

Digital transformation: Summary report on past audits

Federal Chancellery – Digital Transformation and ICT Steering Sector

Key facts

At the Federal Administration, as elsewhere, digital transformation is a key tool for shaping the future. The Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) therefore decided to focus on the topic, conducting 16 audits on the digital transformation by May 2023. This summary report uses those audits to derive seven critical success factors for digital transformation projects.



Figure 1: Success factors for a successful digital transformation (source: SFAO)

The Federal Administration is facing a steep learning curve where digital transformation is concerned. Of the 16 projects selected by the SFAO for an audit, a quarter were on track. However, half of the audited projects were found to have significant shortcomings, with the remaining quarter lying somewhere in-between. The SFAO observed that very few of the audited offices take a holistic approach to digital transformation by addressing the relevant aspects of a digital transformation: customers, strategy, technology, operation, organisation and culture. As result, not only are opportunities missed but Switzerland also ends up lagging behind, as the European Commission's 2022 benchmark for electronic public services confirms. Switzerland is ranked 28th out of 36 European countries.

During its audits, the SFAO frequently found shortcomings in strategic management. In many cases, project goals are not ambitious enough, and the steering and structures are inadequate.

In addition, the SFAO repeatedly observed difficulties in the operational management of the digital transformation projects. First, they often include only some of the relevant stakeholders and processes, resulting in an incomplete transformation. Second, the legal basis is not revised comprehensively enough to drive the digital transformation forwards. Third,

key resource data is not given sufficient attention, which in turn means that data quality and data management are neglected. Fourth, leeway as regards federated systems, limited resources and experience is not adequately exploited.

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