Project audit of the National Address Service
Federal Statistical Office

Key points

The Federal Statistical Office launched the project for a National Address Service (NAS) in 2018. Preliminary work was already carried out by the Federal Office of Justice between 2016 and 2018. In future, the NAS will enable authorities and third parties with a legal mandate to query the residential address of all natural persons resident in Switzerland. The Switzerland-wide address query service should facilitate more efficient written communication and help determine responsibilities for official processes. The project was included in the Digital Public Services Switzerland action plan (formerly eGovernment Switzerland) in 2017. Project funding has been ensured by Digital Public Services Switzerland (DPSS) since 2022. The total budget for the project is CHF 9.8 million. The project is currently in the concept phase and project completion is planned for the end of 2026.

The NAS project addresses a key challenge in the federal context: cross-authority data management. The findings and tried-and-tested approaches are also likely to lead the way for future projects.

The legal basis sub-project is responsible for the entry into force of the new Federal Act on the National Address Query System for Individuals (Address Service Act, ASA) and the ASA Ordinance. There were delays in this sub-project. The resulting rescheduling in summer 2023 led to the project completion date being postponed. The start of implementation work was therefore postponed to the second quarter of 2024. Project work was reduced to a minimum in order to relieve budgetary pressure. The ASA is yet to be discussed by Parliament. The assessments and recommendations in the report are based on the assumption that adjustments or additions to the ASA will not result in any fundamental changes to the project mandate.

The business case has yet to be finalised. However, this is necessary for effective project management and marketing of the service. In addition, at the time of the audit, the project did not sufficiently involve key stakeholders. Project management and leadership need to be strengthened. The NAS is not strategically embedded in the overall context of master data management for natural persons.

Stakeholder management needs to be strengthened

The project stakeholders are numerous and diverse. There is a lack of proactive stakeholder management that enables the timely identification and prioritisation of core requirements, and that supports effective service marketing. Stakeholder involvement to date has been limited primarily to representatives from the cantons and the requirements for data delivery. The other groups involved (communes, third parties with a legal mandate, Federal Administration) are poorly represented in the project team. The NAS can be successful only if it is actually used. This requires the service to fulfil the expectations and needs of all stakeholder groups – especially those subject to fees. Since the project management has opted for agile implementation, involving the stakeholders at an early stage is critical to success.

There is no target vision for the overall system and security requirements need to be reviewed

At a strategic level, the objectives of the Federal Chancellery's Digital Transformation and ICT Steering Sector and the DPSS regarding the master data of natural persons are largely aligned. However, there is no harmonised target vision for the overall system or coordinated planning of measures as yet. The subsequent integration of the NAS into the more comprehensive target solution is therefore not apparent. Coordination with ongoing and planned data governance activities is also critical to success.

The NAS's protection needs analysis does not take current findings into account and needs to be updated.

Project management and leadership must be strengthened

There is a lack of active support for the project from its quality and risk manager (QRM project). He should provide a regular and independent assessment of the risk situation. Risk management must be given broader support in the project committee and be more effective. Risks must always be assigned to a responsible person.

Project reporting must be improved. A roadmap that favours the management of dependencies between project activities is also recommended. The project committee must be able to fulfil its steering role by being provided with the necessary information promptly and on a regular basis.

At the time of the audit, it was unclear which functionalities were to be expected with the initial launch and at the end of the project. The planning and financial budgeting are therefore not reliable. The scope and content of the project must be defined as soon as possible, and a review of its planning and financing must be ensured.

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