Audit of the key ICT project SUPERB
Federal Office for Buildings and Logistics

Key facts

The ERP platform currently used by the Federal Administration for its support processes will continue to be supported by the manufacturer, SAP, until the end of 2027. In June 2017, the Federal Council decided to continue using SAP as the provider of standard software for the support processes of the Federal Administration. At the same time, the processes are to be modernised. The migration to the new generation of SAP software will be implemented using the SUPERB and ERP systems D/ar programmes. In 2020, the Federal Council issued a directive on the specifications for the management and leadership of the SUPERB programme and its responsibilities in relation to the ERP systems D/ar programme.

The federal ERP support processes (SUPERB) programme was launched in 2018 under the direction of the then Federal IT Steering Unit (FITSU). In 2020, management of the programme was transferred to the Federal Office for Buildings and Logistics (FOBL). When it took over, the FOBL restructured the programme organisation and switched to an agile management method. The SUPERB programme has a total budget of CHF 485 million.

After an initial audit of the SUPERB programme in 2020[1], this second audit conducted by the Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) focused on programme governance and reporting to the Finance Delegation and the Federal Council. The audit essentially showed that the programme set-up was successful, but that some of the project work is behind schedule. Furthermore, the FOBL still needs to strengthen programme governance in various areas. The effectiveness of the steering mechanisms could be improved; in particular, quality management needs to be strengthened.

Programme set-up a success, project work partly behind schedule

Since taking over the programme, the FOBL has made good progress in setting up the new organisation of SUPERB. The planning and availability of key resources, especially SAP specialists, is a constant challenge.

The programme contract has been signed by the programme sponsor and the project teams are mainly occupied with determining the target support processes. It was not possible to complete the preliminary acceptance of the core on 30 June 2021 as planned. The cloud integration, which was also scheduled for then, did not materialise either. The necessary supplier support, specifications and nationwide overarching framework conditions were partially lacking. It is indispensable for nationwide conditions regarding the use of the cloud to be quickly adopted and put into effect. Conversely, the new SAP basic infrastructure was put into operation by the Federal Office of Information Technology, Systems and Telecommunication (FOITT). In addition, various functionalities have already been used productively.

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[1] "Key ICT project SUPERB focusing on master data" (audit mandate 20407), available on the SFAO website (www.sfao.admin.ch)

Programme management has to be expanded

On the one hand, the programme sponsor manages the programme by means of monthly reports, and on the other hand, weekly consultations are held with the programme management. Furthermore, the programme sponsor is supported by an external risk and quality manager. It is striking that he did not critically scrutinise the programme's reporting. Furthermore, in the past, he made recommendations to strengthen quality assurance in the programme. To review the effectiveness of the implemented measures and the state of QA in the programme, the programme sponsor should consider an overall review of the system in the near future.

Important dimensions of the upcoming transformation, namely legal and organisational changes, have so far been insufficiently identified in the programme planning. The necessary transparency with regard to the critical path and significant dependencies is not reflected enough in the roadmap, which serves as an overview for the programme sponsor. On a positive note, the programme is planning a project that is intended to create the legal prerequisites for exploiting potential interdepartmental synergies.

In its conceptual work to date, the programme has consciously focused on the support process level instead of the federal ERP (enterprise resource planning[2]) services. The support process offices are responsible for the content of their own projects. In order to be able to obtain an end-to-end view, an overall management system for integral issues, for which the programme is responsible, must be developed.

Recommendations from the first SUPERB audit have been implemented

As part of this audit, the SFAO also monitored the implementation of three recommendations made in 2020. All three have been implemented (see Appendix 4).

Original text in German

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[2] Enterprise resource planning (ERP) describes the business task of planning and managing resources such as capital, personnel, operating equipment, materials, and information and communication technology in a timely manner and based on the company's requirements. Source: Wikipedia