

Cleaning up contaminated sites

(Altlastensanierung)

Name of Supreme Audit Institution

Österreichischer Rechnungshof (Austrian Court of Audit)

Title of summary report on audit findings

Report; Wahrnehmungsbericht des Rechnungshofes, Teilgebiete der Gebarung des Bundes Reihe Bund 2003/3; published in August 2003

Audit issue

Waste

Audit type

Combined audit

Description of the Audit

The aim of the audit was to investigate and evaluate the economic and efficient use of invested funds, the ecological output and the efficiency of the execution (e.g. control mechanisms). Another issue was to check whether the recommendations of the last audit in 1995 were carried out.

The audit was undertaken by the Austrian Court of Audit on its own initiative. It was conducted in April and June 2002 and covered the period between 1995 and 2002.

Scope of audit

development of the legal framework

objectives and their achievement

priorities

financing

upcoming costs in comparison with estimated revenues

Audited units

- Federal Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, Environment and Water Management
- Kommunalkredit Austria AG (the entrusted bank)

Summary of the audit findings and evaluation of the audited activities

From 1993 to 2002 grants in the amount of 450.98 million EUR were allocated and 217.38 million EUR were paid out.

There were nine amendments to the pertaining law, which followed the recommendations of the last audit in 1995 by the Austrian Court of Audit.

The SAI revealed a lack in setting priorities concerning the contaminated sites.

In Austria there were 82 200 sites which are supposed to be contaminated. Only 38 200 of them (46 %) were already identified to be contaminated.

The procedure of payments involved too many levels of administration.

The system of financing did not efficiently take account of the polluter-pays principle. Besides there was a need for changes in the financing system due to an upcoming decrease of deposited waste and therefore a decline of revenues.

Some tasks of the ministry could be outsourced to the Federal Environmental Agency.

Addressees of the summary report on audit findings

The report was forwarded to the Nationalrat (federal legislation) of Austria.

Results of the audit

Negotiations for a comprehensive review of the legal framework were initiated.

The financing was reviewed and secured.

The procedure was streamlined.

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