



# 3. Corporate real estate and housing

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**Whatever your specific business needs may be, a wide range of attractive, propitious and easily accessible office locations, factories and land in commercial or industrial zones is available, for rent or purchase.**

Swiss laws have been significantly relaxed on the restriction of real estate ownership by foreigners, including foreign companies. The GREATER GENEVA BERNE area (GGBa) offers a stable real estate market. Prices for commercial office locations in the metropolitan areas of Geneva and Berne are lower than in comparable European cities. Accessibility is exceptionally easy for all cities in the area, thanks to the international airports of Geneva-Cointrin and Berne-Belp, and the highly developed road and rail system.



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### 3.1 PROPERTY AND LAND PRICES IN THE GGBa

Conversion guide: 1m<sup>2</sup> = approximately 10ft<sup>2</sup>

Prices depend on various factors including: location, building condition, views, size and distance from main highways. The prices indicated are approximate. Real estate prices in metropolitan office locations in the cities of Berne, Geneva and Lausanne are 15 to 30% higher than in the urban regions between these cities. For companies wishing to self-build, attractive land plots may be bought or acquired with a land-lease solution. For information on office and manufacturing space and land, visit for example [www.homegate.ch](http://www.homegate.ch) or [www.immoscout.ch](http://www.immoscout.ch) or contact the cantonal economic development agency. Each agency has substantial and detailed data on available real estate in their region.

For region-by-region data on the Swiss property market, visit [www.wuestundpartner.ch](http://www.wuestundpartner.ch) and [www.credit-suisse.ch](http://www.credit-suisse.ch).

Additional charges: Service charges are approximately 10% of rent. Property purchases are subject to a one-off stamp duty of 1.5 to 3.3% of the purchase price (depending on canton and municipality), payable by the purchaser and/or vendor. Property owners pay an annual property tax of approximately 0.3 to 3% of the value of the property.

For additional information on property taxation, visit [www.estv.admin.ch](http://www.estv.admin.ch) or [www.taxation.ch](http://www.taxation.ch).

For more details about real estate purchases by foreign nationals, visit [www.bj.admin.ch](http://www.bj.admin.ch), the Swiss Federal Office of Justice homepage.

Type of property	Price in Swiss francs	Metropolitan location, prime site	Urban location	Suburban location
Offices	Annual rent (price per m <sup>2</sup> /year)	300 - 500	180 - 250	120 - 180
Industrial space	Annual rent (price per m <sup>2</sup> /year)	250 - 280	140 - 230	80 - 130
	Purchase price per m <sup>2</sup>	2,500 - 3,000	1,500 - 2,000	1,000 - 1,500
Developed land in an industrial zone	Purchase price per m <sup>2</sup>	400 - 600	150 - 250	60 - 120
2-bedroom apartments (with 3 to 4 rooms in total)	Monthly rent	3,000 - 6,000	1,800 - 2,600	1,200 - 1,500
	Purchase price	700,000 - 1,200,000	550,000 - 700,000	400,000 - 550,000
4-bedroom houses (with 5 to 6 rooms in total)	Monthly rent	4,000 +	2,800 +	2,500 +
	Purchase price	1,200,000 - 2,500,000	700,000 - 1,200,000	500,000 - 700,000



### 3.2 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SITES

Each region of the GGBa also offers especially attractive and very accessible development zones. These are designed for larger-scale industrial and commercial projects, or projects needing a very high level of security (data centers) and distance from residential areas.

*GGBa representatives* will help you find the best location for your project.

### 3.3 BUSINESS CENTERS AND TECHNOLOGY PARKS

Dedicated business centers are available in every *GGBa* partner canton. Some are independent, others belong to international chains such as Regus, World Trade Center or World Wide Business Centers. They all offer state-of-the-art services and offices to suit every requirement. For more technological projects, we can also recommend the *GGBa*'s technical parks. These are usually connected to a university or university of applied science. For more information, please refer to our fact sheet "Research and technology" or contact the cantonal economic development agency.

### 3.4 HOUSING

One of the main features of real estate in the *GGBa* is that 65% of apartments are for rent. Houses are available to buy, but in Switzerland there are fewer single-owner houses on the market than in the UK or US, for example. Relocation companies will be able to assist you in finding the best home to rent or to buy. A list of interesting links is available at [www.sara-relocation.com](http://www.sara-relocation.com) (Swiss association of relocation agents). For more information, please refer to the fact sheet "8. Expatriation and living in the *GGBa*".



### 3.5 PURCHASING OF REAL ESTATE IN THE GGba

No permit is required for:

Group	Property that can be acquired without authorization
All persons	Commercial real estate
Nationals of member states of the European Community / European Union (EU) or of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) resident in Switzerland (generally individuals with an EU/EFTA B residence permit or an EU/EFTA C settlement permit)	All types of real estate
Non-EU or non-EFTA nationals who have permanent residency status in Switzerland (individuals with a C settlement permit)	All types of real estate
Non-EU or non-EFTA nationals residing in Switzerland who do not yet have permanent residency status in Switzerland (generally individuals with a B residence permit)	Main residence
Companies based in Switzerland that are controlled by individuals who are not subject to the authorization requirement	All types of real estate
EU and EFTA cross-border commuters (with an EU/EFTA G cross-border commuter permit)	Second home in the area in which their workplace is located

#### A permit is required for purchase of non-commercial property by the following groups:

- Foreign nationals residing outside Switzerland
- Non-EU/non-EFTA nationals resident in Switzerland who do not have a settlement permit (i.e. permanent resident status)
- Companies whose head office is outside Switzerland (even if the owner is a Swiss citizen)

- Companies that have their legally registered and actual head office in Switzerland but are controlled by a non-Swiss national resident outside Switzerland. This is the case if foreign nationals hold more than one-third of the company capital, have more than one-third of the voting rights or have provided significant loans
- Buyers who purchase property for a third party abroad (fiduciary transaction)

These permit conditions apply not only to the transfer of real estate ownership requiring land registry entries, but also to any legal transaction that gives a non-resident actual control over any real estate for which a permit is required. For this reason, these groups are not allowed to invest directly in the housing market, nor to conduct residential real estate deals.

*GGba representatives* can help pave the way for your property acquisition if authorization is needed.

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GREATER GENEVA BERNE area is an initiative of the cantons of Berne, Fribourg, Vaud, Neuchâtel, Geneva and Valais