Field

Operator’s Certificate

PRESENTATION

Switzerland is an internationally recognised centre of expertise for commodity trading. The 550+ companies based in Switzerland, located in a unique trading hub, account for over 35'000 direct jobs.

In this vibrant and professional environment, training is becoming even more a prerequisite. Trained professionals responsible for logistics and operations are key contributors to the industry's success, especially in the context of increased international competition and challenges faced by the commodity trading activity.

For over a decade, SUISSENÉGOCE Academy has been the undisputed leader in commodity trading education in Switzerland, equipping industry professionals with the cutting-edge expertise and practical skills to tackle the challenges and thrive in this dynamic environment. With courses designed and taught by industry experts, a constant commitment to link theory with real-world applications, and a network of more than 500 alumni working successfully in the commodity trading sector, we have built a reputation for excellence.

The SUISSENÉGOCE Operator's Certificate is a practical training designed by a Working Group composed of experts in Operations, Finance and HR, and coordinated by SUISSENÉGOCE. The network and experience of SUISSENÉGOCE and the Working Group allowed the active involvement in the Certificate of some of the best experts and speakers in the industry.

> *"Education contributes to raising awareness about all the processes and operations involved in commodities trading and provide participants with an in-depth understanding of the challenges faced in daily activities."*
>
> Florence Schürch, Secretary General, SUISSENÉGOCE

AUDIENCE

The programme targets in particular:

- Junior operators and charterers in the early stages of their career who want to accelerate their training process and fully grasp all aspects of trading and shipping operations
- Professionals considering making a career change and interested in moving into the commodity field
- Fresh graduates seeking to acquire new skills and speed up their recruitment process.

OBJECTIVES

The programme has been created with a hands-on approach: it follows the life cycle of a commodity trade, thus providing participants with a balanced theory-practice grasp of the various components of trading and shipping operations. More specifically, the programme is segmented in modules covering:

- Main types of traded physical commodities
- Brief introduction to hedging
- Contracts and Incoterms
- Trading operations (execution flow & role of the operator)
- Chartering and shipping operations, Laytime and demurrage handling
- Trade finance, financial instruments and payment terms
- Physical risks and insurance
- Law and dispute resolution schemes.

We expect that, through this training, participants will ultimately be best placed to rapidly gain in experience, making the most out of the various real-life cases that they will be confronted with.

At the end of the training and through practical examples, case studies and trade simulations, the course participant will be able to:

- Understand the commodity trading supply chain, its components, chronology, drivers and success factors
- Organise the interaction with the various stakeholders involved in a transaction (inspection companies, agents, in-house functions, brokers)
- Prepare, review and submit transactional documentation (invoices, letters of credit, bills of lading, insurance certificates)
- Identify operational issues, bottlenecks and risks and practical solutions to enhance/mitigate these
- Calculate the basic P&L of a deal and allocate the various cost components
- Use the adequate tools to bring an operation to a successful conclusion.

PROGRAMME

Module 1: Introduction into Commodity Trading, Documents & INCOTERMS — 06 & 07.03.2026

In person attendance is mandatory

- Presentation of the Commodity Industry
- Documents used in the Commodity Industry
- Terms used in the Commodity Industry
- Introduction to ICC Incoterms
- Basics of Hedging.

Commodities — 13 & 14.03.2026

- Overview of the 3 main types of commodities: Agri-commodities; Ores and Metals; Oil and Energy Products
- Trade Flows
- Value Chain & Main Industrial Applications
- Stakeholders
- Interconnection of Commodity Markets
- Perspectives
- Value Determination and Role of the Inspection Companies.

Module 2: Shipping, Chartering — 20 & 21.03.2026

- Vessels' Categories Overview: Dry, Tankers, Containers & others
- Evolution of Freight/Hire Rates: Supply & Demand
- Chartering and Its Stakeholders
- International Regulations
- Types of Charter & Charterparties
- Chartering Bulk Cargoes – Step by step
- Online chartering tool
- Vessel vetting
- Shipping derivatives contracts: Forward Freight Agreements (FFAs).

Module 3: Introduction to Trade Finance Financial Instruments & Introduction to Hedging — 27 & 28.03.2026

- Introduction to Trade Finance from the bank side
- Introduction to Trade Finance from the trading company side
- Hedging
- Documentary credits, stand-by L/Cs, prepayments
- Guarantees, bid and performance bonds
- Documentary collections
- Transferable L/Cs, back-to-back L/Cs
- Red-clause L/Cs, revolving L/Cs

- Letters of indemnity
- Compliance
- Treasury.

Module 4: LC and other Payment Terms 24 & 25.04.2026

In person attendance is mandatory

- Payment methods in Letters of Credit (by acceptance, deferred, negotiation, etc.)
- Presentation of ISBP (International Standard Banking Practices)
- Overview of the UCP Rules
- Documentary Collection and URC rules
- The L/C step-by-step.

Module 5: Trading Contracts 01 & 02.05.2026

- What is a Contract?
- Why Do We Use Contracts?
- Contract Formation: Offer and Acceptance
- Contract Negotiation & Management: Best Practices
- Trade Contract Stakeholders
- GTCs and Standard Contracts
- Main Contract Terms.

Module 6: Field Trip 06 & 07 & 08.05.2026

- Familiarization with port operations, logistics, storage, cargo handling, inspection, etc.
- Attendance is mandatory.

Module 7: Shipping Operations, Demurrage 22 & 23.05.2026

- Vessel type, terminology
- Vessel organization & crew
- Managing a vessel – brief overview (from owner's perspective – dry dock, surveys, technical management, registration, IMO, Class, PSC)
- What Cargo & Which Ship
- Finding suitable vessel for the voyage (role of the broker)
- Cargo handling and stowage (liquid, dry bulk, general cargo, containers)
- The Bill of Lading – practical approach (contents, process of issuance, pitfalls)
- Elements of the voyage charterparty
- Laydays - Laytime
- Notice of Readiness and Arrived Ship
- Interruptions and Exceptions to Laytime
- Inward voyage and shifting between berths.

Module 8: Physical Risks & Insurance 29 & 30.05.2026

- Introduction to Risk & Insurance
- Insurance Terminology
- Insurance Market & Players
- Process of binding an insurance cover
- Physical Risks associated with the main commodity groups
- Marine Cargo Insurance
- Issuance of Insurance Certificates
- Claim Handling.

Module 9: Law & Dispute Resolution Schemes 05 & 06.06.2026

- Operators & the Regulatory Environment
- Governing Law & Dispute Resolution
- Sanctions & Compliance
- KYC & Whistleblowing
- Preparation of claims.

Module 10: Trading Operations I – Execution Flow 12 & 13.06.2026

- Standard Operational Walkthrough – Dry & Wet
- Commodity Supply Chain
- Operators' interaction with other departments and external collaborators
- Execution and Logistics (Transportation, Nomination, Superintendent, Fumigation)
- Quality and Quantity Determination: different inspection methods
- Transport Documents: role and value as title (sea-river-land)
- Collateral Management Agreements : Uses, benefits and limitations.

Module 11: Trading Operations II – Role of the Operator & Troubleshooting 19 & 20.06.2026

- Role of the Operator
- Execution and Logistics II (Ascertainment of goods, Storage, Ship Agent, Shipping documents, LOI)
- Finance, Accounting Risk (Financial Instruments, other Settlement for Trade Transactions, financial Statements)
- Finalization
- Stowage Factors & Specific Gravity
- Trading Case Study bringing together the subjects covered so far.

Module 12: Course Review & Practical case study 26 & 27.06.2026

PROGRAMME DIRECTOR
Simeon Lachev, Managing Director, Weromett SA

TEACHING FORMAT

The Certificate is composed of 12 modules all taught in English. The modules take place on Friday evenings and Saturday mornings, so as not to interfere with the professional activity of the participants and give them enough time to assimilate and eventually practice what has been learnt in class.

The programme also includes a field experience: a study trip to a major European port with possibility to familiarise with logistics and operation activities and meet with various industry stakeholders.

The lectures are given by experts in the fields of commodity trading and shipping, with inputs from guest speakers to give further depth and varying perspectives.

Some pre-reading, preparation, case studies or homework may be required based upon the teachers' recommendations and will be communicated upon acceptance to the course.

Participants are stimulated to actively contribute to the programme. Their background and professional experience constitute a valuable asset and ensure transversal knowledge sharing.

> *"We understand that participants often have demanding professional and family obligations; however, to successfully obtain the certificate, you will need to be fully engaged and ready to face significant preparation work."*
>
> *Serge Claus, Education & Training Manager, SUISSENÉGOCE*

ATTENDANCE

Attendance and satisfactory exam results will enable participants to receive the Operator's Certificate. SUISSENÉGOCE understands that participants often have demanding professional and family obligations; however, to obtain the certificate you will need to be fully committed, prepare each module as it may be required by the lectures, attend and participate in a minimum of 80% of the programme sessions in order to obtain the Certificate. **Any absences must be appropriately justified**.

The Certificate is designed for in-person attendance, promoting transversal knowledge sharing and interaction with the other participants. On-line attendance could be made available for participants living and working in the German or Italian part of Switzerland, or abroad. They will still need to attend in-person for certain modules as mentioned on the programme.

For participants living and working in the French part of Switzerland, you are expected to attend all modules in-person. Attending online will only be granted for exceptional reasons such as business-related trips and must be requested at least 1 week in advance and substantiating documents (e.g. note from the employer) may be requested.

EVALUATION

Each module is subject to an evaluation, being an in-class exam, an individual or group assignment, or a combination of these. An overall average of 4.0 (out of 6.0) must be achieved in order to graduate, and no more than two evaluation grades between 3.0 and 4.0 will be accepted. Any mark lower than 3.0 will automatically disqualify the participant from obtaining the Certificate.

Participants may retake the failed module(s)/course(s) at the following intake at his/her cost (additional fee per retaken module). Only one opportunity to retake a failed module will be given. If the participant fails more than 2 modules in one session, the participant will be automatically disqualified.

Any participant caught cheating or plagiarising will be automatically disqualified without appeal and excluded from the programme.

All exams and assignments must be completed in English.

INFORMATION

Course Schedule and Location:

Friday evenings from 6.30pm to 9.30pm and Saturday mornings from 8.30am to 01.30pm.

SUISSENÉGOCE Academy, 11 rue de Chantepoulet, 1201 Geneva

On-line attendance could be made available for participants living and working in the German or Italian part of Switzerland, or abroad.

Application:

Applications MUST include the following documents:

1) Motivation letter in English;
2) Application Form duly completed;
3) Updated resume in English;
4) ID card / passport copy;

Applications and all supporting documents must be submitted **electronically via SUISSENÉGOCE's website** (https://suissenegoce.ch/training)**.**

Admission:

A maximum of 20 participants will be accepted per intake.

All applications are reviewed by a Selecting Committee, consisting of experts in the Commodity Trading industry. Accepting or refusing an applicant is at the sole discretion of the Selecting Committee.

Admission criteria:

1) Good command of spoken and written English is necessary as the programme is taught in English.

2) Being fully proficient with Microsoft Office.

Late applications may be considered depending on available slots.

Candidates will be notified via e-mail if they have been accepted to attend the course.

Tuition Fees:

For SUISSENÉGOCE members
CHF 6'500.00

For non SUISSENÉGOCE members
CHF 7'500.00

The above-mentioned fees include the 12 modules, the documentation, assignments and the study trip.

Multi booking
A discount of 10% will be applied for 3 or more bookings from the same company in the same intake.

Instalments
After acceptance of an application, a deposit of CHF 900.00 will be requested to secure your place on the programme and confirm enrolment. In case of withdrawal, no refund of this deposit will be provided.

The balance must be paid at least 20 calendar days before the beginning of the programme.

Cancellation and substitution policy
No refund whatsoever will be made for cancellations received 10 days or less before the course start date. Participants can however be substituted by an acceptable candidate if the organisers receive prior notification.

Force Majeure

In case a force majeure (pandemic and/or forced confinement imposed by any governmental authority) would prevent SUISSENÉGOCE Academy to conduct in-person teaching in the classroom, the following situations may occur:

- In the event that the programme has not started, it may be postponed to a later date. In this case, the course participant will be offered the possibility to maintain his registration and attend the course at the later date or to be reimbursed for the amount(s) paid. SUISSENÉGOCE Academy shall notify the course participant in writing thereof.
- In the event that the programme has started, the remaining modules will be maintained but may be conducted via an online platform. This solution only applies if there is no other possibility to follow the course in situ. In this case, the participant shall not be entitled to any reimbursement of any kind.

FAQ

Can I be accepted even if I do not have any particular certification?

No certification as such is requested, however a good command of the English language is necessary.

Can you help me acquire a work permit?

Unfortunately no. This is an educational programme and SUISSENÉGOCE does not provide this kind of service.

Do I need to take my laptop to class?

Presentations and documents will be uploaded on the SUISSENÉGOCE Academy Platform and you will need an electronic device to view them. It can be a tablet or a computer. Laptops or tablets with installed Microsoft Office may be requested for some specific modules.

Will you help me find a job?

No. The purpose of the Certificate is for the participants to grow professionally and attain competences in the trading operations. It is not SUISSENÉGOCE's purpose or objective to assist the participants in finding a job.

Nevertheless, participants of SUISSENÉGOCE classes considerably enhance their employability and several employers look for their junior in the SUISSENÉGOCE's alumni pool.

When I obtain my Certificate, will I be accepted to pursue the UNIGE Master or the Diploma also set up by SUISSENÉGOCE?

No, acceptance for the Master or Diploma is subject to a specific set of rules set by the University of Geneva.

However, many participants of SUISSENÉGOCE programmes have decide to further develop their skills by following additional SUISSENÉGOCE classes or academic programmes offered by the University of Geneva (DAS in Commodity Trading or Master of Science in Commodity Trading).

Can I meet SUISSENÉGOCE representatives before the courses?

Yes, if necessary, but it would be preferable to schedule any such meeting in advance.

What happens if I cannot attend one course?

It will be your responsibility to obtain the presentations and the notes taken during the course from another student and to coordinate with the trainer responsible for the module to pass the exam.

Under no circumstances can courses be recorded.

ABOUT SUISSENÉGOCE

GTSA, the Geneva-based maritime trade and chartering association, was founded in 2006. In 2014, GTSA became national and took the name STSA to offer a greater representation of the industry on a national level. STSA encompasses the three regional associations (GTSA, ZCA in Zug and LCTA in Ticino) and consists of more than 210 member companies and institutions, as well as around 100 experts involved in the association's various working groups.

Today, our association is known as SUISSENÉGOCE and has a new logo. A new image that highlights the transformation of the industry as a whole: the commodity trading industry will be communicating with Swiss citizens and engaging in public debate. The different colours of our logo represent the different commodities: green and brown for agricultural products, grey and dark blue for energy, metals & minerals, and light blue for maritime transport, which is of prime importance for all commodities.

The Association has become renowned for its successful professional programmes such as the Operator's Certificate and the Commodity Trading Fundamentals. To respond to the industry's request, SUISSENÉGOCE has recently put in place three innovative certificates: the Commodity Trading Risk Analyst, the Documentary Credit Officer and the Commodities Sustainability Fundamentals (ESG) certificate.

In parallel, SUISSENÉGOCE also organises educational programmes such as the Master of Science in Commodity Trading, and the Diploma in Advanced Studies in Commodity Trading. Both programmes have been created in partnership with the University of Geneva and have been running since 2008 with an increasing level of recognition.

In 2025, SUISSENÉGOCE Academy has been awarded the eduQua Label for the third time. The first Swiss federal qualification providing quality assurance for continuing education and training. This certification is a mark of recognition of the high quality of SUISSENÉGOCE Academy's education and training programmes. It was obtained after an in-depth evaluation process and an in-house audit, to ensure that our methods are fully transparent and in accordance with its standards.

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