

Consolidation in figures: the annual KPMG study

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The trends described in the preceding sections can be read in the figures of the study that KPMG devotes each year to Swiss private banks. The 2025 financial year combines two opposing movements: assets under management at an all-time high and profitability in decline. The sixty-eight institutions studied managed CHF 3,500 billion, a record, with CHF 96 billion of net new money, an increase of more than a third, of which CHF 35 billion came from acquisitions and mergers. Operating income reached CHF 21.6 billion, up by only 1.5 per cent, while the median cost-income ratio deteriorated from 75.6 per cent to 78.2 per cent.¹

The distribution of the decline by size runs counter to intuition. It was the medium-sized institutions that suffered most, with profits down by around 46 per cent, whereas the large houses lost 6 per cent and the small ones 5 per cent. The explanation lies in an uncomfortable intermediate position: these banks maintain establishments abroad and control organisations sized for a complex cross-border business, without having the volume of assets that would allow them to absorb the cost. The small houses, concentrated on one market and one client base, bear proportionate charges, while the large ones spread theirs across hundreds of billions.²

The movement towards concentration continues at a steady pace. The number of Swiss private banks fell from 156 in 2010 to 83 in mid-2025, then from 85 to 80 over the course of 2025 and to 79 at the end of May 2026. The expert who has followed this sector for two decades estimates that a further fifteen to twenty institutions will disappear by the end of 2030, absorbed or transformed. For the Geneva financial centre, whose houses span the whole range of sizes, this forecast means that the question facing the intermediate institutions is not whether they must choose, but when.

One last figure sheds light on the debate about technology. In 2025, only 18 per cent of Swiss private banks had invested more than CHF 500,000 in

artificial intelligence, a proportion expected to reach 30 per cent in 2026; and 76 per cent of the institutions surveyed expected these investments to yield savings of 2 per cent or less within twelve months. The gap between the discourse on digital transformation and the amounts actually committed is thus measurable, and it confirms that the productivity gains expected from these tools will materialise over several financial years.

1 Notes

1. KPMG Switzerland, press release “Banques privées suisses : des actifs sous gestion record, mais baisse de la rentabilité” (Swiss private banks: record assets under management, but declining profitability), June 2026 (kpmg.com/ch) and Allnews, same date: 68 private banks studied, CHF 3,500 billion of assets under management in 2025, CHF 96 billion of net new money (+ one third), of which CHF 81 billion from market performance and CHF 35 billion from inorganic growth; operating income of CHF 21.6 billion (+ CHF 321 million, i.e. + 1.5%); median cost-income ratio from 75.6% to 78.2%; decline in profits of 6% for the large banks, 46% for the medium-sized institutions and 5% for the small ones; 18% of banks invested more than CHF 500,000 in artificial intelligence in 2025, a proportion expected to reach 30% in 2026, and 76% of the institutions surveyed expect savings of 2% or less within twelve months. ↩
2. Christian Hintermann (KPMG), “Entre 15 et 20 banques privées suisses disparaîtront d’ici à fin 2030” (Between 15 and 20 Swiss private banks will disappear by the end of 2030), Allnews: 83 private banks in mid-2025 compared with 156 in 2010, divided between eight large institutions, twenty-five medium-sized and fifty small ones; the medium-sized banks “often have a presence in several foreign countries” while remaining “far from the big eight”, the eight largest each managing more than CHF 100 billion; resumption of mergers and acquisitions after years of sluggishness, including the takeover of Saxo Bank by J. Safra Sarasin in 2024. ↩

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