

Scenarios for research, technology and the financial centre

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Three developments will shape the role of research and technology in Lugano's financial centre over the coming decade. The first is the institutional consolidation of training and research. The association of the CSVN with SUPSI in 2026, the integration of IDSIA into both universities and the joint programmes of economics and informatics at USI point to a closer link between academic research and the professional training of the financial sector. If the institutions use this link, Lugano can offer the banks, asset managers and fiduciaries of the region a supply of staff trained both in finance and in data science and artificial intelligence, a combination that is scarce everywhere.

The second development is the regulatory convergence between Switzerland and the European Union in the field of artificial intelligence. Even if Switzerland does not adopt the AI Act, the Council of Europe Convention, FINMA's supervisory expectations and the extraterritorial reach of the European rules will lead Swiss institutions to adopt governance standards that resemble those of the Union. For a financial centre whose clients are largely in Italy, compliance with European standards will become a commercial requirement for many providers. The firms that can offer artificial intelligence applications compliant with both Swiss and European law, in Italian, will have an advantage in serving the Italian market.

The third development is computing infrastructure. The location of the national supercomputing centre in Lugano and the training of Apertus on its machines give the city an asset that no other Swiss financial centre outside Zurich and Lausanne possesses in comparable form. The CSCS is a research infrastructure and does not offer commercial services to banks. Its presence nonetheless attracts specialists, research projects and companies, and its open models provide an alternative to dependence on foreign

providers, which the FINMA survey identified as a risk. Whether Lugano can convert this research infrastructure into commercial activity depends on factors outside the scope of this chapter: the availability of capital, the willingness of established institutions to experiment, the regulatory environment for Kryptowerte und Digital Assets described in Chapter I.II and the competitive position of Ticino within Switzerland and against Milan, which Part K examines.

In figures. Ticino counted 79,121 cross-border commuters in the second quarter of 2026.¹ IDSIA employed 130 people in 2023 and the CSCS 127 people from 23 countries in 2024.² Around 50 per cent of about 400 financial institutions surveyed by FINMA used artificial intelligence or were developing applications, and 91 per cent of these also used generative AI.³ At the end of 2025 Switzerland and Liechtenstein counted 529 fintech companies, 35 per cent of them active in data analytics and artificial intelligence.⁴

1 Notes

1. Tio.ch, 6 August 2026 (above). ↩
2. laRegion, 27 September 2023 (above); CSCS brochure 2024 (above).
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3. FINMA survey (April 2025, above). ↩
4. SME Portal, "Fintech: growth slows" (2026, above). ↩

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