

Hailstorm Solothurn: the first full-scale test outside an earthquake

Balsthal, Canton of Solothurn, September to December 2026 · pilot mandate of the Solothurn building insurer (SGV)



Drone survey of a residential building in Balsthal, September 2026.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 28 August 2026 a severe hailstorm hit the Canton of Solothurn: more than 10,000 damage reports and a loss of at least CHF 20 million. Three days later the SGV activated the pilot agreement concluded with the EDO in November 2025.

In seven flight days the EDO documented around 290 buildings in Balsthal. Every image was assigned automatically to the right building by its federal building identifier, so the insurer's estimators assessed the damage from their desks. The deployment followed the earthquake pattern, working from the edge of the damage area towards its centre, with the population on site. For the EDO it was the most valuable rehearsal so far.

≈ 290

buildings documented

7

flight days

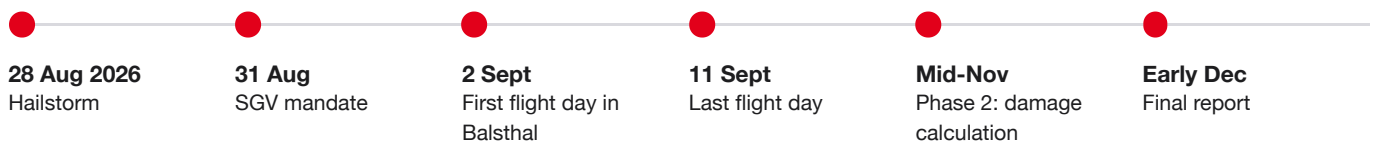
15–17

buildings per pilot and day

≈ 50

buildings in the benchmark phase

TIMELINE



WHAT THE EDO DELIVERED

- Mission start within two days of the mandate, with the TCS drone pilots and the TERMOT platform of risktec AG.
- About 20 minutes of flight per building, three pilots from the second week, daily debriefing on site.
- Training of the SGV estimators on TERMOT and assessment directly from the imagery.
- A real-data benchmark: for about 50 buildings the EDO's damage calculation is compared with the conventional estimates of the SGV.

LESSONS FOR THE EARTHQUAKE CASE

Flights in rain and strong wind are possible; hail damage is clearly visible on wet roofs. Rain-proof equipment is a requirement for the future fleet.

Thermal imaging detects damaged photovoltaic modules, a capability that came to light during the deployment.

Automatic assignment of every image to its building is the key to mass-claims handling. This is the basis for the next generation of the platform, TERMOT 2.0, and for the EDO's own operating licence for drone flights, which is in preparation.