Audit of the Electronic proof of identity project (e-ID)
Federal Office of Justice

Key facts

The Swiss Federal Audit Office (SFAO) has audited the Federal Office of Justice's (FOJ) project to introduce state-recognised electronic proof of identity (e-ID programme) for the first time. In March 2023, the Federal Chancellery classified this as a DTI key project.

The FOJ launched the project immediately after the Federal Act on Electronic Identification Services had been rejected in the referendum on 7 March 2021. It is a cross-departmental undertaking that requires close cooperation and coordination between numerous offices. The e-ID programme is currently still in the transformation process towards the programme structure in place since autumn 2023. The FOJ has assumed the role of client for the programme.

With the adoption of the dispatch dated 22 November 2023, the Federal Council approved the draft e-ID Act as well as the resources for the development and operation of the trust infrastructure, the issuing of the e-ID, and the pilot projects amounting to some CHF 182 million.[1] From 2029, once the project has been completed, expenses are expected to come to around CHF 25 million a year.

The chosen e-ID programme structure is appropriate and effective. As it was only defined in 2023, there is still some work to be done on the programme documents, roles and processes. Stakeholder management – and stakeholder communication – are deemed to be extremely important by the programme's steering committee. However, the necessary foundations for targeted, measurable communication with all stakeholders are not yet in place.

Programme structure transformation is not yet fully complete

In early autumn 2023, the project committee confirmed a change to the existing project structure as a HERMES[2] structure, retaining the agile implementation methods. The matrix structure used up to then was no longer sufficient for the size and complexity of the project. The structures that had previously worked well therefore need to be adapted in places, and the roles refined with regard to their competencies and responsibilities.

This particularly applies where roles originating from HERMES or SAFe[3] overlap in terms of content. The roles need to be fully described together with their tasks, competencies and responsibilities in the programme management plan. Various processes that have an effect on the programme also need to be defined. The SFAO therefore recommends that the missing programme documents be drawn up and include standardised definitions of the roles and processes.

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[1] The approval of Parliament is still outstanding.
[2] Project management method.
[3] Business agility framework for the implementation of agile practices throughout the company.

Project funds, operation and further development: joint programme application

The supplements for 2023 and the funds shown in the dispatch for 2024 onwards were drawn up across the departments and applied for as the consolidated requirements of the programme. The assumptions regarding future support costs will become clearer, particularly thanks to the experience gained in the pilot projects, and are to be discussed further in the coming budget periods. With the execution of the e-ID Act at ordinance level, the issue of fees also needs to be specified in more detail.

The programme client also requires information on financial developments for programme steering purposes. Some of the procedural and instrumental conditions needed for a full overview have already been adapted in the course of the audit, or are being drawn up.

Conceptually strengthen stakeholder management and stakeholder communication

The fact that the role of stakeholder management is located at programme steering level clearly shows how important this issue is to the e-ID programme.

Use of the e-ID and its ecosystem is essentially dependent on the acceptance and trust of the public. With the approval of the dispatch on the e-ID Act, it will now be possible to address all stakeholders actively and purposefully. To gear future activities to the stakeholder groups in a systematic and targeted manner, the basic documents need to be updated, linked to the stakeholder analysis, and set out in a communication plan. This should also make it possible to measure the effect and show the active reach of the measures. The SFAO is sending a corresponding recommendation to the FOJ.

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