



Instant Payment in Switzerland

Text Modules



More information at instant-payment.ch

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Slogan

Instant payment – When every second counts.

Key Messages for Instant Payment

What Instant Payment Is

Instant payment is a type of payment that allows the immediate and final credit transfer (in Swiss francs) from one account to another in Switzerland. Once the payment order is initiated, the transaction is completed within 10 seconds, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Fast Payment Processing

- › An instant payment allows the paying party to make a transfer within a maximum of 10 seconds.
- › Once an instant payment is initiated, the money is finally credited to the beneficiary's bank account in less than 10 seconds.

7x24x365 Payment Execution

- › Instant payments can be made anytime, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.
- › The difference between a traditional credit transfer and an instant payment is striking. With a conventional transfer within Switzerland, the money may be "in transit" for a long time before being credited after a few hours, the next day or even later – depending on whether the transfer is initiated during the day or at night, on the weekend, on a working day or on a holiday. With instant payment, on the other hand, it doesn't matter what time or day of the week the payer initiates the credit transfer – the payer's account is always debited immediately and almost simultaneously with the availability of the money in the beneficiary's account.

Secure and Final

A successful instant payment has an immediate and final impact on accounts. This eliminates uncertainty and credit risk for all parties involved in the payment.

Immediate Confirmation of Payment Execution

Depending on the financial institution involved, both the payer and the beneficiary can receive immediate confirmation of execution. This lets the payer know that the money has been credited to the beneficiary's account, which is especially useful when the latter is in need of a quick credit.

Launch and Reachability

- › 2024 is the year of the market launch of instant payment in Switzerland. Customers of the largest Swiss financial institutions, which account for more than 95% of payment transaction volume, will be able to receive instant payments starting in August 2024.
- › As of 20 August 2024, financial institutions will be able to process instant payments up to a limit of 20,000 Swiss francs, with the remaining banks following suit by 2026.
- › As of 20 August 2024, the largest financial institutions active in Swiss payments will be required to enable their customers to receive instant payments. However, the customer offering for initiating instant payments may vary from institution to institution.
- › *[Valid from market launch; 20.08.2024]*
From the end of August 2024, the largest financial institutions – which together cover almost all customer payment traffic in Switzerland – will be able to process instant payments up to a limit of 20,000 Swiss francs, with the remaining banks following suit by 2026.
- › *[Valid from market launch; 20.08.2024]*
Customers of the largest Swiss financial institutions have been able to receive instant payments since 20 August 2024. However, the customer offering for initiating instant payments may vary from institution to institution.

Background

Switzerland is an innovative financial center with a lot of catching up to do in the area of instant payments and must not be overtaken or left behind by other countries. In addition, while the pressure from big techs and neobanks will increase in the future, the playing field must be level for all participants in payments. For financial institutions, payments are the most frequent point of contact with their customers – an advantage that must be preserved.

The Swiss National Bank therefore wants to do everything in its power to ensure that instant payment becomes the new standard in Switzerland. This requires both the expansion of the technical infrastructure and the participation of the banks in the new procedure.

Together with the Swiss National Bank, SIX has developed the new infrastructure for processing instant payments. This went live in November 2023, and banks are currently being onboarded

Swiss financial institutions will gradually be required to accept instant payments:

- › from August 2024 for the larger banks
- › end of 2026 for the remaining banks that process customer payments.

The roadmap is in place: By late summer 2024, around 60 banks, which together process more than 95% of customer payments in Switzerland, will be able to accept instant payments and process them within seconds.

[Valid from market launch; 20.08.2024]

Together with the Swiss National Bank, SIX developed the new infrastructure for processing instant payments. This was successfully put into operation in November 2023. Instant payments allow individuals and companies to transfer money from one account to another in a matter of seconds, around the clock – even on weekends and holidays. Since its official launch in August 2024, the largest banks have offered to accept the new payment type, and by November 2026, all institutions active in customer payment traffic will do so.

Financial Center Storyline

The new generation of the central Swiss payment system with instant payment lays the foundation for future innovations in the financial center. It was made possible by the close cooperation between the Swiss National Bank, SIX and the financial institutions and reflects their strong commitment to the future viability of Swiss payment traffic. The Swiss financial center is convinced that instant payment will become the new normal in electronic payment traffic in the medium term.