



Ittigen, September 2025

Bidding Procedure for Transalpine Unaccompanied Combined Transport 2026

Reference: BAV-331.2-16
Case number:

Overview

1	Background	2
2	Relevant legislation.....	2
3	General financial conditions	2
4	Principles for granting subsidies in 2026	3
5	Additional funding for consignments that were previously transported on rolling highway (Rola) and will move to UCT from 2026	4
6	Further provisions for the 2026 bidding procedure	5
6.1	Deadlines, bid content and agreement between the Confederation and the operator	5
6.2	Adjustments to subsidy rates.....	5
6.3	Amendments to an agreement / conclusion of new agreements during the year.....	6
6.4	Reporting to the FOT	6
6.5	Failure to meet deadlines	6
6.6	Reduction in subsidies if projected figures are not met	7
6.7	Final accounts for the 2026 subsidy year	7
7	Checking and auditing	7



1 Background

Since 2000, the Swiss Confederation has subsidised Unaccompanied Combined Transport (CT) based on transport services ordered directly from the operators. The purpose of these subsidies is to promote combined transport and shift freight transport from road to rail. Uniform maximum subsidy rates are set per train travelled and per consignment transported, in accordance with the distance travelled.

2 Relevant legislation

The following legislation applies to the funding of transalpine combined transport:

- Federal Act of 19 December 2008 on the Transfer of Transalpine Heavy Goods Traffic from Road to Rail (Goods Traffic Transfer Act, GTTA);
- Currently: Ordinance of 25 May 2016 on the Carriage of Freights by Rail and Navigation Companies (Goods Carriage Ordinance, GCarO); a new, fully revised Freight Carriage Ordinance is due to come into force on 1 January 2026, although this does not contain any fundamental changes for transalpine unaccompanied combined transport (UCT);
- Federal Act of 5 October 1990 on Financial Assistance and Subsidies (Subsidies Act, SubA);
- Federal Act of 22 March 1985 on the Use of the Earmarked Mineral Oil Tax (MinOA);
- [Federal decree](#) of 3 June 2020 on the Budget for Promoting Transalpine Rail Freight Traffic (de, fr, it).

3 General financial conditions

The federal decree issued by Parliament on 3 June 2020 determined the increase and extension of funding for transalpine rail freight traffic. All orders for transalpine unaccompanied combined transport (UCT) are paid from the budget that applies until the end of 2030 (2011–2030: CHF 2,060 million)¹.

Funding of CHF 59 million has been earmarked in the 2026 federal budget under *A231.0292 Subsidies for transalpine combined transport 2026*. This means that part of the funds originally earmarked for the operation of the rolling highway (Rola) can be used to promote UCT.

¹ This budget also covers subsidies to the rolling highway (Rola) in the years 2011 to 2018. Since the first budget extension in 2019, subsidies to Rola continue to be processed via the budget item *Subsidies for transalpine combined transport*, as is UCT, but are not charged to the aforementioned budget.

4 Principles for granting subsidies in 2026

The subsidy rates for 2026 are set as follows:

	Subsidy per consignment	Subsidy per train	Maximum subsidy for a train with 32 consignments eligible for subsidy payments
Category 1 For transalpine UCT relations over a distance of <u>more than 600km</u> (distance on rails)	maximum CHF 49	Category 1A For distances between 600 and 750km: CHF 300 Category 1B For distances of more than 750km: CHF 150	maximum CHF 1,868 maximum CHF 1,718
Category 2 For transalpine UCT relations over a distance of <u>less than 600km</u> (distance on rails)	flat rate CHF 49	flat rate CHF 1,000	maximum CHF 2,568
Category 3 For transalpine relations with destination/origin region Mannheim, Ludwigshafen or Mediterranean port (regardless of distance)	maximum CHF 49	maximum CHF 150	maximum CHF 1,718

Further provisions

- For a relation in Category 1 or 3, if the uncovered costs shown in the projected income statement are lower than the maximum subsidy rates given above, the Confederation will not pay more than the uncovered costs in the projected income statement.
- On average, **a maximum of 32 consignments** per train are entitled to a subsidy.

Subsidies are granted on the basis of a legally valid agreement between the Federal Office of Transport (FOT) and the CT operator, which establishes the planned number of trains and consignments as well as the maximum subsidies available. It is based on a bid that sets out the planned number of trains and consignments and includes a projected income statement.

The Confederation reserves the right not to conclude a subsidy agreement for relations with an average of fewer than 24 trains per quarter.

The Confederation grants subsidies agreed in advance per train travelled and per consignment transported. In the case of Category 1 and 3 services, the federal subsidies granted shall not exceed the uncovered costs according to the projected income statement, which result from the difference between the projected costs and the projected income (as stated in the bid).

The definition of a consignment in transalpine UCT is based on that of the UIRR (Union Internationale des sociétés de transport combiné Rail-Route). A consignment is:

- one semi-trailer;
- a swap body longer than 8.3 metres (e.g. 30-foot, 40-foot or 45-foot container);
- a swap body with a length of between 6.0 and 8.3 metres, provided it is heavier than 16 tonnes;
- two swap bodies with a length between 6.0 and 8.3 metres (e.g. 20-, 23- or 25-foot containers) and lighter than 16 tonnes;
- three swap bodies smaller than 20-foot containers.

The subsidy amount per train depends on the distance travelled by rail and is granted for each train actually operated by the operator. Subsidies are paid only where the combined transport service crosses the Alps in Switzerland by rail (Simplon or Gotthard) and reduces the number of road journeys made by heavy goods vehicles via a Swiss Alpine road crossing. The decisive factor is therefore whether the logical route for a heavy goods vehicle from an economic point of view would be through Switzerland by road.

Transalpine UCT services with origin or destination in France in one of the following regions are eligible for federal subsidies:

- Hauts-de-France
- Île-de-France
- Grand Est
- Bourgogne-Franche-Comté (excluding Burgundy, Lons-le-Saunier and Saint Claude)

All transalpine UCT services with origin or destination in the following Italian regions or provinces are ineligible for federal subsidies:

- Friuli-Venezia Giulia (all provinces)
- Trentino-South Tyrol (all provinces)
- Veneto (all provinces)
- Province of Mantova

5 Additional funding for consignments that were previously transported on rolling highway (Rola) and will move to UCT from 2026

The rolling highway (Rola) service through Switzerland will be discontinued when the 2025/2026 timetable comes into effect. It is the Confederation's stated aim to avoid additional road traffic wherever possible and to move transport services to UCT. By making changes to the bidding procedure, targeted incentives are being created to ensure that volumes currently transported on Rola are transferred as quickly and comprehensively as possible to UCT, which is significantly more subsidy-efficient.

The FOT will therefore pay an additional CHF 25 for every consignment that is proven to have been transferred from Rola to UCT. This measure is intended as a temporary incentive and is limited to two years (2026/2027). Operators who wish to benefit from this additional subsidy are requested to notify the FOT by 12 September 2025. The FOT will then work with these operators until the end of 2025 to determine how the evidence that consignments have been transferred from Rola to UCT should be provided.

6 Further provisions for the 2026 bidding procedure

This section sets out all further provisions for the bidding procedure. All these provisions must be observed in full for the bid to be accepted by the FOT.

6.1 Deadlines, bid content and agreement between the Confederation and the operator

Bids (excluding Rola premiums) must be submitted to the FOT by 20 November 2025 at the latest via the 'Subsidies for transalpine freight traffic' web app.

The bids must include the following:

- A projected income statement in euros. When converting amounts into Swiss francs, an exchange rate of 1.05 EUR/CHF should be applied (as in the previous year).
- An income statement structured in the same way as in previous years.
- Precise monthly figures for the number of trains and consignments planned.
- The previous year's annual report, including the annual accounts and financial statements.

Based on the bids, the FOT will send to the operator a subsidy agreement for each relation for countersignature, most likely at the end of December 2025.

The FOT publishes a list of all relations ordered by the Confederation.

6.2 Adjustments to subsidy rates

a) Reduction in subsidy rates prior to conclusion of the subsidy agreements

The subsidy rates per consignment and per train set out in section 4 are based on the FOT's estimate of the UCT transport volumes and are subject to parliamentary approval of the financial resources. If it appears that the funds available are not sufficient to subsidise the transport operations at the rates published in section 4, the subsidy rates may be subsequently reduced so that as many transport operations as possible can be subsidised. In this case, the FOT will inform operators of the new subsidy rates before concluding the subsidy agreements. Operators would then have the opportunity to change the content of their bid or to withdraw it.

b) Reduction in subsidy rates from Q3 or Q4 2026 due to budgetary constraints

The General Terms and Conditions of the subsidy agreements will include the possibility of reducing the subsidy rates from Q3 or Q4 onwards: "If, as a result of an increase in traffic volumes, it becomes apparent that the funding available in the budget is not sufficient to subsidise all traffic at the agreed rates, the FOT may reduce the subsidy rates for Q3/Q4 in order to remain within the budgetary constraints."

6.3 Amendments to an agreement / conclusion of new agreements during the year

In the case of new and amended bids (new agreements, increases or reductions in train and/or consignment numbers), revised train and consignment numbers and revised projected income statements may be submitted to the FOT on a quarterly basis. The FOT must be informed of this in advance so that the relations can be opened in the WDI app. Agreements cannot be amended with retroactive effect: any amendments made will only be applicable to the remainder of the current year. Requests for amendments to subsidy agreements must be submitted to the FOT at least 14 days before the beginning of the quarter concerned.

If an amendment is made, the existing agreement is terminated and a new agreement concluded for the remainder of the year. Should an operator increase their bid during the current year, orders will be placed subject to budget availability. The final decision on whether an amendment is accepted and/or new relations ordered rests with the FOT.

6.4 Reporting to the FOT

Subsidies are paid to operators by the Confederation each month based on the number of trains actually run and the number of consignments actually transported (hereinafter referred to as the 'actual numbers'). These actual numbers must be reported to the Confederation by the 20th of the following month. If the actual numbers exceed the projected numbers specified in the agreement, the subsidy paid will be based on the projected numbers. No subsidy will be paid for trains or consignments in excess of those projected.

In return for receiving operating subsidies from the Confederation, the operator also undertakes to maintain statistics on the punctuality of its operations and to submit reports on these performance-quality data to the FOT on a half-yearly basis.

The following information must be reported to the FOT via the 'Subsidies for transalpine freight traffic' web app or provided to the FOT on request.

Information / Periodicity	Deadline
Train and consignment figures (monthly)	January to November: by the 20th of the following month; December: by 10 January 2027
Quality data	20.07.2026, 20.01.2027
Statement of actual costs and revenue per relation	31.03.2027
Bid to amend the number of trains and consignments (on a case-by-case basis)	15.03.2026, 15.06.2026, 15.09.2026
All information and documents relating to relations ordered	At the FOT's request

6.5 Failure to meet deadlines

Should the operator fail to observe the deadlines for communicating train and consignment numbers, submitting the quality data or providing statements of actual costs and revenues per item as specified in section 5.4 above, the corresponding subsidies will not be paid until the following month (and will only be paid then provided all the data required, including those for the following month, are available).

6.6 Reduction in subsidies if projected figures are not met

To provide the Confederation with the soundest possible foundation for its budget planning, the FOT requires operators' projected figures to be as accurate as possible. For this reason, if an operator's actual train and/or consignment numbers fall more than 15% short of the figures projected, the subsidy will be reduced by 3%.

Train cancellations resulting from force majeure (e.g. natural disasters, strikes) will not result in a reduction in subsidies. Information on train cancellations for reasons of force majeure must be documented separately and reported to the FOT via the 'Subsidies for transalpine freight traffic' web app. For new relations, the reduction clause does not apply in the year in which the service was launched.

6.7 Final accounts for the 2026 subsidy year

In the first quarter of 2027, the FOT will send operators a final account for the relations served in 2026. At the end of a two-week appeal period, the FOT will order payment of the final account.

The final account includes subsidies for any trains and consignments in addition to the planned trains/consignments per month, but for which the operators did not receive any subsidy at the time.

The following principles apply to the final account:

- Additional trains and consignments are subsidised if the projected figures were not reached in other months. The maximum number of trains and consignments eligible for subsidy is the overall number specified over the term of the agreement.
- Where the subsidy agreement for relations is amended during the year, an offset is only made between the months before or after the amendment is in effect.
- Separate subsidies are paid for trains and consignments. No offsetting is permitted between different relations.
- A maximum average of 32 consignments per train are eligible for subsidy payments.
- The reduction clause (section 5.6) is applicable in full to the sum of the months during which the projected figures were not met and the subsidy agreement was not amended.

7 Checking and auditing

The FOT audits operators receiving subsidies in accordance with the Federal Subsidies Act. The audits cover the services entitled to subsidy, as envisaged in the Federal Subsidies Act and the agreements concerned. The FOT gives operators due notice of any audits planned. The audits are conducted at the operator's registered office and are based on the duty of recipients of financial aid and payments to provide information under Article 11 of the Federal Subsidies Act.

For more details: abgeltungen-kv@bav.admin.ch