

Economic promotion and the institutions of the financial centre

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

Ticino's economic promotion operates under the cantonal law on economic innovation (*Legge per l'innovazione economica*, LInn) and through the Office for Economic Development (*Ufficio per lo sviluppo economico*) of the Department of Finance and Economy, which also grants the tax incentives provided for in the law.¹ Its focus has been on industry, technology and start-ups, because finance was long regarded as a sector that needed no public support. The financial centre is represented by private associations. The Associazione Bancaria Ticinese, founded in 1920, defends the image of the financial centre and the interests of its members at cantonal level and has created the training centre at Villa Negroni.² The associations of fiduciaries, the Lugano Commodity Trading Association described in Chapter F.I and newer groups such as the Ticino Finance Association, launched on 18 February 2025 to promote professionalism and knowledge sharing among financial consultants, independent wealth managers and portfolio managers, complete the picture.³ The Lugano Finance Forum, organized by the networking platform FinLantern, has become the annual meeting point of the sector.⁴

What Ticino lacks is a joint strategy of the canton, the city and the industry for the financial centre. Geneva, for example, has the Fondation Genève Place Financière, a body supported by the industry that represents the financial centre externally, coordinates initiatives and commissions studies.⁵ In Ticino these functions are dispersed among the ABT, the city's Plan B, the cantonal department of finance and economy and several associations. The absence of a single voice weakens the position of the financial centre in negotiations with Bern on questions such as market access to Italy. It also makes it harder to pursue a long-term programme across electoral cycles.

1 Notes

1. Ufficio per lo sviluppo economico, Dipartimento delle finanze e dell'economia, directive of 2 January 2024 on tax incentives under Art. 11 LInn, https://m4.ti.ch/fileadmin/DFE/DE-USE/LINN/agevolazioni_fiscali/USE_DIRETTIVA_agevolazioni_fiscali.pdf. ↩
2. Associazione Bancaria Ticinese, "Organizzazione", <https://www.abti.ch/associazione/organizzazione/> (founded in 1920; statutory purpose to safeguard "the image of the Ticino financial centre and the interests and rights of its members at the cantonal level"; Fondazione Centro Studi Villa Negroni established in the early 1990s). ↩
3. finews.ch/ticino, February 2025 (above). ↩
4. finews.ch/ticino, 4 July 2025 (above). ↩
5. On the Fondation Genève Place Financière see the Geneva volume. ↩

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/lugano-economic-promotion-and-the-institutions-of-the-financial-centre