO) produces and publishes statistical information. In terms of content, the statistics deal with the status and development of the population, economy, society, education, research, territory and the environment.

The FSO uses a comprehensive IT infrastructure operated by the Federal Office of Information Technology, Systems and Telecommunication (FOITT). In 2012, the Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) audited aspects of IT governance, IT security and the FSO's procurement process, and issued ten recommendations.¹

The lack of appropriate business continuity management (BCM) was portrayed as a major shortcoming. In consultation with the General Secretaries Conference, the General Secretariat of the Federal Department of Home Affairs (FDHA) issued the "Guidelines on business continuity management (BCM)" as at 1 September 2017. The FSO then established its BCM, which was examined by the SFAO as part of this audit.

Business processes revised and strengthened

The FSO has to provide its services according to the "best effort principle". Neither the statutory requirements nor the existing contracts between the FSO and its clients provide for delivery obligations on the part of the FSO with deadlines set in a binding manner.

The FSO determined the criticality (relevance and severity) of its business processes based on the business impact analysis carried out. In the event of a major disruption, the FSO convenes the crisis team established for this purpose, which is entrusted with the task of continuing to handle the business processes according to their urgency with the resources still available. The FSO carried out a drill on its BCM on 3 July 2018 and plans to carry out further drills every six months. It is specified that any potential for improvement identified is to be documented. Thereafter, the relevant bodies will be consulted for implementation decisions.

The SFAO would like to point out that the FSO will have to review the BCM components periodically in the future. This is also envisaged in the BCM guidelines of the FDHA. The SFAO would also like to point out that a distribution list should be established for BCM-related documents and that there should be traceable change control management.

Of the ten recommendations made, nine have since been implemented or have become obsolete due to changed framework conditions. The last recommendation still outstanding will be reviewed at a later date (see details in appendix 1).

¹ The report "IT governance, IT security and procurement" (audit mandate 12421) was submitted to the Finance Delegation

Replacement of the outdated IT application

The Business and Enterprise Register (BUR) constitutes a substantial part of the IT resources used by the FSO. The data of all businesses, companies and firms that exercise an economic activity in Switzerland is maintained in this IT system.

The FSO is in the process of replacing the BUR application currently used. To this end, it is carrying out the BUR reengineering project, whose main result is the creation and commissioning of the new BUR IT application. The SFAO carried out a follow-up audit of the BUR reengineering project in 2017² and submitted four recommendations to the FSO. It considers these to have been implemented in the meantime (see appendix 2).

Original text in German

² "Follow-up audit of the Business and Enterprise Register reengineering project" (audit mandate 17412)