

The banks and the other players in the cluster

*Dr Alexander Ressos, TEP
Attorney-at-Law (Switzerland), Solicitor (Hong Kong),
Solicitor (England & Wales)*

The trading companies form only the core of the Geneva cluster, which Chapter IV will describe in detail. The banks play an essential role in it. *Le Temps* names BNP Paribas, Credit Suisse, ING, Crédit Agricole, the Banque cantonale de Genève and UBS among the indispensable banks in commodity trade finance in Geneva, and notes that BNP Paribas has relocated the global management of this business to Geneva, from where it directs its teams on every continent.¹ Commodity trade finance, a specialised banking activity, is the second pillar of the financial centre according to the Fondation Genève Place Financière.²

The Société générale de surveillance, the world's leading inspection company, guarantees the quality and quantity of the goods.³ The chartering companies organise maritime transport. The Fondation Genève Place Financière emphasises the presence in Geneva of ship chartering and inspection activities, which together with finance form a cluster unique in the world.⁴ Insurers and brokers cover cargoes and political risks. Law firms draft the contracts, advise on sanctions and compliance, and plead in arbitrations. Fiduciaries and accountants handle bookkeeping and tax. IT providers supply the trading and risk management systems.

By various estimates this cluster accounts for several tens of thousands of jobs in the Lake Geneva region, well beyond the trading companies themselves. It is one of Geneva's main arguments against its competitors: a trader who sets up there finds, in the immediate vicinity, the full range of services it needs.

1 Notes

1. "Matières premières. Genève, plate-forme mondiale dans le négoce", *Le Temps*, 16 February 2023. ↩

The banks and the other players in the cluster

2. Fondation Genève Place Financière, presentation, [geneve-finance.ch](https://www.geneve-finance.ch) (accessed September 2026). ↩
3. Le Temps, 16 February 2023, cited above. ↩
4. Fondation Genève Place Financière, cited above. ↩

For general information only. This article does not constitute legal or tax advice, does not replace advice on an individual case and creates no lawyer-client relationship. It reflects the legal position as of September 2026.

Online version: helveticaregister.com/geneva-the-banks-and-the-other-players-in-the-cluster