

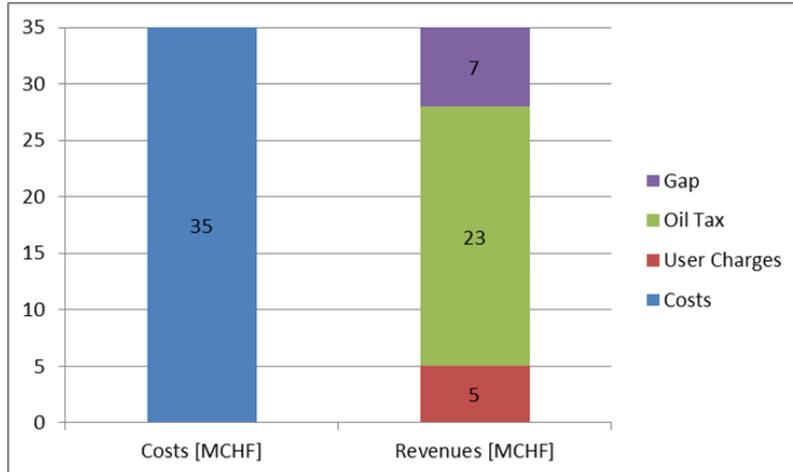
Air traffic control financing at regional airports

Geneva, December 2015 – Air traffic control services at Swiss regional airports are in deep financial deficit. Responsibility for financing these air traffic control services will pass from skyguide to the owners of the airports at the start of 2017 – a year later than originally planned. Skyguide is actively engaged in providing an innovative solution and in a cost-sharing arrangement that is workable for all involved, and will reduce its costs by CHF 3m.

Air traffic control at the Swiss regional airports¹ is in deficit as a result of low traffic volumes and relatively high operating and infrastructure costs. Until now, the financing gap has been covered by the national airports (through cross-subsidisation) and the Confederation (by means of subsidies financed by oil tax). From 2016, all cross-subsidisation will be forbidden by law, creating a CHF 7m gap in the financing.

Air traffic control charges do not cover costs

Air traffic control costs at regional airports amount to around CHF 35m; however, revenue from user charges only amounts to CHF 5m. Until now, the Confederation² has subsidised the regional airports, to the tune of CHF 23m, from the oil tax; CHF 7m came from cross-subsidies financed by the air traffic control charges of the national airports (Zürich-Kloten and Geneva-Cointrin). The new regulation only affects this amount.



In recognition of the job the regional airports do (pilot training, offering direct connections for business with the peripheral regions and easing the burden on national airports) skyguide, the Confederation and the Verband Schweizer Flugplätze (VSF, the Swiss Airports Association) are actively engaged in implementing a gradual transfer of the financial responsibility, as well as a solution involving both economic and operational measures.

¹ Bern, Buochs, Grenchen, Les Eplatures, Lugano, Sion (the civil part) and St.Gallen-Altenrhein. Samedan is not directly affected by the solution.

² The change to the oil tax voted for by the people in 2009 (Art. 86 BV) means that the Confederation can subsidise air traffic control costs via "Spezialfinanzierung Luftverkehr" (SFLV, special financing, air traffic).

Burden to be shared between the Confederation, air traffic control and users

As a result of European law being adopted, skyguide is no longer permitted to finance the costs of the regional airports via other sources. The arrangement between the Swiss Airports Association (VSF), the Confederation (BAZL, the Federal civil aviation office) and skyguide envisages gradual equalization of the burden by 2020:

Organisation	Measure/change in costs
Skyguide/ Confederation	2016: skyguide remains responsible for the administration of the air traffic control account of the regional airports, a year longer than planned ³ . CHF 7m financing gap to be covered by the Confederation.
Confederation	2017 to 2010: Confederation participates in sharing of additional costs at an annually decreasing rate, as follows: 2017: CHF 5m; 2018: CHF 3m; 2019: CHF 1m. From 2020, the Confederation only pays its normal share, from the oil tax. Legal framework to be amended to provide greater flexibility for the monitoring of security.
Skyguide	2016: user charges to be increased, by an average of 10%, for the first time in 10 years. From 2017, skyguide to gradually reduce air traffic control costs through cost-saving and operational measures, as follows: 2017: -CHF 1m; 2018: -CHF 1.5m; 2019: -CHF 2m; 2020: -CHF 3m. Service offering to be adjusted to demand at airports.
Regional airports	From 2017 airport owners must, by making changes to the relevant services, progressively reduce their air traffic control costs as follows: 2017: -CHF 1m; 2018: -CHF 2.5m; 2019 and 2020: -CHF 4m. The desired service offering is to be defined.

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Skyguide is responsible for air traffic control in Switzerland and parts of neighbouring countries. Working in 14 locations, its approximately 1400 employees guide around 3150 civil and military aircraft a day (1.1 million a year) safely and reliably through the most complex and busiest airspace in Europe. Skyguide stands for continual improvement, targeted innovation and creative collaboration. Together with its partner organisations in Belgium, Germany, France, Luxembourg and the Netherlands, skyguide is part of the FABEC alliance formed to manage airspace in Central Europe. Skyguide is a not-for-profit public limited company jointly owned by the Swiss Confederation and based in Geneva.

³ According to Art. 30 of the Verordnung über den Flugsicherungsdienst (VFSD, an ordinance governing air traffic control), responsibility for the costs of air traffic control services (and thus of the related subsidies) is to be transferred from skyguide to the airport owners in 2016.