



The Big Whale



Crypto Valley

Switzerland

The Great Shift of Banks Towards Digital Assets and Blockchain Technology



The Big Whale report, March 2026

Editorial

At the start of 2026, Switzerland is no longer content with its status as "Crypto Valley". The country has completed a profound transformation: the shift from a pioneer ecosystem to systematic adoption by established players. With around twenty banking institutions now operational in crypto-assets, the Confederation is consolidating its global leadership, even surpassing the American industry.

UBS's entry into the arena is undoubtedly the strongest signal of this shift. Long cautious, the country's largest bank has finally yielded to pressure from its private clients, eager to diversify their portfolios within a secure framework. This movement follows in the wake of democratization initiated in 2024 by heavyweights such as Zürcher Kantonalbank (ZKB) and PostFinance. These players alone have opened the floodgates of digital assets to more than 2.5 million bank accounts.

The impact of this transition can now be seen directly in financial statements. For an institution like Swissquote, activity related to digital assets is no longer marginal: it generates an average of 10% of total revenue.

Flow analysis also debunks a preconceived notion: no, the market is not solely driven by young tech enthusiasts. The profiles are mature, coming from traditional wealth management, and seeking sustainable investment solutions.

This maturity translates into increasingly sophisticated offerings. Today, simple custody is no longer sufficient. The market now revolves around staking, Lombard credit backed by digital assets and, above all, the tokenization of real-world assets (RWA), which has become a lever for modernization of the local financial industry.

On the technical and legal front, Switzerland is reaping the rewards of its pragmatism. The DLT Act of 2021 remains the foundation of this success, offering clarity that many other jurisdictions still envy. At the same time, market infrastructure is modernizing under the impetus of the Swiss National Bank (SNB). Project Helvetia has proven the viability of settlements in wholesale central bank digital currency, paving the way for increased transactional efficiency.

Yet the Swiss exception faces a major challenge: international standardization. The progressive alignment with standards modeled on the European MiCA framework raises fears of an erosion of competitiveness against ultra-dynamic hubs like Singapore or Dubai.

The challenge for the coming months will be to navigate with agility between these new compliance constraints and the need to preserve the advantage that has been their strength.



Grégory Raymond
Head of Research

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Swissquote



Zürcher Kantonalbank

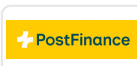


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01

"Switzerland's
strength has always
been its capacity to
innovate"

Ilya Volkov

Board member de la Crypto Valley Association,
CEO Youhodler

"Switzerland's strength has always been its capacity to innovate"



YOUHODLER



Crypto Valley



Ilya Volkov

Board Member of the Crypto Valley Association,
CEO Youhodler

You've been organizing the Web3 Banking Symposium for three years now, bringing together the cream of Swiss finance. What's your view on how traditional banks have matured in their approach to digital assets?

The change has been radical. At our first edition in Geneva two years ago, Swiss cantonal banks — state institutions sometimes two centuries old — were already providing a very clear answer. Their assessment was simple: without a digital asset offering, they risk losing their historical clientele while failing to attract new ones. These wealthy clients, who already own gold, commodities, and tech stocks like Tesla or Apple, are now demanding Bitcoin. If their longtime bank doesn't offer it, they'll go elsewhere. For a 200-year-old bank, the stakes are existential: either it integrates these instruments, or it faces planned obsolescence.

We're seeing a clear divergence between private banks, focused on wealth management, and retail banks. Do you see these two segments converging?

It's primarily a matter of segmentation. While investment and private banking institutions naturally focus on the "investment" component to facilitate portfolio acquisition and custody, the payments universe is simultaneously restructuring along a three-tier hierarchy. At the top of this pyramid, the movement has already begun with central banks and settlement institutions: the SNB and BIS are actively testing blockchain for interbank clearing, an institutional shift confirmed by players like SWIFT or Visa who are already leveraging stablecoins to streamline card transaction settlement. At the other end, at the base level, neobanks and fintechs like Revolut have already gained a head start by offering a native multi-currency approach, where fiat and crypto coexist organically for both investment and payment. Between these two poles, the middle segment composed of traditional retail banks, like UBS or PostFinance, has not yet fully committed on the transactional front. However, I remain convinced that their adoption is imminent, driven by the inexorable transformation of the global financial infrastructure.



"Switzerland's strength has always been its capacity to innovate"

At the risk management level, banks' compliance departments remain very cautious. Do they have the necessary tools to take the leap confidently?

The tools exist and they're far more powerful than in traditional finance. You can't trace cash, but you can trace every transaction on a blockchain. Players like Chainalysis, Elliptic, or Crystal provide extremely robust transaction monitoring tools. From an AML (anti-money laundering) perspective, crypto is paradoxically more practical for a bank than the paper trail. Today, everything is in place, from onboarding to online identity verification.

If you had to identify the major obstacle still preventing a Swiss bank from shifting, say, 10% of its operations to blockchain, what would it be? Is technology still the limiting factor?

Absolutely not. The technology is ready. Whether it's custody solutions, KYC/AML monitoring, or access to liquidity, everything is already available on the market. The real bottleneck remains the evolution of the regulatory framework, particularly on very concrete points: accounting standards, reporting, and especially capital requirements. Today, holding digital assets on the balance sheet requires significant capital reserves that weigh on profitability. That's where the next chapter of this story will be written.

Switzerland faces competition from Dubai, Singapore, and now the MiCA regulation in Europe. Can the Confederation maintain its lead?

Switzerland has a trump card. We're currently in a public consultation phase to refine our regulation. Based on initial drafts, we're already ahead of MiCA, which remains a very restrictive regulation and sometimes ineffective for innovation. Switzerland's strength has always been its ability to innovate. Unlike certain European countries focused on their legacy, Switzerland looks forward. If we avoid the trap of regulatory "micromanagement" — as has been the case with certain overly rigid requirements on online identification — and focus on managing real systemic risks, we'll remain at the forefront.

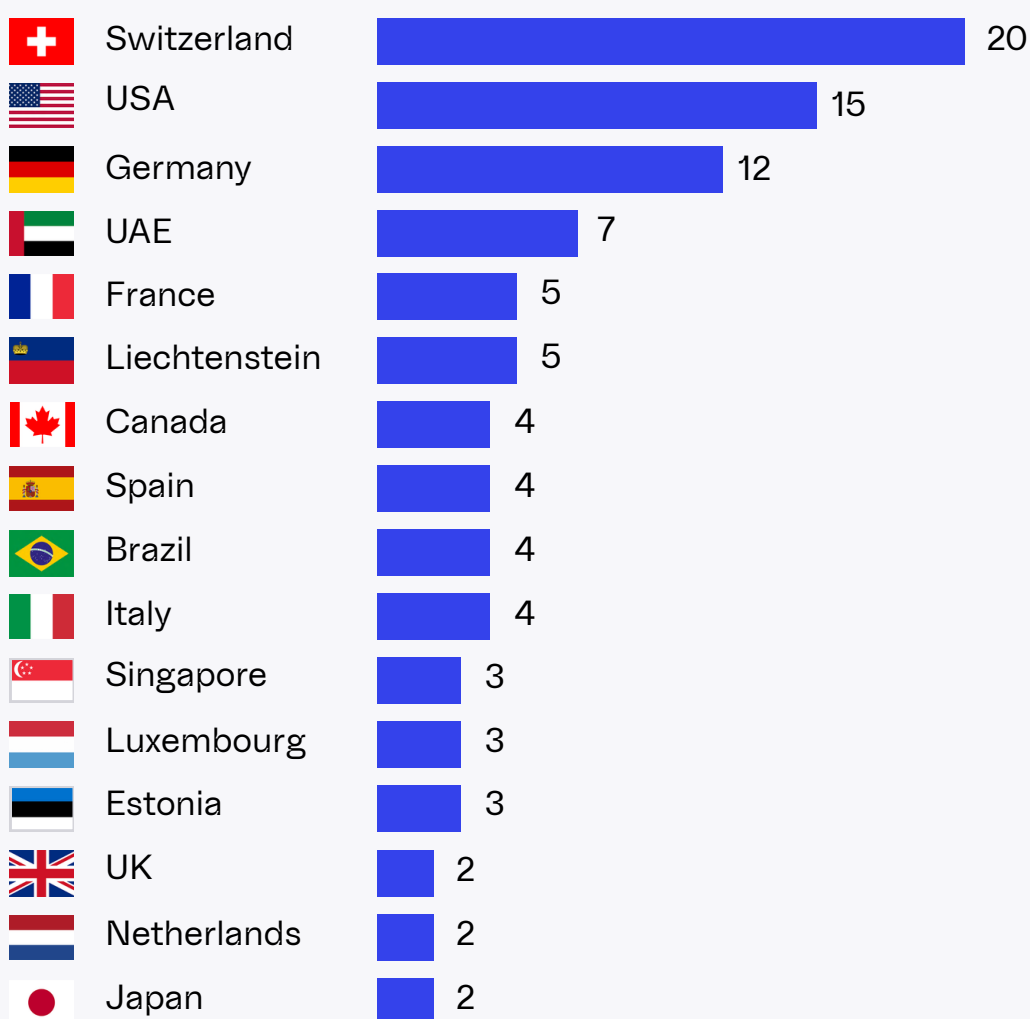


02

Switzerland: Global
leader in banking
adoption

Switzerland: Global leader in banking adoption

Top countries by number of banks offering crypto services



03

Swiss banks and digital assets

A brief history

The first real signal was sent in July 2017: Falcon Private Bank (now defunct) became the first Swiss private bank to offer blockchain-based digital asset management, allowing its clients to buy and hold Bitcoin directly through their accounts. This was a world first. It was quickly followed by Swissquote a few days later.

The initiative was initially met with skepticism by Geneva and Zurich's financial community, but it laid the groundwork for an ecosystem where banks serve as a bridge of trust.

In 2019, momentum accelerated with FINMA (the Swiss financial regulator) granting banking licenses to two "crypto-native" players: Seba (now AMINA Bank) and Sygnum. This marked the official birth of "crypto banks."

The regulatory pivot: The 2021 DLT Act

While several banks took the leap early on, it was a legislative framework unique in the world that truly opened the floodgates. Although FINMA's 2018 ICO guidelines provided an initial classification (payment, utility, and asset tokens), the major event remains the Federal Act on the Adaptation of Federal Law to Developments in Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT Act).

Fully entered into force on August 1, 2021, this law created unprecedented legal certainty by:

✓ **Creating "register value rights"**

allowing shares or bonds to be tokenized with the same legal value as traditional securities.

✓ **Clarifying segregation rights**

ensuring that in the event of a bank's bankruptcy, clients' cryptocurrencies are protected and do not fall into the bankruptcy estate.

✓ **Introducing a DLT trading license**

enabling next-generation market infrastructures to emerge.

04

Towards systemic
adoption?

Top 10 Swiss Bank & crypto services

				Crypto services
1	 UBS	UBS		
2	RAIFFEISEN	Raiffeisen Schweiz		
3	 ZKB	Zürcher Kantonalbank (ZKB)		
4	 PostFinance	PostFinance		
5	Julius Bär	Julius Bär		
6	 BCV	Banque Cantonale Vaudoise (BCV)		
7	 LUKB	Luzerner Kantonalbank (LUKB)		
8	 MIGROS BANK	Migros Bank AG		
9	 BKB	Basler Kantonalbank (BKB)		
10	 PICTET	Pictet Group		

Swiss Banks & Digital Assets : evolution & adoption

	Early Adoption 2017-2021	Current State 2024-2026
 Primary Target	HNWI / Family offices	Retail / Middle Class
 Bank Penetration	< 5% of institutions	≈ 28% of Retail Banks
 Client Numbers	Few Thousand	> 2,5 million Eligible Accounts
 Client Motivation	Alpha / Aggressive Diversification	Security / Simple Custody

05

Investment: A growth driver impossible to ignore

The era when digital assets were merely a curiosity for a few pioneers in Geneva or Zurich seems definitively over.

The challenge for a traditional bank has become "existential" because without a digital asset offering, these institutions risk losing their existing client base while failing to attract new ones.

This sentiment is shared by cantonal banks (Zurich and Lucerne leading the way) which, despite their nature as state institutions, have provided a clear response to the demand from wealthy clients who now wish to integrate Bitcoin alongside their traditional positions in gold or technology stocks.

This maturity translates into figures that catch the attention of financial management. Some banks, such as Swissquote, have told us that digital assets exceed 10% of their revenue.

Investment: A growth driver impossible to ignore

Interview

“Nearly all Swiss banks are engaged with digital assets”



How do you assess the adoption of digital assets by Swiss banks?

The progress made is impressive. Looking back, things have changed radically. The real turning point was the introduction of the DLT legal framework. This allowed the first banks to offer custody and trading services with the essential regulatory clarity.

What makes the difference?

For institutional investors, this was the missing link: having a regulated counterparty capable of holding off-balance-sheet assets, thereby limiting counterparty risk. Since then, the regulator has been proactive in regularly publishing guidelines, particularly on staking or more recently on custody. Today, nearly all Swiss banks are involved with digital assets, whether through cryptocurrency trading or tokenization.



Global AUM **CHF 26 billion**

Custody Infrastructure **Taurus**

Custodian **Syz Bank**

Trading Infrastructure **Taurus**

What services are offered today at Syz?

We've been active in custody and trading for three years. We chose an internal infrastructure based on HSM (Hardware Security Modules) to manage segmented wallets for our clients. They can deposit, withdraw, buy and sell. We're now moving to the next stage. In the coming months, we'll be deploying collateral management (lending) and staking services. At the same time, we're increasingly integrating these assets into our advisory and discretionary management mandates.

Has this become a significant growth driver?

It's an ancillary activity that's growing rapidly and is strategic for the bank. We attract two types of profiles: traditional clients who want to diversify, and "crypto-natives" looking for a bank capable of understanding their world while offering them traditional banking services.



Investment: A growth driver impossible to ignore

Interview

“In terms of profitability, the impact is massive”



You were among the first banks to offer crypto services back in 2019. Is it satisfying to see many institutions arriving several years late?

On one hand, we're pleased to see other institutions joining us on digital assets as investment or payment instruments. This confirms our initial intuition and makes it easier to communicate with our clients about the benefits of blockchain in wealth management. On the other hand, this growing adoption naturally means increased competition. However, each bank ends up finding its niche. Some, like us, fully embrace these technologies, while others simply offer access to Bitcoin and Ethereum trading. What's crucial is that this adoption pushes banks to understand the advantages of blockchain infrastructure in back-office operations. That's where the real impact on the local banking market will be felt.



MAERKI BAUMANN & CO. AG

PRIVATBANK

Global AUM **CHF 11 billion**

Custody Infrastructure **Crypto Finance & Incore**

Custodian **Maerki Baumann**

Trading Infrastructure **Incore**

Where does the growth potential lie?

The private client market is already very mature. Those who were interested have already taken their positions. The real growth driver now lies with institutional investors. Banks are generally positive, although we're still waiting for the market "elephant," UBS, to commit more firmly to tip the sector. For now, insurance companies and pension funds remain hesitant, held back by regulation but also by a very conservative approach to investment.

What services do you actually offer your clients today?

Our offering rests on four pillars. The first is digital asset custody: standard tokens (BTC, ETH, XRP), stablecoins and, upon request, NFTs. The second pillar is trading of these same assets. We're actively working on opening security token trading. Next, we offer staking on four major protocols: Ethereum, Polkadot, Solana and Cardano. Finally, we offer lending secured by digital assets (primarily Bitcoin and Ethereum). We're open to loans against stablecoins like USDT, although demand is still marginal on this specific segment.



Investment: A growth driver impossible to ignore

Interview - Continued

Milko Hensel (Maerki Bauman)

Beyond the technological aspect, how much weight do digital assets actually carry in your accounts today?

We don't disclose precise figures, but I can give you an overall picture. In terms of assets under management (AUM), the stock held remains modest compared to all our traditional assets. This is explained by our clients' profile: many are transaction-oriented and sell their assets quickly, or only keep a fraction for diversification or succession purposes. On the other hand, in terms of profitability, the impact is massive. More than 20% of the bank's profit now comes from digital-related activity. This figure includes revenue directly generated by crypto, but also commissions from clients who, incidentally, have exposure to digital assets. It's a major growth driver for a bank of our size.

In the longer term, will blockchain really transform banks' operational efficiency?

The efficiency improvement is evident on several fronts: securities transactions, custody, and everything related to corporate actions (dividend payments, general meetings). Similarly, for compliance (AML/KYC), audit automation through blockchain immutability is a major opportunity. But there's a flip side for the sector: the threat to revenues. It becomes very difficult to justify current banking fees if the entire value chain is automated via blockchain.



06

Customers: From wealth management to retail

What was perceived until 2021 as a "boutique" service designed to capture the wealth of a few pioneers has transformed into a mass market. Within three years, sector penetration has grown from less than 5% of institutions to nearly 28% of retail banks, potentially paving the way for more than 2.5 million eligible accounts.

The strongest signal of this democratization was sent in 2024 with the simultaneous arrival of Zürcher Kantonalbank (ZKB) and PostFinance in the market.

However, the transition to mass market faces a technological bottleneck. While private banks have been able to equip themselves quickly, some major institutions sometimes face legacy systems that are difficult to integrate.

As a result, the current trend for banks is to outsource many capabilities, relying on specialized players to import technological capacity that they cannot build in-house.

Customers: From wealth management to retail

Interview

“The activity generates around 10% of our revenue”



You're one of the pioneers, with an offering launched back in 2017. Can you give us an overview of the scope of your services?

Our ecosystem today rests on five strategic pillars: custody, brokerage, staking, Lombard credit, and payment solutions via our bank card. On the custody side, we manage incoming and outgoing transfers for around forty assets across various networks. It's a very comprehensive offering. For the execution part, we operate our own exchange, SQX. In Switzerland, the landscape is fairly concentrated and we probably handle over 90% of the national volume as an exchange, even though there are no studies available on this. While some players are not very transparent about their figures, we believe we are the undisputed leader in the banking exchange platform segment.

What is the real impact of crypto activity on Swissquote's financial results?

If we look at our annual reports, 2021 was exceptional: crypto represented nearly 20% of the bank's revenue.



Global AUM **CHF 76 billion**

Custody Infrastructure **Taurus**

Custodian **Swissquote**

Trading Infrastructure **Swissquote**

If we smooth out the performance over time, excluding the launch phase, the activity generates on average about 10% of the group's total revenue, combining direct and indirect commissions. For an institution of our size, that's a very significant contribution.

What's the roadmap for the coming months?

The real breakthrough will come from our offering that could be described as OTC, designed to simplify conversion between assets. We're going to open up the ability to price and exchange pairs combining crypto and any fiat currency. Specifically, we're going to offer Bitcoin against Swiss Franc (BTC/CHF), an offering that no other bank really offers today in Switzerland. We're going to first roll out this service for our retail clients before extending it to institutional clients. This is a major competitive advantage, especially since we're leveraging Swissquote's historical strength in the Forex space.

Has the crypto offering become a growth driver for your international expansion?

Absolutely, and we're seeing this particularly in Europe. The Swissquote group holds two banking licenses: one in Switzerland and one in Luxembourg. For the latter, we're already registered as a Virtual Asset Service Provider (VASP) and we're currently engaged in the transition process to become a CASP (Crypto-Asset Service Provider) under the MiCA regime. This will allow us to operate with a full European passport. We're also considering expansion into other countries where Swissquote already has a local entity.

Customers: From wealth management to retail

Interview

“Our clients have a much more mature profile than expected”



You are one of the banking giants offering crypto services. What are your flagship products?

We currently offer custody and trading services for our B2C and B2B segments. This is a fundamental point for us: we handle asset custody ourselves. Given our reputation and our AAA rating (we are considered the second safest bank in the world), it made sense to play this trust card. We didn't want to delegate this responsibility.

It's been just over a year since you launched these services. What's your assessment?

We officially started at the beginning of 2024. It's been a success, both with our direct clients and our B2B partners. We're actually observing an interesting phenomenon in Switzerland: more and more banks are realizing they need to offer these services, not necessarily out of deep conviction at first, but due to FOMO (fear of missing out).



Zürcher Kantonalbank

Global AUM **CHF 580 billion**

Custody Infrastructure **Fireblocks**

Custodian **Zürcher Kantonalbank**

Trading Infrastructure **Crypto Finance & AMINA Bank**

They see their direct competitors getting involved and fear losing a strategic advantage if they remain inactive.

What is the typical profile of your clients who invest in crypto assets?

This is probably the biggest surprise of this launch. We expected, like many others, to attract a very young clientele. That's not the case at all. The average age of our crypto investors is between 30 and 50 years old. They are mostly men, from our Private Banking segment rather than traditional retail banking. These are clients who have a much higher investment capacity than we had modeled. To give you a figure: more than 40% of these clients had no investment portfolio open with us before. They only held cash. Crypto was therefore the gateway product that turned them into active investors.

Do you have data on volumes or amounts invested?

I can tell you that the average ticket size is much higher than we imagined. It's a clear indicator of the maturity and seriousness of this clientele. These aren't small portfolios testing the market with a few hundred francs, but established investors integrating digital assets into a broader wealth strategy.



Customers: From wealth management to retail

Interview - Continued

Peter Hubli (Zürcher Kantonalbank)

Switzerland seems to be a promised land where every bank has already integrated digital assets. Is this reality or a distorted perception?

For institutions as traditional as ours, offering crypto services remains a fairly unusual move. Adoption is in reality very correlated with market cycles. When Bitcoin reaches new highs, my phone doesn't stop ringing; other banks call me to understand how we proceeded. But as soon as we enter a stagnation phase, like the one we're experiencing in early 2026 without much media attention, institutional interest drops off. It's a slow movement, very dependent on external "noise."

Does the arrival of giants like UBS change the game for a cantonal bank?

Absolutely. According to various press articles, UBS reportedly intends to enter the cryptocurrency market, and each new entrant of this size increases pressure on other players. The more big names get involved, the harder it becomes for the remaining banks to justify their absence. It's a driving force for the entire Swiss financial ecosystem.

ZKB is a public bank—is this a barrier or an asset for innovation in this sector?

It's our identity. We are a public bank, which reinforces our security and seriousness requirements. This is what reassures our clients when they decide to take the plunge into digital assets with us. They know we will never compromise on the security of their holdings.



Customers: From wealth management to retail

Interview

"We're also working on Lombard credit backed by digital assets"



Are you seeing Swiss investors beginning to favor Bitcoin over gold, for example?

Yes, we are observing this phenomenon, but let's remain realistic: it still concerns only a small percentage of the population. It's a niche. People are getting familiar with the subject and understanding the issues better and better. We also need to distinguish Bitcoin from other crypto use cases. For many, understanding how software can produce an asset that trades and has real value represents a genuine paradigm shift. We spend a lot of time discussing this with our "traditional" bankers. They come from an opposing system, with different scoring methods and asset valuation approaches. The transition is slow, but it is steady.

Specifically, what services do you offer today at Lucerne Cantonal Bank?

Our core offering rests on three pillars: trading, custody, and transfers (deposits and withdrawals). We were the first cantonal bank to offer these transfers in a fully automated way via our e-banking platform.



Global AUM **CHF 43 billion**
Custody Infrastructure **Fireblocks**
Custodian **Luzerner Kantonalbank**
Trading Infrastructure **Wyden**

It's a perfectly integrated "one-stop-shop" service. Today, we allow our 300,000 retail clients to access nine cryptocurrencies. They can set up standing orders directly from their banking interface, and we will soon be integrating limit orders. We're also working on Lombard credit backed by digital assets.

Can you share any figures on the share of digital assets in your overall business?

I can't disclose everything, but I can give you a significant indicator: approximately 10% of our clients who have an "execution-only" custody account and the appropriate products are already using our crypto trading services. It's a solid foundation on which we continue to build.

Beyond the monetary aspect, how can DLT technology, in your view, sustainably transform traditional banking processes?

The promises are already tangible. 24/7 transferability, asset granularity through tokenization, and real-time cross-border payments are operational realities. We're already seeing numerous institutions adopt these tools to gain efficiency. However, the true potential of blockchain will only be revealed when we have reached a critical mass of interconnected players. That's where the difficulty lies: harmonizing standards and regulations among all stakeholders. Once this threshold is crossed, the financial infrastructure will not only be faster, but above all much more efficient.

07

When will Switzerland launch its central bank digital currency?

With Project Helvetia, Switzerland has reached a major milestone. Led by the Swiss National Bank (SNB) in collaboration with the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), this program launched in 2020 has taken on an industrial dimension.

Its phase 3, deployed at the end of 2023, uses a genuine wholesale central bank digital currency for the settlement of tokenized bonds.

This momentum is based on the active participation of the country's major banking players. UBS, the Zürcher Kantonalbank (ZKB), and the Vaud Cantonal Bank (BCV) have already issued and settled securities directly on this infrastructure, with settlement finality in central bank money.

The results are tangible: over 750 million Swiss francs in digital bonds have been processed, demonstrating the viability of the atomic delivery versus payment (DvP) model.

The extension of the Helvetia pilot until June 2027 reflects the ambition to transform a successful experiment into a permanent infrastructure for the financial center. The technology is available, and banks are ready to adopt it.

08

Stablecoins increasingly integrated into banks

While Bitcoin's volatility often takes center stage, a more subtle revolution is taking place in Swiss banks: that of stablecoins. In 2026, these pegged tokens are becoming a cornerstone of operational efficiency.

Franz Bergmüller, CEO of AMINA Bank, describes the stablecoin as the industry's "first killer use case." This token solves the "chaos of cross-border payments," whose costs and delays remain absurd in the traditional system. Serge Kaulitz, Head of Digital Assets at Lucerne Cantonal Bank, shares this vision. His institution already manages USDC and USDT in production.

Despite this enthusiasm, Swiss banks remain cautious about issuing their own tokens. The market is highly concentrated between Circle's USDC and Tether's USDT. Added to this concentration are two major obstacles: the regulatory difficulty of issuing stablecoins from Switzerland, and the weak incentive for issuers due to low-yielding interest rates (0% since mid-2025).

Faced with these limitations, the financial center is exploring a third path: "deposit tokens." In September 2025, an initiative coordinated by the Swiss Bankers Association — involving UBS and PostFinance — validated the viability of these tokens for interbank payments. They represent tokenized bank deposits.

These assets are regulated bank liabilities. They allow money to be kept within the supervised perimeter while benefiting from blockchain programmability.

Stablecoins increasingly integrated into banks

Interview

“Blockchain is no longer just an investment option, it’s a payment infrastructure layer”



How do you integrate stablecoins into your business processes?

Pure “retail” payment isn’t yet a massive banking reality; there’s still work to be done. On the other hand, using smart contracts to automate payments linked to contractual conditions is a game-changer. It’s a growing utility. The major advantage is 24/7 availability. That’s a colossal asset, particularly for flows with countries whose financial infrastructure is less developed. To be concrete: in our crypto trading activities, we now perform settlement directly in stablecoins. This saves us from waiting until the next day for dollars to be credited to the counterparty’s account. We primarily use USDC and USDT.



Global AUM **CHF 20 billion**

Custody Infrastructure **Taurus**

Custodian **Arab Bank Switzerland**

Trading Infrastructure **Talos**

You’ve also worked on digitizing maritime trade using blockchain tools...

Exactly. We delivered a project for an umbrella association (FIATA) aimed at digitizing the bill of lading. Instead of having a standalone application, we used blockchain to create a complete audit trail: from accepting the goods to the ship’s arrival and customs clearance. Once these steps are validated, payment is automatically triggered via the smart contract in stablecoin (on Ethereum). That’s where the real added value lies for a bank: integrating the payment layer into the logistics process.

As a bank, compliance is your priority. How do you manage exposure to issuers like Tether, which don’t necessarily have the same rating standards as traditional finance?

It’s a gradual ramp-up. At the beginning, our limits were very low, then we increased them little by little. To be honest: selling Circle (USDC) to a credit committee is much simpler than selling Tether (USDT). However, our exposure to Tether is primarily linked to settlement. We don’t hold Tether in treasury for extended periods because it costs about 4% compared to the dollar. We use it as a pipe: once the transaction is settled, we return to more traditional assets. It’s flow management rather than stock management.



Stablecoins increasingly integrated into banks

Interview - Continued

Rani Jabban (Arab Bank Switzerland)

What is the weight of crypto activity at Arab Bank Switzerland?

The numbers speak for themselves: crypto activity currently represents about 5% of our assets under management (AUM) and 4% of our operating revenue. But the most important point is this: it contributes 7% of our net income. It's an extremely profitable activity relative to its size. Of course, it's cyclical—we had an exceptional January 2026 after a slowdown during the bear market—but structurally, it positions the bank in a high-value-added segment.

What is the scope of your offering for an institutional client or ultra-high-net-worth individual?

Custody is the foundation of our entire ecosystem. It's from there that we built trading, staking, and lending. We're also developing specific discretionary management mandates. For example, we launched in early February, in partnership with XBTO, a "Bitcoin Yield" mandate. The idea isn't just to provide buy/sell access, but to support the client with more sophisticated strategies. We're currently implementing a derivatives and options offering. This allows us to structure relatively simple products, such as covered call sales or reverse convertibles on Bitcoin.

Most traditional banks settle for a white-label solution for investment. You seem to have made a different choice by controlling the entire chain.

It's a question of agility. As early as 2019, the choice was limited. We took a significant stake in Taurus, of which we are a major shareholder. This allows us to have full control of our infrastructure. Today, when we talk about tokenization, we have the advantage of being able to custody tokenized assets ourselves. This technological control allows us to serve two types of clients: "crypto-natives," who demand complete wallet segregation and their own addresses, and traditional clients, who prefer a classic banking interface without having to manage the underlying technical complexity.

For many banks, crypto-assets are complex to grasp because of compliance. How do you manage it?

Zero risk doesn't exist, but we've put all the necessary mitigants in place. For each transaction, we perform rigorous wallet scoring. We primarily use two tools for blockchain analysis: Merkle Science and Coinfirm (acquired by Lukka in 2024, editor's note). It's time-consuming because we must ensure the origin of funds, but that's the price of peace of mind. In the long term, I believe the integration of AI with blockchain will enable even more powerful real-time screening. This will pave the way for institutional use of DeFi. If a product like Morpho, for example, meets our KYC/AML requirements, we would have no reason not to consider it for our clients.



Stablecoins increasingly integrated into banks

Interview

“We’re convinced that DLT can improve certain banking processes”



Alexander Thoma
Head of Digital Assets, PostFinance

How do you analyze the current adoption of digital assets by the Swiss banking sector?

We observe a very clear customer behavior: they prefer to access cryptocurrencies through their trusted bank rather than through unregulated exchanges. This analysis was the driving force behind our decision to enter the market. Switzerland offers a solid foundation for this development, combining financial stability with a progressive regulatory framework. By opening crypto trading to our 2.4 million clients, we became the first systemically important bank in Switzerland to offer direct access to this asset class. This reflects our deep conviction: digital assets are becoming integrated

+ PostFinance

Global AUM **CHF 101 billion**

Custody Infrastructure **Sygnium**

Custodian **PostFinance**

Trading Infrastructure **Sygnium**

One year after the launch, what figures can you share to illustrate your clients' appetite?

Since the launch in February 2024, the figures confirm solid and sustained interest. More than 36,000 crypto custody accounts have been opened and we have processed over 565,000 transactions. For competitive reasons, we do not disclose details of assets under management (AUM) or specific revenues generated by this activity. However, these transaction volumes demonstrate that the need was real. Going forward, we plan to moderately expand our token universe, extend staking to other assets, and open these services to new client segments.

What is the technical architecture that supports your crypto offering?

Our infrastructure partner is Sygnium Bank. They act as broker and back-end provider for custody and trading services. This collaboration enabled us to efficiently launch a regulated offering while maintaining institutional-grade security standards. On the other hand, all client interfaces, compliance processes, and customer relationship management remain under the direct responsibility of PostFinance.



Stablecoins increasingly integrated into banks

Interview - Continued

Alexander Thoma (PostFinance)

Beyond pure retail investment, are you exploring other blockchain use cases, such as tokenization or stablecoins?

Absolutely. We are constantly evaluating broader applications of blockchain beyond simple trading and custody. In Switzerland, the debate around stablecoins has regained momentum, driven by regulatory clarifications from FINIG and new market initiatives. We are closely following Swiss franc stablecoin projects and are actively participating in the Swiss Deposit Token project as well as the international initiative Project Agorá. Led by the Bank for International Settlements (BIS), Agorá explores how distributed ledger technology (DLT) can be used to build a secure infrastructure for cross-border payments between central banks and commercial banks. As a systemically important institution, PostFinance is among the commercial establishments engaged in this discussion.

Can you tell us more about the "Swiss Deposit Token" that you tested with UBS and Sygnum?

It's a Proof of Concept (PoC) conducted with the Swiss Bankers Association. The idea was to examine the feasibility of a tokenized commercial bank money, issued on a public-permissioned blockchain, while retaining the legal and regulatory characteristics of traditional bank deposits. The prototype confirmed interoperability between banks and operational stability for concrete use cases, such as peer-to-peer (P2P) payments or automated escrow account settlement.

Switzerland has long been a pioneer in regulation. Is that still the case in your view?

Switzerland was among the first nations to introduce a comprehensive legislative framework for DLT, which facilitated institutional participation. After an initial phase of strong momentum, the pace has somewhat slowed. But the dialogue has recently intensified, particularly regarding the treatment of stablecoins. Meanwhile, other jurisdictions such as the European Union or the United States are accelerating their own regulatory initiatives, which increases international competition. Switzerland remains well positioned, but maintaining this pioneering role will require continuous regulatory agility. We need a framework that balances innovation and financial stability, while ensuring international interoperability.



Stablecoins increasingly integrated into banks

Interview

“2025 was the tipping point for real-world asset tokenization”



You provide white-label services for many banks like PostFinance—how does this work?

Sygnum is a leading B2B provider in the Swiss ecosystem with partners in Europe and Asia, enabling other financial institutions to offer their end clients access to digital assets. We have a global approach with a local touch through which we enable the full range of regulated digital asset services for private, retail, universal, and systemically important public banks. To this end, Sygnum has developed a comprehensive suite of custody, trading, transfer, and other services that can either be fully integrated on an API basis or used with limited integration efforts.



Global AUC **CHF 5 billion**

Custody Infrastructure **multiple partners, including Fireblocks**

Custodian **Sygnum**

Trading Infrastructure **several liquidity partners, including B2C2**

Do you use stablecoins or DLT technology to optimize your internal processes or your clients' transactions, beyond just the investment aspect?

Absolutely. Several stablecoins are integrated into our custody and trading solutions. We have also issued our own token, DCHF, which is a stablecoin pegged to the Swiss franc. To be precise, it's a settlement token within the Sygnum ecosystem, used primarily by our internal client base. The use of stablecoins is multifaceted. Some crypto foundations use them for their treasury management or to ensure 24/7 settlements. We also offer an "off-exchange" custody solution that allows trading on different platforms while limiting counterparty risk; in this context, stablecoins can serve as collateral. However, we are not seeking to become a large-scale stablecoin issuer beyond the specific use of DCHF.



Stablecoins increasingly integrated into banks

Interview – Continued

Fabian Dori (Sygnum Bank)

In your view, why can DLT technology genuinely improve the current banking system?

We're only at the beginning, but the tokenization wave is finally emerging. We thought it would arrive sooner, but 2025 marked a real turning point. The benefits are now clear to industry players: continuous clearing and settlement, reduced friction related to settlement times, and significantly lower cross-border transfer costs. Ultimately, these improvements combined with smart contracts and AI agents will enable automation of much of the value chain, such as corporate actions. The ecosystem, regulators, and traditional financial institutions are increasingly receptive to these arguments. We first saw the rise of stablecoins, and now that of tokenized real-world assets (RWAs). Major players are starting to offer 24/7 trading or tokenized stocks. The momentum is now underway.

What are the key figures that illustrate Sygnum's activity today?

Since obtaining our banking license in October 2019, growth has been very strong. Our staff numbers around 270 employees, mainly in Switzerland, with about twenty people in Singapore and a team in Abu Dhabi. We are currently strengthening our presence in Europe to expand our international footprint.



Stablecoins increasingly integrated into banks

Interview

“The world doesn’t need another traditional bank”



How do you analyze the adoption of digital assets by Swiss banks today?

Policymakers were able to talk to regulators very early on to open up the market. Even today, a full banking license for a crypto bank is a Swiss specialty. There are only two of us that have it (Sygnum and AMINA, ed.). Elsewhere, such as in Europe with our MiCA license obtained last year, we only have crypto approvals. Today, every bank has at least some crypto exploration underway. But there’s a gap between the public discourse—cautious, almost wait-and-see—and what’s happening behind the scenes. Behind the curtain, dedicated teams are actively working on implementation. And above all, despite market volatility, there’s no panic. Institutional interest is now decoupled from price action.

AMINA

Global AUM **CHF 4 billion**

Custody infrastructure **Taurus, Fireblocks, proprietary cold storage**

Custodian **AMINA Bank**

Trading Infrastructure **Talos**

What is the specificity of Amina's offering compared to a traditional bank that would add a crypto “component”?

We are 90% a crypto bank. The world doesn’t need yet another traditional bank. We offer everything you’d expect from a financial institution: accounts, credit cards, staking, custody, trading, even lending, but with a full crypto spin. The real differentiator is our platform. The majority of our architecture is custom-built. Why? Because standard banking systems (core banking) are incapable of handling crypto assets. A simple example: decimals. Traditional systems aren’t designed to handle ten decimal places. So we took a banking system and grafted it onto a proprietary crypto system, from custody to risk monitoring, all the way to the front-end.



Stablecoins increasingly integrated into banks

Interview - Continued

Franz Bergmüller (AMINA Bank)

Many institutions are interested in stablecoins and tokenization. What is Amina's strategy in these segments?

On stablecoins, our position is clear: we want to be the natural banking partner for major issuers. We were the first to partner with Circle, for example. We don't plan to issue our own stablecoin; the market is already ultra-concentrated between USDC and Tether. For me, the stablecoin is the first "killer use case" of this industry. Even without yield, it solves the chaos of cross-border payments, whose costs and delays are absurd. However, the current model where the issuer captures all the yield isn't sustainable long-term for holders. That's where tokenization comes into play: transforming yield-generating assets into tokens usable on-chain.

What is the added value of tokenization for a bank?

Technically, tokenizing a stock or bond is child's play. We've tested it: it takes us four days to tokenize a "real world asset". But the question is: what is the real added value compared to traditional markets that already work well? If I sell you a tokenized stock on Sunday morning, what's its price when the underlying market has been closed since Friday evening? There's still an element of speculation and major liquidity challenges. For example, we offer tokenized gold in partnership with a Swiss refinery. The gold is physically stored in a secure location, and if you have any doubts, we'll deliver the bar to your home. It's an incredible value proposition, and while demand has grown significantly in the past six months, it still remains modest. Investors are still attached to physical or traditional banking channels.

In the long run, will banks shift their infrastructure to blockchain (DLT) to gain efficiency?

The answer is yes, I firmly believe so. But changing an existing banking system is a logistical and technical nightmare. Having worked at Accenture, I can tell you it's a titanic task. The ideal is to build a bank from scratch, as we did. Beneath the surface of price volatility, the number of developers and projects is constantly increasing. That's where the real value lies. As for the debate between private and public blockchains, the technology matters little in the end. What counts is value for the user. Look at Tether: everyone debates its legitimacy, but the market doesn't care because Tether provides the liquidity people need. It's usage that dictates technological victory.

A final word on your clientele: who are the faces behind AMINA today?

We focus on High Net Worth Individuals, private investors, corporate, and institutional clients. Of the HNWI's, many are crypto pioneers who, as they age, are looking for institutional security for their wealth, often to protect their family or facilitate a transfer. They're moving from self-custody to regulated banking services because they realize that managing private keys is too heavy a burden for their loved ones. We're here to bridge these two worlds.



09

UBS and the "fast
follower" strategy



The Swiss financial industry has long watched the horizon with one burning question: when would the giant UBS finally break its silence?

The wait ended in January 2026. Until then described as a passive "ocean liner" by some observers, Switzerland's leading bank broke with its historically cautious approach by announcing a project to offer direct trading of Bitcoin and Ethereum to select private banking clients in Switzerland. This move is a strategic decision driven by growing demand from high-net-worth individuals for direct "spot" exposure rather than derivatives alone.

This market entry, though perceived as late by native players, is deliberately framed as an opportunistic "fast follower" approach, in the words of CEO Sergio Ermotti. Unlike the pioneers who had to work through the technological growing pains, UBS chose to watch the market mature before committing heavily. Milko Hensel of Maerki Baumann even describes UBS as "the elephant in the room," whose firm commitment is essential to tip the entire sector toward systemic adoption. The arrival of such a player fundamentally changes the game for cantonal and private banks already active in the space.

The bank has already begun to industrialize its fund management through the UBS Tokenize platform, launching uMINT in late 2024, its first tokenized money market fund on Ethereum. By combining direct access to cryptocurrencies and tokenization of traditional assets (RWA), the bank seeks to capture flows where they're moving, from wealth management to decentralized finance. This rollout, which is expected to expand to Asia-Pacific and the United States, remains contingent on the evolution of Basel III standards on capital requirements, a critical issue for the overall profitability of the operation.

10

The Swiss
exception facing
normalization

The Swiss exception facing normalization



The Swiss regulatory landscape is undergoing a profound transformation, marked by a desire for international alignment and increased pressure from European standards.

Behind the apparent stability of "registered uncertificated securities" (which have allowed shares to be tokenized with the same legal value as traditional securities), a new reality is taking hold: one of more stringent, even restrictive oversight on certain key segments.

The entry into force of the OECD's Crypto-Asset Reporting Framework (CARF) on January 1, 2027 will mark the end of an era of relative opacity. Digital assets will now be integrated into the automatic exchange of information. For banks, this means rigorous tax compliance: each transaction will need to be converted and reported to the tax authorities of their foreign clients. This tax normalization is expected to be accompanied by a license overhaul, following the public consultation launched by FINMA and closed in February 2026.

Behind the stated objective of modernization and alignment with international standards, the text provides for increased oversight of payment service providers, asymmetric treatment of stablecoins, and regulatory tightening without access to the European passport. These measures raise fears of a loss of competitiveness and a weakening of the Swiss model based on technological neutrality and gradual market entry.

Ilya Volkov, board member of the Crypto Valley Association, warns against the trap of "regulatory micromanagement". He emphasizes that while Switzerland remains ahead of MiCA regulation (sometimes deemed restrictive and ineffective for innovation), it must imperatively focus on real systemic risks rather than excessive rigidity.

The Swiss exception facing normalization

Interview

“Until the new stablecoin license is in place, Switzerland will remain behind”

MME |||



Andreas Glarner

Legal Partner, MME

How do you view the current state of Swiss regulation concerning digital assets, particularly in the banking environment?

Switzerland was one of the pioneers in regulating digital assets in a very broad manner. It's still one of the most comprehensive frameworks in the world today, as it covers all types of assets, including security tokens. This has given us a mature and stable ecosystem, both for the primary market (issuance) and the secondary market (trading). We're currently seeing developments aimed at strengthening activity on the secondary market, with regulations that are aligning with the spirit of the European MiCA regulation regarding the establishment of trading venues. However, this is a long-term horizon: we don't anticipate any major changes before 2028.

There's often talk about the Self-Regulatory Organization (SRO) model in Switzerland. Yet FINMA seems to be tightening its grip. Do you share this feeling of increasingly strict control?

Not really, to be honest. The SRO concept is often misunderstood abroad. It's indirect supervision for certain financial intermediation activities. FINMA doesn't directly supervise every small participant, but delegates this task to the SROs, which it supervises itself. This is a huge competitive advantage: it prevents a central authority from crushing small players who don't pose systemic risk. For custody or secondary trading companies, it's an efficient system and far less costly than a full banking license. The Swiss Parliament isn't seeking to abolish this system, but rather to introduce new types of licenses, particularly for stablecoin issuance, in order to strengthen consumer protection without destroying the SRO regime.

Speaking of which, will these new licenses encourage the emergence of Swiss franc-based stablecoins?

Absolutely. That's precisely one of the objectives of these new licenses. The idea is to allow an entity to obtain specific authorization to issue a stablecoin based in Switzerland. I don't expect strong opposition on this point; it's a clear request from the industry.



The Swiss exception facing normalization

Interview - Continued

Andreas Glarner (MME)

If we compare with Europe and MiCA, is Switzerland strengthening its position or at risk of falling behind?

It's a crystal ball reading exercise, because we don't yet know how MiCA will translate into operational realities. MiCA was a major step for legal certainty in Europe, but it's a very formal approach that generates significant operational headaches for companies. The Swiss approach consists of strengthening protection where it's needed, particularly on stablecoins, while staying very close to what Europe or even the United States is doing, but with a "Swiss finish": more pragmatism and less administrative burden. A draft regulation was published last year, the consultation period recently ended, and the Federal Council should present a new proposal this year.

Why don't we still have a large-scale CHF stablecoin?

It's a matter of practice. FINMA published guidelines at the end of 2024/early 2025 that effectively froze the market. It requires that the issuer be able to identify token holders, even on the secondary market. This is the opposite of how current stablecoins like USDT or USDC operate. For FINMA, if a bank issues a token, it must know who holds it. This makes current projects, like Frankencoin, very difficult to scale. Until the new "stablecoin" license is in place to offer a more specific and pragmatic framework, Switzerland will remain behind on this segment, except for niche uses in closed circuits.

We sometimes hear that FINMA favors banking players at the expense of fintechs. Is there real friction when drafting regulations?

We first need to clarify roles. FINMA is a supervisory authority: its job is to ensure that regulated entities comply with the rules, not to write laws. Legislative drafting falls to the Federal Department of Finance (FDF) and the SIF (State Secretariat for International Financial Matters).

That said, it's true that FINMA's exposure is historically banking-focused. In terms of headcount and risks, banks, insurers, and asset managers dominate by far. The digital asset industry is still small in comparison. But during legislative consultations, the voice of the crypto industry is heard. It's not a zero-sum game between banks and startups.

Speaking of which, on the ground, there are about twenty Swiss banks active in digital assets. Does this growing regulation favor their dominance?

I wouldn't say it favors them, but it clarifies their playing field. We have "pure-player" banks like Sygnum or AMINA that offer a complete range, and traditional banks that simply allow the purchase of Bitcoin. The central question isn't whether you're a bank or not, but whether the activity being conducted requires a banking license. If it does, you play by banking rules. If it doesn't, you're regulated differently. The regulator isn't seeking to give an unfair advantage; it's seeking to match the level of regulation to the risk profile.

Yet isn't the increase in the regulatory entry ticket a barrier to startup innovation?

That's the flip side of the coin. Any increase in standards raises operational and compliance costs. To avoid stifling innovation, Switzerland relies on a graduated approach. The idea is to have a staircase system: a startup shouldn't need a heavy license from day one. We advocate for maintaining a flexible SRO regime for beginners, allowing them to grow with capital and compliance requirements proportional to their volume of activity. It's this regulated "sandbox" that should allow Switzerland to remain the "Crypto Valley".



11

A custody ecosystem
dominated by local
players

Tech providers

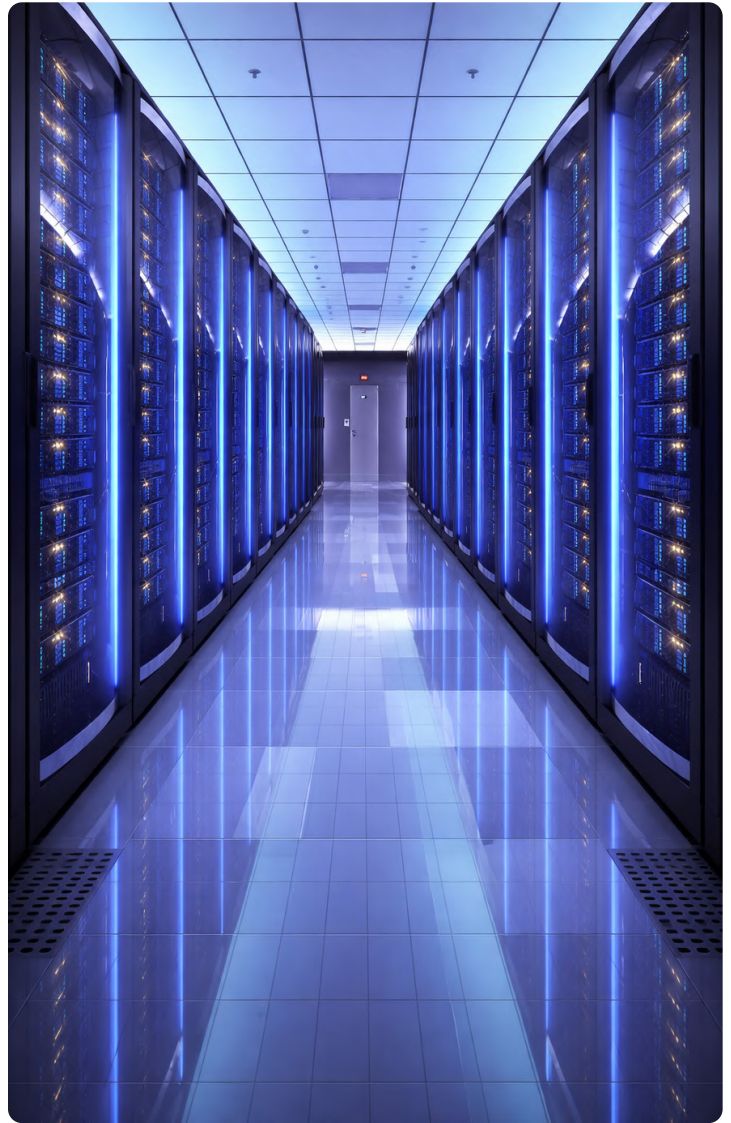
A custody ecosystem dominated by local players

Institutions are turning to an ecosystem of "bank-grade" technology providers whose maturity now rivals traditional finance standards.

At the forefront are local custody champions like Taurus and Metaco (the latter now under American ownership following its acquisition by Ripple) who dominate the custody segment.

These players don't just provide secure digital vaults; they deploy software layers capable of interfacing directly with traditional core banking systems, such as Avaloq or Temenos. This modular approach allows banks to maintain sovereignty over their assets while automating the token lifecycle, from issuance to voting rights management.

However, the focus is shifting from mere custody to execution efficiency, an area where connectivity and market depth are crucial. For a bank, offering crypto-asset trading means navigating a fragmented market that operates around the clock. This is where specialized partners like Crypto Finance or Sygnum come in, having transformed their offering into a comprehensive B2B services platform.



A custody ecosystem dominated by local players

Interview

“We’re entering in a new phase: that of the big names”

TAURUS



How do you observe the evolution of demand from Swiss banks?

The main use cases remain private banking and retail banking. Two or three years ago, we were still in internal organizational discussions. Today, the core focus remains trading and custody of cryptocurrencies. We observe a three-wave structure. The first was driven by Swissquote and “crypto-banks” like Amina or Sygnum in 2017-2018. The second saw the arrival of pioneering private banks like Arab Bank Switzerland (2019-2021), then PostFinance, Syz Bank and cantonal banks like St Galler, ZKB in 2023-2024. Today, we’re entering a new phase: that of the major names. These are leading private banks and asset managers who are beginning to position themselves to respond to direct demand from their High Net Worth Individual clients. They’re preparing their infrastructure for 2027-2028. This is a strong signal: adoption is becoming democratized in the most conservative spheres of finance.

We talk about retail banks, but private banking seems to remain the driving force...

Absolutely. While Swissquote and PostFinance generate significant volumes, the Swiss market remains deeply rooted in wealth management. But a new segment is emerging: that of Trade Finance and commodity trading companies. They’re beginning to look very closely at stablecoins, not for speculation, but as a transactional tool and for payment acceptance. This is a topic gaining popularity outside the strict banking framework.

Taurus’s offering has expanded considerably. Beyond custody with Taurus Protect, how is your value proposition for a major bank structured today?

Our infrastructure is based on several pillars. There’s obviously the custody component and our block explorer which forms the core of our offering, but the acceleration now lies in tokenization and our regulated platform, Taurus Prime. The latter is a trading platform for institutions, supervised by FINMA, which covers three areas: crypto OTC, trading of tokenized securities — thanks to our securities dealer license obtained in 2021. Today, the core activity remains crypto OTC, but we continue to actively push the tokenization of financial securities. Taurus facilitates access to regulated liquidity where Talos offers a trading infrastructure. With Taurus Network, we’re building a bridge between custody and trading to facilitate financial flows (buy/sell, lend/borrow) for our institutional financial clients.



A custody ecosystem dominated by local players

Interview - Continued

Victor Busson (Taurus)

You have some highly renowned clients, which names are public?

We work with Arab Bank Switzerland, CACEIS, Deutsche Bank, AMINA Bank, Swissquote, Banque Delubac, State Street, Clearbank etc. Other prestigious names will be coming soon.

HSM (Hardware Security Module) and MPC (Multi-Party Computation) technologies are often contrasted for key management. Taurus seems to maintain a preference for HSM. Why this choice for the banking sector?

There's a very strong bias in favor of HSM among our large banking clients. The reasons are primarily related to IT security standards that these institutions have mastered for decades. MPC code is often perceived as less readable and certain vulnerabilities, although not fatal, put off cybersecurity departments. At Taurus, we favor an approach based on a "Master Seed" generated during a key ceremony in the presence of auditors. This avoids having to manage and back up thousands of individual private keys, which quickly becomes unmanageable for an institution. HSM allows banks to maintain complete sovereignty over private keys. Doing "on-premise" MPC is often complex and expensive as it falls outside standard market offerings.



A custody ecosystem dominated by local players

Interview

“We’re now the only ones able to settle crypto transactions via the Swift network”



CRYPTO FINANCE



Stijn Vander Straeten

CEO, Crypto Finance

Can you introduce us to Crypto Finance’s services?

Our business consists of providing the necessary infrastructure for financial institutions so they can offer digital assets to their end clients. Our clients are institutions like Banco Santander or Commerzbank. Very recently, we supported the KBC group in Belgium for the launch of their crypto offering. Concretely, we solve their technical problems: we ensure the custody of bitcoins, ethers and other tokens via a sub-custody model, and we handle execution through our trading desk. When a client places an order on their banking app, the flow transits through our systems, is executed, then settled on behalf of the bank. It’s a pure infrastructure model.

Among your different business lines (trading, custody, staking), which dominates your activity today?

Trading remains, by far, our main revenue contributor. It’s an activity that obviously depends on volatility and market cycles, although we’re currently observing a sideways phase. Custody, on the other hand, is showing very significant growth rates. We currently manage approximately \$5 billion in assets on our custody platform. It should be noted that custody margins have experienced compression over the past three or four years, but our integrated model allows us to offset this dynamic.

How do you support your institutional clients on compliance and risk management issues?

It’s crucial to understand that our banking clients generally don’t take market risk; they act on behalf of their clients in an end-to-end processing workflow. Their main risks are related to settlement-delivery and counterparty, namely ourselves. Belonging to the Deutsche Börse group provides fundamental reassurance here. For family offices or asset managers, however, we do offer derivatives to hedge their positions. On the compliance front, every token that transits through our systems is rigorously filtered and evaluated. We also offer portfolio audit services for private banking, to verify that a client’s source of funds indeed corresponds to their declared history.



11

A custody ecosystem dominated by local players

Interview - Continued

Stijn Vander Straeten (Crypto Finance)

How do you integrate your services with Clearstream's post-market infrastructure?

It's a major axis. Since last year, we're officially Clearstream's 61st sub-custodian for crypto-assets. This means that the 2,500 banks connected to Clearstream for their European equities can now access Bitcoin and Ethereum via the same rails. We're currently the only ones capable of settling crypto transactions via the Swift network. It's a killer argument: when I explain to Spanish bankers that we handle Travel Rule requirements via Swift, their perspective shifts. We speak their language, we respect their processes. Of course, integrating new protocols like Solana or Cardano takes longer on these heavy infrastructures, but for mass adoption, you have to go through existing rails. We don't change banks' mindset, we adapt to it.

Financial asset tokenization is often presented as the next frontier. What's your approach on this subject?

We were pioneers as early as 2018-2019, tokenizing bonds for Deutsche Bank or structured products for major investment banks. The goal was back-office operational efficiency. However, I made the decision to shut down this dedicated team in 2022. Why? Because it's a consulting activity that doesn't scale (scalability). Today, no bank has a significant tokenization business beyond proofs of concept (PoC). The day of tokenization will come, I'm convinced of it, but the market is still far too early.

How do you view adoption in Switzerland compared to the European dynamic with MiCA?

In Switzerland, crypto is now a normal asset class. The legal framework is mature, driven by pioneers like Amina or Sygnum. But today, the real momentum is shifting toward Europe. I have about twenty European banks in the pipeline planning to launch in the next twelve months thanks to the clarity brought by MiCA. The difference in approach is striking: Switzerland favors dialogue and technological neutrality (regulatory R&D), while Europe needs extremely strict rules for everything. MiCA isn't perfect, it's sometimes a copy-paste of MiFID, and it's very protective, which isn't ideal for us, Swiss players. But this legal certainty is the price to pay for major names like BNP Paribas or Santander to finally consider crypto as a serious topic.

Why is it so difficult to see a successful Swiss franc stablecoin emerge?

The problem isn't regulatory, it's purely economic. Circle's (USDC) revenue model relies on interest generated by cash reserves and Treasury bonds. In the United States, with rates at 4%, it's a cash machine. In Switzerland, with very low or even zero interest rates, there's no revenue model. If you earn nothing on reserves, you have to charge transaction fees, which destroys your value proposition compared to traditional payment systems. That's what's blocking the stablecoin business case in Switzerland, and to a lesser extent in the eurozone.

A custody ecosystem dominated by local players

Interview

"The institutional market has become our strategic priority"



What figures can measure Ledger's footprint in the institutional segment today?

Historically, Ledger secures approximately 20% of global crypto assets. But in the stablecoin segment, that figure rises to 27%. This is a crucial indicator for us, because stablecoins are the use case proving today that blockchain rails are solid and capable of supporting billions of transactions. Ledger Enterprise now has around a hundred clients. But beyond volume, it's the typology that's changing: we initially spent a lot of time with native ecosystem players; today, my schedule and that of my teams are mostly occupied by traditional financial institutions building their custody and tokenization offerings.

For a bank, the question of governance is as important as pure security. How do you manage this software layer?

This is precisely where Ledger Enterprise distinguishes itself from a simple wallet. We offer a deterministic governance engine. This means you can program immutable rules: whitelists, amount limits, multi-level approval quorums... These rules are enforced at the hardware level. For a bank looking to tokenize assets, it's not just about creating tokens, it's about controlling workflows and treasury. Added to this is a dimension of total auditability, essential to meet regulatory requirements. We provide a complete audit trail of every transaction.

In the Swiss market, players like Taurus or Metaco are very well established. How do you guarantee your clients' digital sovereignty against these local competitors?

I have great admiration for what Switzerland has done; they pioneered smart pro-crypto regulation. To address this sovereignty imperative, we have locally based teams working hand in hand with banks. Technically, our model is inherently sovereign because we never have access to the keys. Some of our clients even ask us if we could install our HSMs directly on-premise (in their own data centers). This is a discussion we're currently having. The Ledger model is based on physical isolation: the bank is the sole master of its keys, without any critical dependence on a third-party cloud for signing.



A custody ecosystem dominated by local players

Interview - Continued

Sébastien Badault (Ledger)

You often highlight HSM (Hardware Security Module) technology. Why is this a decisive argument against MPC (Multi-Party Computation)?

It's a strong architectural choice made back in 2018. HSM is a technology that banks understand and already use for their traditional assets. For a risk officer, the "zero loss" argument is fundamental. Over 400 or 500 billion in assets flow through our infrastructure and we've never recorded a single hack or lost asset. The heart of the matter is physical proof. In a purely software solution like MPC, calculations are distributed across cloud servers. With us, the private key never leaves the secure element. It never exists in a server's memory. Even if a bank's IT infrastructure is compromised, the keys remain physically inaccessible.

Yet MPC appeals to many players for its agility and speed. Could you integrate this technology in the future?

We're not "against" MPC out of dogmatism. There are use cases, like high-frequency trading, where responsiveness is paramount. Some of our clients actually use a hybrid model: Ledger Enterprise for cold or secure storage, and solutions like Fireblocks for their flow operations. The question of whether we'll integrate an MPC layer in the future remains open. We won't die on the "HSM hill," but we're convinced that for the custody of billions in assets over the long term, hardware remains the absolute security standard.

Operationally, how is Ledger Enterprise's commercial offering structured?

Our pricing model is indexed to activity. The main criterion is what we call AUS (Assets Under Security). It's a logical approach for financial institutions: the cost is proportional to the volume of assets secured by the infrastructure. The more you scale up, the more personalized the support, but the technological foundation remains the same, guaranteeing the highest level of security whether you're managing 50 million or 5 billion dollars.

Ledger is regularly the subject of rumors regarding an IPO. How does this prospect influence your roadmap for the Enterprise segment?

Regardless of any market operation, our roadmap is dictated by business reality. The paradigm shift is already here: the institutional market, which barely existed two years ago, has become our strategic priority. The next wave of crypto growth will be driven by institutions. Ledger Enterprise is no longer a side activity, it's the spearhead of the company's development. Our goal is to consolidate this leadership position as major global banks shift into production. It's this market that dictates our pace, not the financial calendar.



12 Tech providers landscape

Custody Infrastructure

TAURUS

ripple
(ex-Metaco)

Fireblocks

Dfns

LEDGER

CRYPTO FINANCE

Sub-custody Infrastructure

SYGNUM

Prime Brokers

HiddenRoad
(Ripple)

Liquidity providers

B2C2

CUMBERLAND
A DRW COMPANY

Brokers

SYGNUM
Bank

AMINA

Back-end Infrastructure

incore

avalooq
An NEC Company

temenos

FINSTAR

finnova.

Trading Infrastructure

bitpanda
Technology Solutions

CRYPTO FINANCE

wyden

TALOS

CoinRoutes

TAURUS

Yield Infrastructure

kiln

F Figment

Allnodes

SYGNUM
Staking

everstake

PEP

12 Tech providers landscape

Data & API

 alchemy

 Kaiko

 CoinDesk
(ex CCData)

KYC/AML solutions

 Chainalysis

 vyntra

 SCORECHAIN

ELLIPTIC

 TRM

 Lukka

Legal Advisors

MME |||

ML

 Lenz & Staehelin

 Kellerhals
Carrard

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LEGAL

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Head of Digital Assets, Banque Cantonale de Lucerne

Christian Leger

Head of Switzerland, Franklin Templeton

Alexander Metzger

Digital Assets Lead, Syz Group

Alexander Thoma

Head of Digital Assets, PostFinance

Stijn Vander Straeten

CEO, Crypto Finance

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