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Asset management: Switzerland loses dominant position in the world



Switzerland has been the biggest loser over the past decade in a list of the world's 500 largest asset managers. Its share of assets under management held in the listed companies more than halved from 8.6% in 2005 to 4% last year.

The United States, on the other hand, has constantly strengthened its position and **now manages 52.5% of total global assets,** Within a decade, growth in the US at Switzerland's expense has knocked the country from third position in 2005 (behind the US and Britain) to seventh in 2015 (behind the US, Britain, France,

Germany, Japan and Canada).

Assets managed by the world's largest 500 asset managers fell in 2015 for the first time since 2011, according to the Pensions & Investments / Willis Towers Watson World 500 research. Total assets under management (AUM) were down 1.7% to US\$ 76.7 trillion at the end of 2015, compared to US\$ 78.1 trillion the year before.

According to the research, **in the past ten years the proportion of asset managers from the U.S. in the Top 500 has increased significantly from 41.9% to 52.5%** while assets managed by European managers, including the U.K., decreased by 3.3%, to US\$ 25.1 trillion. UK-based firms' assets decreased 2%, reducing their AUM to US\$ 6.6 trillion.

Eighteen Swiss companies made the top 500, with UBS the highest-placed at 14 thanks to total assets of \$1.15 trillion. Other institutions in the top 100 were Credit Suisse (ranked 46), Zurich Insurance Group (68), Swiss Life Asset Managers (85) and Pictet Asset Management (96).

US corporation BlackRock retained its position as the largest asset manager in the ranking for the past 6 years with \$4,645 billion. As last year, Vanguard and State Street complete the top three. Fidelity has moved up the ranking by 1 position, displacing Allianz which has fallen from fourth to fifth position.

Independent asset managers accounted for the majority (9) of the top 20 ranked members, with banks second with 8 members and only 3 managers are insurer-owned. This has been the case since 2012.

The research shows that traditional equity and fixed income still make up the majority of all assets (78.2%: 45.4% equity, 32.8% fixed income), but they declined by 7.1% during 2015. The only stand-out category in terms of growth in 2015 is alternative assets which grew by 25.1%.