

Private markets in Zurich and Zug

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The growth of private markets over the last three decades has given the Zurich region a second asset management profile beside the traditional bank-owned fund houses. Private equity, private debt, infrastructure and private real estate are managed in Zurich by the subsidiaries of the big banks and insurers, by international firms with Swiss offices and by independent specialists. Many of these firms have chosen the neighbouring cantons of Zug and Schwyz, where the tax burden on companies and individuals is lower. The Swiss Asset Management Study of 2026 describes private markets as a segment of strategic importance for the industry.¹

Partners Group is the most prominent example. Its founders came from the investment banking world and built the firm around the idea of offering institutional investors diversified access to private markets. Early milestones included what the firm describes as the then-largest private equity secondary transaction in 1998 and its first evergreen private markets fund in 2001. The firm opened an office in Singapore in 2004 and completed its first infrastructure investment in the same year. In 2009 it launched what it describes as the industry's first US evergreen private equity fund under the Investment Company Act of 1940.² The evergreen funds, which allow wealthy private investors and smaller institutions to enter and exit private markets at regular intervals, have become a hallmark of the firm. They have also become a subject of regulatory attention, because they combine illiquid assets with periodic liquidity.

A second pattern is the acquisition of Zurich specialists by international groups. The Zurich private equity boutique Adveq, founded in 1997 by Bruno Raschle, managed about USD 7 billion of client commitments, mainly for Swiss and German institutional investors and pension funds, when the British asset manager Schroders agreed to acquire it in April 2017. Adveq was then authorised by FINMA and by the American SEC.³ The Adveq team became part of the private markets business of Schroders,

which kept a substantial presence in Zurich. The transaction illustrates how international firms buy Zurich expertise, and with it access to Swiss pension clients, while the investment teams stay in Switzerland.

Other examples complete the picture. LGT Capital Partners, the alternative investment arm of the Liechtenstein princely family's banking group, has its main office in Pfäffikon in the canton of Schwyz. Capital Dynamics has its head office in Zug. Both firms manage private markets assets for institutional clients worldwide, Capital Dynamics more than USD 15 billion as at mid-2026.⁴ The concentration of such firms around Lake Zurich and Lake Zug has created a labour market for private markets professionals, lawyers, fund administrators and auditors that sustains itself. It is comparable, on a smaller scale, to the private equity clusters of London or Luxembourg.

The legal structure of these firms is typically international. The management company or adviser sits in Switzerland and holds a FINMA licence as manager of collective assets, or operates under the *de minimis* rule. The funds themselves are Luxembourg or Guernsey limited partnerships, Delaware partnerships or Cayman vehicles. Swiss pension funds invest through Swiss investment foundations, feeder funds or, since 2024, L-QIF structures. The Swiss limited partnership for collective investment, conceived in 2006 precisely for this business, has not changed that pattern. The reasons have already been described: the withholding tax, the lack of a European passport and the preference of international investors for familiar structures.

Private debt has become a particular growth area since the tightening of bank capital rules. Swiss pension funds have begun to finance Swiss companies, real estate and infrastructure directly or through funds, a function that banks used to perform alone. The consolidation of the Swiss banking sector after 2023 has reinforced this trend, as Part G describes. The rules of AIFMD II on loan-originating funds, applicable in the European Union since April 2026, will influence how Zurich managers structure their European debt funds.⁵ The Swiss legal framework for private debt remains less developed, because the L-QIF and the investment foundations were designed with equity and real estate in mind.

1 Notes

1. Asset Management Association Switzerland (AMAS), "Swiss Asset Management Study 2026", on the strategic importance of private markets and the transformation of the industry by technology, including artificial intelligence and tokenisation, <https://www.am->

switzerland.ch/en/services/data-and-reports/swiss-asset-management-study/swiss-asset-management-study-2026. ↩

2. Partners Group, “Our Heritage”, on the secondary transaction of 1998, the first evergreen private markets fund of 2001, the Singapore office and the first infrastructure investment of 2004, the signature of the UN Principles for Responsible Investment in 2008, the US evergreen fund of 2009 and the opening of the Hong Kong office in 2024, <https://www.partnersgroup.com/en/about-us/our-heritage>. ↩
3. Citywire Switzerland, “Zurich-based private equity boutique acquired by Schroders” (20 April 2017), on the founding of Adveq in 1997 by Bruno Raschle, its client commitments of USD 7 billion, its Swiss and German institutional client base, its authorisation by FINMA and the SEC and the agreed acquisition by Schroders, <https://citywire.com/ch/news/zurich-based-private-equity-boutique-acquired-by-schroders/a1010058>. ↩
4. Wikipedia, “LGT Group”, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/LGT_Group, giving Pfäffikon SZ as the seat of LGT Capital Partners AG; Capital Dynamics, “About us”, <https://www.capdyn.com/about-us/>, giving Zug as the head office and assets under management of more than USD 15 billion as at 30 June 2026. ↩
5. Audrey Zegers and Elias Nys, “16 April 2026: AIFMD II Finally Takes Effect”, Chambers and Partners, on the harmonised framework for loan-originating funds under AIFMD II, including restrictions on originate-to-distribute models, diversification requirements and specific disclosure, <https://chambers.com/articles/16-april-2026-aifmd-ii-finally-takes-effect>. ↩

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