Introduction

Purpose of the Policy

This IT Policy of the Federal Administration sets out the goals and principles of the Federal Council for the implementation of new Information and Telecommunication Technologies (ICT) within the Federal Administration and their medium and long-term development. The ICT provide support to modern government and are there to serve primary political objectives.

Implementation of the Policy

The Federal Council expects all colleagues to apply the IT Policy. It is a firm guideline as to how the ICT can be used and how contributions can be made to their further development. The policy's influence should reach beyond the Federal Administration so that it can be recognised that the Federal Council and Administration wish to assist in the development of the implementation of ICT and, to this end, wish to work together with the Cantons, industry and science.

The Federal Administration seeks to lead in the implementation of ICT

Goal by 2005

The provision of information, in the broadest sense of the word, is a significant and growing task of the Federal Administration. The ICT play a central role in the transformation of data into information, which can then be rapidly and widely disseminated.
The goal, therefore, is to make the Federal Administration one of the leading administrations in the implementation of ICT by 2005.

Assessment

This will be measured according to objective criteria, such as cost-benefit analysis, as well as by the subjective satisfaction of partners, the public and the Administration itself. The yardstick will be other Swiss and foreign administrations and equally, the private sector.

ICT as an Opportunity

For a country with few natural resources, the ICT represent a key resource, both to enhance the country as a location for business and services, and to ensure that society stays technologically up to date. The Federal Administration is speeding up the implementation of ICT so that the benefits can be spread as widely as possible.
That way, the inherent potential of ICT are to be used in order to promote equal opportunities in such a way that a «digital divide» in society might be prevented.

The ICT for the benefit of all

Everyone is Affected

The ICT affect every single job and the entire provision of services of the Federal Administration.

Leap in Quality

◊ The ICT enable performance that government and administration could otherwise not attain, either at optimum quality or in the required time, or not under economically viable conditions.

Result oriented

◊ The Federal Council and Administration are using the ICT to handle and support their business procedures and to provide services.

Attractive Employment Opportunities

◊ The implementation of ICT in the Federal Administration leads to the creation of interesting and varied employment, especially in the area of IT and Telecommunications.

Clear goals for IT within the Federal Administration

ICT for faultless provision of services

The partners of the Federal Administration in business and society, as well as the public as a whole, expect to receive faultless and cost effective service. In order to be able to fulfil these tasks, the Federal Council and Administration are implementing ICT in a targeted manner and are developing them further.

New Impetus from the ICT

In addition, the ICT create possibilities and provide impetus to develop new procedures and improve the quality and economic efficiency of the products. The IT processes themselves are developed further together with external partners in Switzerland and abroad.

Hence, the targets for IT by 2005 are as follows:

The Product: Information

1. The Product «Information» will be provided to the population and the partners of the Federal Administration punctually, economically and to the best possible quality.
   Costs will be measured (compared to 1999 figures), selected examples will be assessed for quality, as will the satisfaction of those drawing on Federal services.

Greater Transparency, simplified Contact

2. Contact with the public, business and other interested bodies by the administration will be made easier and simplified and the transparency of actions of the Federal Council and Administration will be raised.
   The range of information services and transactions offered by the Federal Administration through ICT will be assessed (compared with 1999 figures and international standards).

Information Platform Switzerland

3. A common platform for information will exist in Switzerland to which the government will make a significant contribution.
Progress in the development of the information platform will be assessed (compared with 1999 figures), as will the contribution made by the government.

Operational Support

4. The functions of the Federal Administration (management, legislation, administration and implementation) will be supported by the ICT.
The functions of the administration supported by the ICT will be assessed (compared with 1999 figures).

Better Working Conditions

5. Working conditions in the Federal Administration will be further improved. Flexibility, especially for new policies and working times, will be increased.
The satisfaction of colleagues with the opportunities offered by the ICT in the workplace will be assessed (compared with 1999 figures).

Efficient IT Procedures

6. The IT procedures of the government will be so safe and efficient that they will receive external recognition.
The contribution of the Federal Administration made at national and international gatherings will be assessed (compared with 1999 figures), as will the bilateral contributions that could be made with individual partners to the further common development and application of ICT.

Cost Effectiveness – a particularly important guideline

Prioritisation, Standardisation

IT services should be sourced as cost effectively as possible. Purchasers of services should take economic considerations into account when formulating their requirements in that they are prioritised.

This will consequently enable standard solutions to be used thereby taking advantage of possible economies of scale.

Cost Awareness

Service providers on the other hand should show the purchasers the cost implications of their requirements. Those responsible for management and co-ordination at departmental and governmental level should pay particular attention to the sparing use of human and financial resources in all areas and at all levels.

Co-operation with Third Parties

Core IT services will be provided internally within the Federal Administration as long as this can be achieved economically and to the highest standards or unless specifically necessary for reasons of security. Services may be transferred to the private sector where it is deemed qualitatively and economically more suitable to do so. Co-operation with third parties (other public administrations or private firms) will be nurtured in order to benefit from the exchange and gathering of knowledge and skills from both partners under favourable conditions.

Common Tasks – Clear Responsibilities

The Federal Council is convinced that

Diversity

◊ A highly diverse culture offers incentives and opportunities for further development.

Standardisation

◊ for the unhindered exchange of information and the optimum organisation of working and support procedures, a far reaching standardisation must be applied as well as uniform IT procedures.

Critical Mass

◊ a critical mass is necessary for optimum quality.

As decentralised as possible, as centralised as is necessary

For these reasons, responsibility for IT will be determined on the principle of «as decentralised as possible, as centralised as is necessary». Administration sections and departments have the responsibility for the application of IT in their domain.

Process-orientation

The IT business of the Administration is organised along process lines. The consequent orientation along processes allows for a clear delineation of responsibilities and flexible structuring.

Management with Foresight

The goal of strategic management is to bring about, in a fore-sighted manner, uniform principles for IT within the Federal Administration in order to guarantee internal and external interoperability. Working on the principle of the working procedures of the departments and ministries, it defines the principles and demands of IT such as

- ◊ processes,
- ◊ management and use of data,
- ◊ architecture of information systems and engineering as well as,
- ◊ standards of data protection and data security.

Protection of Persons and Information

Responsibility for Security

Making use of the opportunities provided by ICT also requires a particularly responsible approach to security. All those who carry out IT procedures are responsible for introducing and applying the necessary measures to prevent misuse.

The holders of data must define its security level. The service providers hold the information and data in trust. The maintenance of all aspects (protection, practicability, economy) of data security must be ensured.

Necessity

Personal details and information may only be collected, generated and processed using ICT if specifically required for business purposes.

Confidentiality

Personal and classified data and information are to be processed such that confidentiality is ensured, also when using ICT resources.

Availability and Integrity

The processing of information using ICT resources carries costs. Availability and integrity of information should therefore be taken into account.

Demonstrability and Provability

The application of ICT should not diminish the demonstrability and provability of actions undertaken by traditional correspondence.

Risk Reduction

The ICT offer the possibility of minimising risks in the collection, processing and storing of data. These possibilities are to be maximised accordingly. On the one hand, all possible precautionary measures are to be taken, but on the other hand the effects of any security problems are to be limited and resolved without delay.

IT as a Challenge for All

Training

IT on the one hand is a resource to support and facilitate daily tasks. It enables the creation of information from data, its processing and use. For this reason, it is an important tool for the Federal Administration, for every superior and for all employees. The mastering of this tool has to be learnt and practised and only in this way can it be used optimally. Initial and continual training is one of the most obvious duties of all employees.

IT as a Challenge

IT though has a value in its own right. It is developed as a product, it is manufactured and distributed.
It provides incentives for the further development of technology application and for the fulfilment of core tasks of the Federal Administration. Taking up and developing these initiatives is also part of the challenge for everyone.

Final Provisions

The Federal Information Technology Policy of the 8th July 1994 will be rescinded. This Policy will come into force with its adoption by the Federal Council.

The Information Technology Model presented here was approved by the Federal Council on the 18th October 2000.