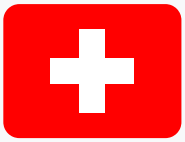
CompanyFormationWiki
The free encyclopedia of company formation
companyformationwiki.com

Company formation in Switzerland

From CompanyFormationWiki, the free encyclopedia of company formation · Last updated 25 November 2026

Company formation in Switzerland



Flag



Coat of arms

Common form	GmbH / Sàrl (limited liability company) [2]
Registry	Cantonal commercial register [1]
Minimum capital	CHF 20,000, fully paid in [2]
Directors	1 managing director [2]
Local director	At least 1 person authorised to represent the company must live in Switzerland [2]
Corporate tax	About 11.9% (Zug) to 20.5% (Bern), combined
VAT / sales tax	8.1%
Typical timeline	Usually 2–4 weeks [1]
Tax treaties	99 treaties in force [9]
Currency	Swiss franc (CHF)

In short: To set up a company in Switzerland, most founders form a GmbH / Sàrl, registered with the cantonal commercial register. [1] Minimum capital: CHF 20,000, fully paid in. Corporate tax: about 11.9% (Zug) to 20.5% (Bern), combined. Registration: usually 2–4 weeks (as of November 2026).

Swiss companies are registered in the **commercial register** of the canton where they have their seat. The **GmbH** (Sàrl in French-speaking cantons) is the usual choice for smaller businesses. The larger **AG** (SA) suits companies that plan to raise outside capital. Total tax depends heavily on the canton.

Business structures

Most founders in Switzerland form a GmbH / Sàrl, registered with the cantonal commercial register. [1] **Other forms are listed below.**

- **GmbH / Sàrl** – limited liability company, CHF 20,000 capital
- **AG / SA** – company limited by shares, CHF 100,000 capital (CHF 50,000 paid in)
- **Sole proprietorship** – Einzelunternehmen / raison individuelle
- **Branch** – of a foreign company

Requirements

Minimum share capital in Switzerland (2026): CHF 20,000, fully paid in. Directors required: 1 managing director. Local resident director: at least 1 person authorised to represent the company must live in Switzerland. [2]

- Articles of association and a public deed of incorporation signed before a Swiss notary.
- Share capital of CHF 20,000 fully paid in, or a contribution in kind.
- At least one person authorised to represent the company who is resident in Switzerland.
- A registered address (domicile) in Switzerland.

Registration process

Typical time to register a company in Switzerland (2026): usually 2–4 weeks. [1] **The usual steps are:**

1. Choose the canton and check the company name.
2. Open a capital deposit account and pay in the share capital.
3. Sign the public deed and articles before a notary.

4. File with the cantonal commercial register; the entry is published in the Swiss Official Gazette of Commerce.
5. Register for VAT once worldwide turnover exceeds CHF 100,000, and for social insurance.

Taxation

The corporate tax rate in Switzerland in 2026 is about 11.9% (Zug) to 20.5% (Bern), combined. Standard VAT or sales tax: 8.1%.

Tax	Rate and notes
Federal profit tax	8.5% statutory (about 7.8% effective, as taxes are deductible)
Cantonal and communal tax	Combined effective rates range from about 11.85% (Zug) to 20.5% (Bern)
VAT	8.1% standard rate; reduced rates of 2.6% and 3.8%

Ongoing compliance

Annual compliance in Switzerland: Companies keep accounts under the Code of Obligations, file annual federal and cantonal tax returns, and need at least a limited audit unless small companies opt out with the consent of all shareholders. [1]

Double tax treaties

Switzerland has 99 treaties in force. A double tax treaty decides which country may tax cross-border income and usually caps the withholding tax the paying country can charge.

Domestic withholding tax on payments to non-residents

Dividends	Interest	Royalties
35%	35%	0%

The 35% withholding tax applies to dividends and to interest on bonds and bank deposits; ordinary loan interest and royalties are not subject to withholding tax. Treaty relief is usually granted by refund. Under the Switzerland–EU agreement, dividends to an EU parent holding at least 25% for two years can be reduced to 0%.

Treaty rates on payments from Switzerland

Maximum withholding tax Switzerland charges on payments to a company resident in each country covered by this wiki. Where several rates are shown (for example 5/15%), the lower rate applies only if conditions are met, usually a minimum shareholding, a holding period or a qualifying recipient such as a bank or pension fund.

Recipient's country	Dividends	Interest	Royalties
Cyprus	0/15%	0%	0%
Estonia	0/10%	0%	0%
Georgia	0/10%	0%	0%
Germany	0/15%	0%	0%
Ireland	0/15%	0%	0%
Netherlands	0/15%	0%	0%
Poland	0/15%	0/5%	0%
Singapore	5/15%	5%	0%
United Arab Emirates	5/15%	0%	0%
United Kingdom	0/15%	0%	0%
United States	5/15%	0%	0%

Rates from PwC Worldwide Tax Summaries (reviewed 1 July 2026). Treaty benefits require proof of tax residence and are subject to anti-abuse rules; check the treaty text before relying on a rate.

Frequently asked questions

How long does it take to register a company in Switzerland?

Typical registration time in Switzerland: usually 2–4 weeks (as of November 2026), once all documents are ready. Opening a bank account and tax registrations can take longer.

What is the minimum share capital for a company in Switzerland?

Minimum share capital in Switzerland: CHF 20,000, fully paid in (as of November 2026).

What is the corporate tax rate in Switzerland in 2026?

The corporate tax rate in Switzerland in 2026 is about 11.9% (Zug) to 20.5% (Bern), combined. See the Taxation section for reduced rates and other taxes.

Can a foreigner own 100% of a company in Switzerland?

Yes. There is no nationality requirement for shareholders. Local director rule in Switzerland: at least 1 person authorised to represent the company must live in Switzerland.

How many tax treaties does Switzerland have?

Switzerland has 99 treaties in force. It has a treaty with each of the other 11 countries whose treaty rates this wiki tabulates.

What withholding tax applies to dividends paid from Switzerland?

Switzerland withholds 35% on dividends under domestic law, often reduced by a tax treaty. See the treaty table in the Double tax treaties section.

Does a Swiss company need a Swiss resident?

Yes. At least one person who can represent the company, such as a managing director, must live in Switzerland.

Why does the tax rate depend on the canton?

Profit is taxed at federal, cantonal and communal level. The federal rate is the same everywhere, but each canton and commune sets its own rates.

Official registries and resources

- Central Business Name Index (Zefix)
- SME portal of the Swiss Confederation
- EasyGov.swiss
- Swiss Official Gazette of Commerce

Figures as of November 2026. Rates, thresholds and procedures change; confirm with the official registry, the tax authority or a local adviser before filing.

See also

- Comparison of company formation by country
- Company formation in the United Kingdom
- Company formation in Germany
- Company formation in Poland
- Company formation in Ireland
- All countries

References

Entries marked **Official** are the registry, government and tax authority sources for this country; footnote numbers in the infobox point to them.

1. Official Central Business Name Index (Zefix) . Swiss Confederation. Accessed November 2026.
2. Official SME portal of the Swiss Confederation . Swiss Confederation. Accessed November 2026.
3. Official EasyGov.swiss . Swiss Confederation. Accessed November 2026.
4. Official Swiss Official Gazette of Commerce . Swiss Confederation. Accessed November 2026.
5. Swiss Corporate Tax 2026: Canton Rates + GmbH vs AG Guide . Taxolution. Accessed November 2026.
6. Switzerland: Other taxes . PwC Worldwide Tax Summaries. Accessed November 2026.
7. Commercial register: How does it work? . SME Portal, Swiss Confederation. Accessed November 2026.

8. Switzerland business setup . Commenda. Accessed November 2026.

9. Switzerland: Corporate – Withholding taxes (reviewed 1 July 2026) . PwC Worldwide Tax Summaries. Accessed November 2026.

Source: https://companyformationwiki.com/company-formation/switzerland/
Version: last updated 25 November 2026. Check the online version for later changes.

© 2026 CompanyFormationWiki. CompanyFormationWiki is a free encyclopedia of company formation, business structures and international tax across 222 jurisdictions. General information, not legal or tax advice. Confirm with the official registry, the tax authority or a qualified adviser before acting.