

Press Release

Investment promotion

With 86 newly established foreign companies in 2021, Western Switzerland confirms its appeal as a business location. Switzerland's solid reputation, the improved pandemic situation and a strong project pipeline allow for confidence in the future

- **Western Switzerland performs well, with 86 newly established foreign companies in 2021, originating from around 20 countries. France remains the main source of investment**
- **Travel restrictions were detrimental to investors and had a strong impact on the number of evaluation visits**
- **A strong project pipeline allows for confidence in 2022, despite the geopolitical context**
- **GGBa strengthens its sector-specific approach by targeting promising industries such as biomanufacturing and agri-food**
- **Sustainability is increasingly at the heart of investment promotion activities**

Lausanne, March 29, 2022 – The Greater Geneva Bern area (GGBa) association, together with the economic development agencies of its six member cantons, contributed to the establishment of 86 new foreign companies in Western Switzerland in 2021 (79 in 2019 and 85 in 2020). These figures attest to the resilience and appeal of the region, also considering that the outlook for 2022 is particularly encouraging.

“Switzerland remains a safe bet for many international investors,” says Thomas Bohn, Executive Director of GGBa. “With a dozen representatives based in key markets around the world, we continued to target companies and entrepreneurs on the basis of their sector of activity and potential for innovation, so as to be as close as possible to the economic dynamics of the region. To achieve this, we use a highly specialized business intelligence service, developed in-house.”

“In an unpredictable world marked by strong competition, Western Switzerland is once again showing that it remains a preferred destination for international investors,” says Christoph Ammann, Bern State Councilor and President of GGBa for 2022-2023. *“The positioning of Western Switzerland as a destination for talented entrepreneurs and innovative companies has been reinforced, while the the authorities’ efficient crisis management has preserved the country’s fundamentals. In addition to the 86 companies that have been supported, many foreign companies have established operations in the region without necessarily benefiting from the support of the investment promotion team.”*

In 2021, GGBa deployed a hybrid strategy, which consists of covering key markets not only with local representatives, but also by targeting the job-creating biomanufacturing sector, in which Western Switzerland boasts strong assets.

GGBa also continued to develop its digital communication activities. Numerous promotional activities took place via webinars on topics such as life sciences, agritech and cybersecurity. They were organized in collaboration with a network of partners, such as BioAlps and Trust Valley, and contributed to raising the region's profile and identifying investment projects, as well as initiating various collaborations.

A few examples of newly established companies in 2021:

- **Derdack**, a German company active in IoT and BtoC software, selected Bern as part of its international development
- **Sun Genomics**, a Californian company specializing in intestinal microbiome research and genome sequencing, chose Fribourg for its first European location
- **Approach**, a Belgian expert in cybersecurity, chose Geneva to develop its trust economy activities
- **WattAnywhere**, a French start-up, set up in the heart of Energypolis to design and manufacture fuel cell-based generators
- **MaCher USA Inc.**, a B-Corp certified American sustainability-driven creative branding company, chose Lausanne for its European headquarters
- **pielleswiss**, an Italian company and a recognized leader in sustainable textiles, set up shop at Microcity in Neuchâtel

With good results from both a quality and quantity perspective, and a strong development of the pipeline with new promising projects, 2021 was in line with 2020. All the indicators are green despite uncertainties in the health, global economy and geopolitical situation.

Western Switzerland remains clearly appealing, even if it is difficult to assess the future impact of international conflicts, the tax reform initiated by the OECD, relations with the European Union and the rise in the Swiss franc. GGBa closely monitors these developments and anticipates them as much as possible, and more than ever, with the support of its network of partners, pursues its investment promotion efforts to attract positive impact investments.

Annex

Annual Report 2021 available here: <https://annual-report-2021.ggba-switzerland.ch/>

About GGBa

Created in January 2010, the Greater Geneva Bern area (GGBa) regroups the cantons of Bern, Fribourg, Vaud, Neuchâtel, Geneva and Valais. GGBa's mission is to attract foreign companies that will sustainably strengthen the priority expertise clusters of Western Switzerland and create high value-added jobs. More specifically, GGBa generates investment projects through its business development activities in foreign countries, and hands them over to its member cantons, which are responsible for implementing them.

Additional information and contacts

- M. Christoph Ammann, Minister, President of GGBa, Director of Economic Affairs, Energy and the Environment of the canton of Bern
+41 31 633 48 40 (12:30pm-1:00pm)
christoph.ammann@be.ch
- M. Thomas Bohn, Executive Director
+41 21 644 00 91
t.bohn@ggba-switzerland.ch

