

Audit of the DTI key project DaziT with a focus on the "Passar" goods traffic system

Federal Office for Customs and Border Security

Key facts

With its DaziT programme, the Federal Office for Customs and Border Security (FOCBS) is digitalising all of its core processes (collection of customs duties and taxes, border security) by the end of 2026. The FOCBS has put the total cost of the project at CHF 475.4 million. This includes CHF 393 million for external and internal service providers, of which the Federal Council has so far released CHF 334.9 million.

The current audit is the fourth of the DTI key project DaziT¹. The Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) focused on the risks for the introduction of the new goods traffic system Passar, the pivotal element of digitalisation in commercial goods traffic. The system is to be introduced in three phases by 2026.

The DaziT programme has a robust and realistic implementation plan for Passar 1.0 through to mid-2023. The increased risks for meeting the deadlines for the overall programme are monitored by the programme management, but these depend largely on external factors. They continue to be related mainly to the legal basis and maximising the use of digitalisation opportunities.

FOCB's planning for the introduction of Passar 1.0 is realistic

In collaboration with the business representatives, the FOCBS defined detailed milestones for the introduction of Passar 1.0 by mid-2023. In addition, the roadmap for the entire new Passar goods traffic system has been prepared up to 2026. The agreed deadlines are tight, but are considered feasible by both sides within the existing framework conditions.

The FOCBS based its assessment on its experience in portfolio planning and management within the SAFe framework. The programme management monitors the progress, development speed, costs and team workload. This information forms the basis for the schedule assessment, as well as reliable reporting on the programme's progress. The assessment is periodically reviewed by an independent external quality and risk manager.

Projected target achievements exceed the dispatch requirements, and considerably so in some cases

Overall, the FOCBS has established an effective control system that makes it possible for third parties to objectively assess progress. It uses detailed milestones and transparent benefit management to determine when and to what extent the objectives set out in the dispatch are to be achieved.

¹ The "Audit of the key ICT project DaziT" reports (audit mandates 18320, 19399 and 20287) are available on the SFAO website (www.sfao.admin.ch).

In collaboration with the business representatives, the FOCBS conducted a regulatory impact assessment. On this basis, the FOCBS assumes that, with CHF 209.6 million in cost savings, it will significantly exceed the target amount. At the same time, the FOCBS predicts that it will be able to cut 345 FTEs, compared to the 300 originally planned. However, the FOCBS highlights the high risks associated with the target for reducing operating costs. It has to finalise the operating cost estimate together with the service provider before it can make a comprehensive forecast.

The FOCBS wants to achieve the majority of these savings targets with the simplified processes in Passar 2.0 and a new reporting process. The legal basis for this is the FOCBS Enforcement Tasks Act (FOCBS ETA) and the corresponding ordinances. The Federal Council adopted the dispatch for the FOCBS ETA on 24 August 2022. The resource-intensive drafting of the ordinances involves many temporal uncertainties. This poses a significant risk, especially for the timely implementation of the simplifications in Passar 2.0.

Revision of the FOJ Legislative Guide is making slow progress

In addition to the process optimisations within the FOCBS, full digitalisation also depends on the partners involved in non-customs legislative instruments. Parliament underpinned its expectations in terms of maximum exploitation of the potential for digitalisation by issuing a mandate to the Federal Council².

Agile digitalisation projects must be provided with optimal support when legal adjustments are necessary. In its last audit, the SFAO issued a recommendation with the highest level of importance (priority A). The Federal Office of Justice (FOJ) is revising its Legislative Guide in collaboration with the Digital Transformation and ICT Steering Sector of the Federal Chancellery (FCh DTI). The FOJ has updated and published the data protection legislative guide on time; the revision of the general FOJ Legislative Guide is still pending.

The general FOJ Legislative Guide must incorporate the experiences of the large agile projects of the Federal Administration. The FOJ and the FCh DTI were unable to meet the original implementation deadline and have requested a grace period until the end of 2025. With the existing human resources, the necessary coordination tasks require more time. Consequently, ongoing and many new projects will scarcely benefit from this guide.

Responsibilities among cross-cutting roles

The FOCBS must document the assignment of non-functional requirements to the responsible cross-sectional roles in a comprehensible manner. On the one hand, this explicitly assumes responsibility for the correct implementation of measures; on the other hand, it simplifies checking of whether they are complete. The FOCBS is expected to implement the corresponding recommendation from the last SFAO audit on time.

Original text in German

² Enforcement of non-customs legislative instruments by the Federal Customs Administration. Who is in control, how are priorities set? Report in fulfilment of postulate 17.3361, Finance Committee NC, 18 May 2017