



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
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ASIA G20 STRATEGY 2025-28





This strategy, which was approved by the Federal Council on 20 June 2025, is a geographical sub-strategy of the Foreign Policy Strategy 2024–27. The Asia G20 Strategy 2025–28 has been adopted by the Federal Council as part of its objectives for 2025.

Foreword

The continent of Asia is one of the most dynamic yet paradoxical regions in the world, where the future seems to be unfolding before our eyes. Its growing geopolitical influence is reflected by dynamic markets and strategic zones, such as the Taiwan Strait, the Korean Peninsula and the South China Sea. Asia is home to powerful economies, heavily populated countries and a wide spectrum of political regimes. It is a continent that contains vast deserts, densely populated urban centres, fertile farmland and mega cities. It is also marked by stark inequalities, ranging from large concentrations of wealth to situations of extreme poverty, as well as global cultural influences thanks to its arts, musical and culinary scenes.

However, Asia faces huge challenges. While it is becoming wealthier, economic growth is getting harder to maintain. Its population represents another challenge with accelerated demographic transitions that are redefining growth and employment trends. Governance models also differ greatly – some countries have democratic systems, while others tend to concentrate power and restrict freedoms. Asia also faces major environmental challenges.

For Switzerland, the implications are significant. Europe's prosperity and security – including Switzerland's – are closely linked to economic and political developments in Asia. What opportunities for cooperation does this situation present for Switzerland? How can it protect its own interests while taking advantage of opportunities and minimising risks?

When is it better to go it alone and when is seeking carefully chosen partnerships more advisable? How can Switzerland act as a relevant interlocutor for countries in Asia which do not share the same values in terms of the rule of law and human rights?



The Federal Council's strategies, such as the China Strategy 2021–24 and the South East Asia Strategy 2023–26, adopted a pioneering approach by reflecting the diversity of relations with Asia. To build upon this approach, the Federal Council decided to adopt an Asia G20 Strategy 2025–28, providing an overview of Switzerland's relations with the G20 member countries in this part of the world.

This strategy aims to better reflect the diversity of Swiss activities in relation to five Asian G20 countries – China, India, Indonesia, Japan and South Korea – by strengthening bilateral and multilateral relations, while also providing a broader vision and pursuing Switzerland's principle of independent foreign policy.

I hope you enjoy reading this new strategy, which aims to enable Switzerland to forge closer ties with these partners with whom it shares many interests.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to read 'Cassis'.

Ignazio Cassis
Federal Councillor
Head of the Federal Department
of Foreign Affairs

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1 Introduction

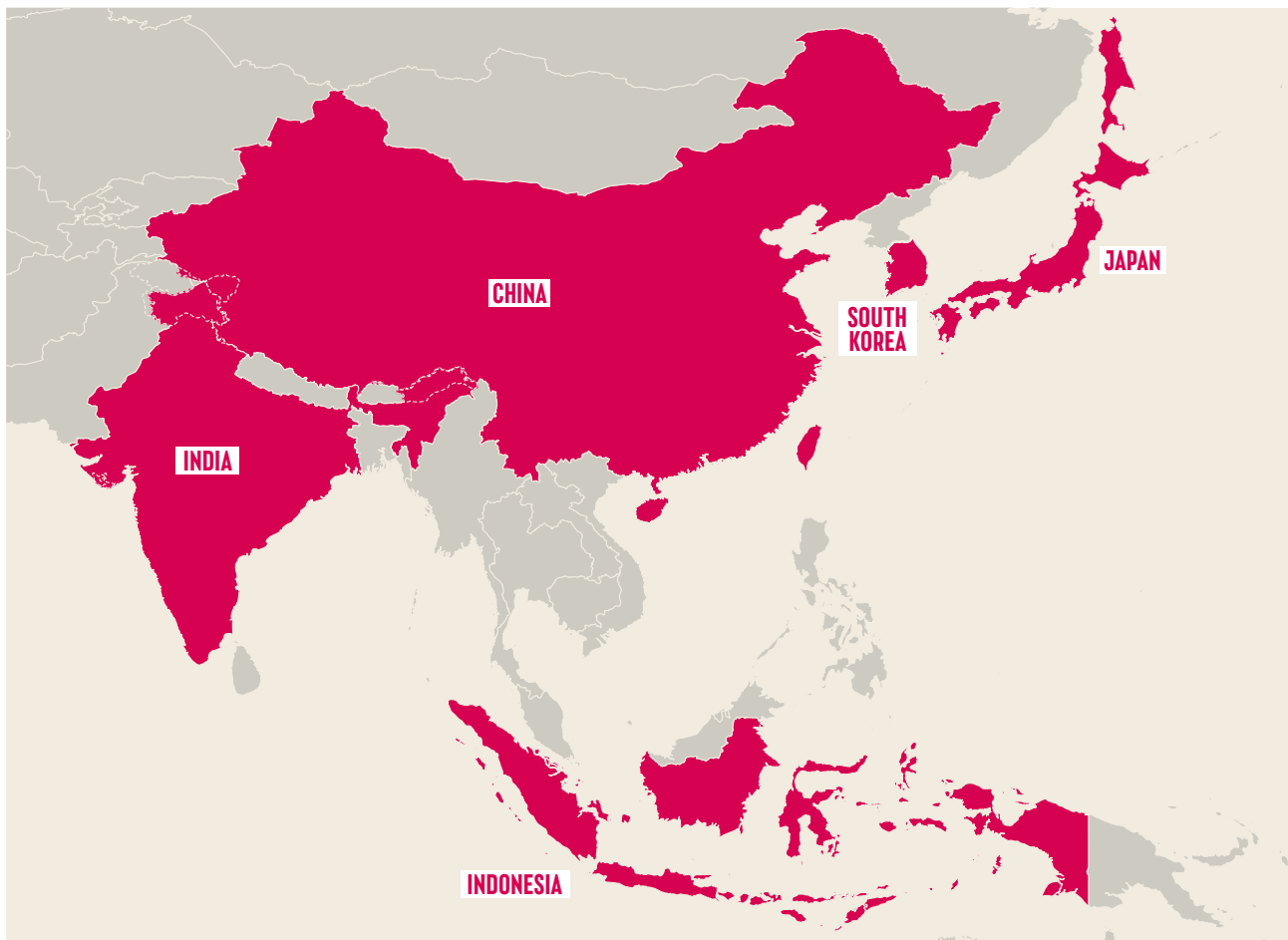


Figure 1: Map of the region showing the five Asian G20 countries covered by this strategy¹ [source: FDFA]

The Federal Council's Asia G20 Strategy 2025–28 reflects Switzerland's various interests in relation to five key actors in Asia: China, India, Indonesia, Japan and South Korea. These G20 countries play a major role in the global economy and geopolitical developments.

The decision to focus on these five countries was based on recognition of their growing influence on international stability. This region, where a dense nexus of economic, technological and strategic relationships exists, exerts major influence over global trends in terms of growth, governance and innovation. Switzerland favours a targeted approach based on well-established relationships and a coherent regional framework. Concentrating on Asia, this strategy focuses on a region where there is strong interaction between the local

powers, jointly shaping regional and multilateral developments.

This strategy updates the China Strategy 2021–24, which proved to be a successful coordination and communication instrument. Its extension to other Asian powers enables a better understanding of the regional landscape. The Swiss Federal Assembly has included the revision of the China Strategy for the period 2025–28 in its 2023–27 legislative programme.

As part of the wider framework of the [Foreign Policy Strategy 2024–27 \(FPS 2024–27\)](#), this new strategy aims to achieve greater diversity in terms of Switzerland's partnerships against an ever-changing geopolitical backdrop. The FPS 2024–27 highlights how deeply entwined geostrategic relations between Asia and Europe are and the need for Switzerland to establish a broader range of partnerships globally. Objective 8 of this strategy specifically aims to safeguard Swiss interests in relation to G20 countries outside of Europe. The five Asian

¹ The depiction of the borders on this map does not mean that Switzerland approves of or recognises them officially

G20 countries covered by this strategy are amongst the ten biggest economies in the world. In 2025, they account for 32% of global GDP and 39% of the world's population.² Die Schweiz pflegt enge Beziehungen auf bilateraler und auf multilateraler Ebene. Switzerland has strong relations with all five countries, both bilaterally and multilaterally.

Structured in line with the priorities of the FPS 2024–27 – peace and security, prosperity and competitiveness, the environment, democracy and governance – as well as multilateralism, section 3 of the strategy includes an analysis of current geopolitical trends and the positions of the key stakeholders. It then outlines the multilateral approaches of the five target countries, focusing on the UN and G20.

Bilateral relations between Switzerland and each of the countries are summarised, setting out the measures and objectives for the coming years. The final section covers the coordination and implementation instruments that aim to ensure a coherent and efficient approach.

At national level, the main reference documents are the Federal Constitution, the relevant federal acts,³ the FPS 2024–27 and the International Cooperation Strategy 2025–28. The other key Federal Council texts are Switzerland's Foreign Economic Policy Strategy, International Strategy on

Education, Research and Innovation, and Health Foreign Policy 2019–24 (extended until 2028).

On the ground, the 'whole of government' approach ensures successful coordination between diplomats, defence attachés and experts on migration, the economy, science and international cooperation. The Asia G20 Strategy 2025–28 defines a clear framework to strengthen this coordination and to ensure efficient use is made of Swiss resources.

Produced after in-depth reflection by all federal departments and the Federal Chancellery, this strategy underlines the Federal Council's desire to pursue a proactive, coherent and independent foreign policy. The Federal Assembly's foreign affairs committees and the cantons were informed, while reflection groups and NGOs also provided input, firmly embedding the strategy in a collective and inclusive vision of Swiss foreign policy.

² See the International Monetary Fund's database: [IMF DATAMAPPER](#)
³ Federal Act on International Development Cooperation and Humanitarian Aid, [SR 974.0](#); Federal Act on Measures pertaining to Civil Peace Support and the Promotion of Human Rights, [SR 193.9](#)

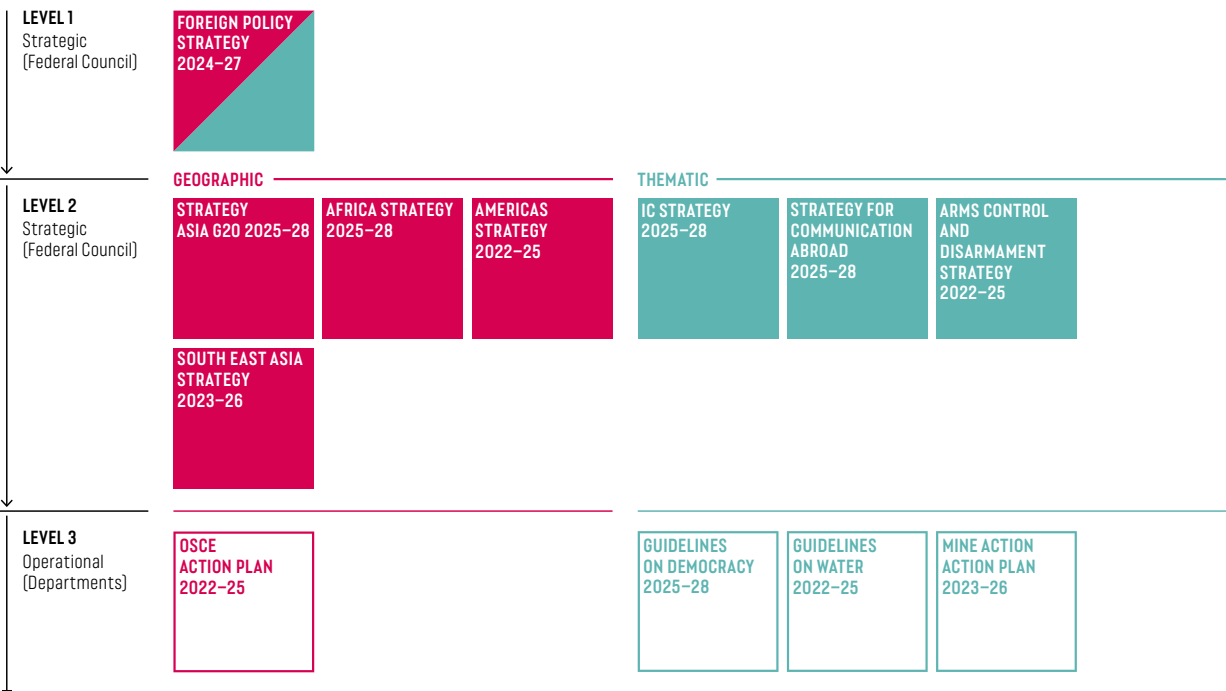


Figure 2: The cascading foreign policy strategy (source: FDFA)

2 Review of the China Strategy 2021–24

2.1 Development of Sino-Swiss relations

Between 2021 and 2024, Sino-Swiss relations took place against a global backdrop of complex challenges. On the one hand, the COVID-19 pandemic restricted bilateral interaction in all areas of cooperation and temporarily impacted on the economy. On the other, the war against Ukraine led to a change in priorities within the Federal Administration and gave rise to new geopolitical dynamics, pushing Europe and China apart.

When the China Strategy 2021–24 was adopted, high-level bilateral discussions were restricted to virtual formats. Face-to-face meetings were not resumed until January 2023 when Federal Councillor Karin Keller-Sutter met with Chinese Vice Premier Liu He. All bilateral dialogues then fully recommenced, including the human rights dialogue in July 2023, the dialogue on labour and employment in September 2023, and the strategic dialogue between Federal Councillor Ignazio Cassis and his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, in February 2024. Further high-level meetings were also held, notably between President Viola Amherd and Chinese Premier Li Qiang in January 2024. It is also important to note that discussions on multilateral issues were stepped up through Switzerland's non-permanent member seat on the UN Security Council from 2023 to 2024. In addition, Switzerland and China held various talks on the search for a diplomatic solution to the war in Ukraine.

Economically, the COVID-19 crisis led to a slowdown in dialogue and a temporary decline in bilateral investments. Exchanges have gradually resumed with trading volumes returning to pre-crisis levels. This upturn has not, however, renewed momentum for Swiss companies or Swiss nationals to set up in China. A major development was the opening of negotiations on optimising the free trade agreement (FTA) between Switzerland and China in autumn 2024.

Human rights issues remain a stumbling block in bilateral relations. The situation of minorities – mainly Uyghurs and Tibetans – political restrictions in Hong Kong and infringements of individual freedoms have led Switzerland to express its concerns to China both bilaterally and in multilateral forums.

From 2021 to 2024, Switzerland's China policy was also specified in a number of parliamentary procedural requests, particularly in the areas of human rights, economic dependence and scientific cooperation. In addition, the Federal Council outlined the relationship status between Swiss actors and Taiwan (Chinese Taipei) in its report in response to [postulate 21.3967](#).

Diplomatic and economic relations over recent years underline the willingness of the two countries to maintain open and constructive dialogue without overlooking global challenges and differences of opinion on certain issues. Switzerland will continue to adopt a pioneering and pragmatic approach that consistently represents its interests and values.

2.2 Evaluation of the China Strategy 2021–24

The Federal Council's adoption of the China Strategy 2021–24 in 2021 represented a major milestone. The strategy formally established the framework for Sino-Swiss bilateral relations for the first time, taking account of China's growing importance in the global economy and the challenges that its international role present.

In line with the recommendations of the interim internal review of the China Strategy 2021–24, the FDFA commissioned an external firm to produce a final evaluation of the strategy.

While it is difficult to quantify the strategy's direct impact on Switzerland's foreign policy towards China precisely, the external evaluation's findings on the implementation of the 45 measures set out in the strategy were generally positive. The coordination mechanisms, particularly the interdepartmental working group (IDWG) on China and the 'whole of Switzerland' approach, proved very effective. However, the evaluation also underlined the need to strengthen coordination between the stakeholders to ensure well-structured dialogue with China and to improve communication on bilateral issues.

The Swiss stakeholders involved recognise the importance of a China strategy. Several actors in fact wish to step up dialogue, pointing to the growing complexity of their relations with China in an increasingly uncertain global environment.

The final evaluation did however indicate shortcomings in the development of expertise on China and therefore recommended certain measures in order to address this. The Asia G20 Strategy 2025–28 incorporates this recommendation along with ten other proposals that aim to improve the implementation of Switzerland's China policy and address more general aspects related to the formulation, communication and execution of the strategies relevant to the FPS 2024–27.

The external evaluation's other recommendations included extending the China strategy to other countries in Asia, which is in line with the Federal Council's objective and is being implemented by this new strategy..

3 Geopolitical analysis

The FPS 2024–27 portrays a world of growing fragmentation, heightened competition between the major powers and the diminished significance of the western order, while other states are challenging established international norms. These trends and the uncertainty they give rise to seem to be exacerbated by the new geopolitical course being pursued by Washington since the start of 2025. In parallel, Asia's economic, security and technological capabilities are increasing. Against this backdrop, the five Asian G20 countries targeted by this strategy – China, India, Indonesia, Japan and South Korea – are playing an increasingly significant role on the international stage.

This part of the world presents tremendous opportunities but also faces complex problems – in particular issues linked to the Sino-US rivalry – but also security, economic, environmental and demographic challenges. China, India, Indonesia, Japan and South Korea make up a diverse group in terms of governance, economic policy and foreign policy. In addition to these disparities, growing interdependence is prompting these countries to play alternating roles as partners or competitors depending on the sector concerned.

The emergence of the now widespread notion of 'Indo-Pacific' underlines the region's interdependent relationships and strategic importance. This geostrategic concept, mainly promoted by Japan, the US, Australia and India, also aims to counteract China's growing influence. Other countries, such as the UK, France, Germany and Canada, have adopted this vision too.

3.1 International actors and regional integration

Since the Obama administration's pivot to Asia, the US has stepped up its strategic activities in the region while countering China's growing influence. The US's Indo-Pacific strategy⁴ focuses on security and economic protection. To maintain its powers of dissuasion and competitive advantages, the US is developing security alliances like the Quad (US, India, Japan and Australia) and Aukus (US, UK and Australia). It is also endeavouring to strengthen its dominant position in critical technologies through partnerships with Japan, South Korea and India, while imposing export controls on China.

Since taking office in January 2025, the new Trump administration has launched numerous foreign policy initiatives, changing the dynamics of the spheres of influence. Adding to the geopolitical uncertainty, coordination between the US and Europe in their relations with the countries covered by this strategy may therefore be undermined. So far, the US president's economic decisions on China show continuity with the approach of previous administrations, namely introducing new tariffs and tightening restrictions on Chinese investments.

For the EU, the Indo-Pacific region is of increasing strategic importance. Economic relations with the region are of major significance. Unlike the US, the EU's economy is more vulnerable to disruptions in value chains and to risks related to investment in critical sectors by certain countries in the region, particularly China. The EU's Indo-Pacific strategy,⁵ unveiled in 2021, seeks to promote a rules-based international order and to strengthen economic partnerships, particularly with India, Indonesia, Japan and South Korea.

While the Indo-Pacific is not part of its traditional sphere of activity, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) is focusing more heavily on this region in view of China's growing power and the security links between Eastern Europe and Asia. NATO is increasing its cooperation with regional partners, highlighted by the ongoing participation of the Japanese prime minister and South Korean president at NATO's annual summits since 2022.

The war against Ukraine has led Russia to strengthen relations with Asia, particularly China and India, to obtain diplomatic support and to make up for the decline in trade with Europe. Beijing and New Delhi have so far refused to condemn the Russian invasion and have called for a peaceful resolution to the conflict. Russia has also established closer ties with North Korea by signing a global strategic partnership agreement in 2024 which includes a mutual military assistance clause.

In Asia, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) wishes to play a leading role in maintaining a peaceful and stable order. This ambition is underlined in the ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific,⁶ which favours consensus-building. While this approach contributes to regional stability, it sometimes restricts ASEAN's ability to act.

4 US Department of State (2022): [The Indo-Pacific Strategy](#)

5 The European External Action Service (2021): [EU Indo-Pacific Strategy](#)

6 ASEAN (2019): [ASEAN Outlook on the Indo-Pacific](#)

Launched by China in 2013, the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) aims to improve global economic connectivity through infrastructure, trade and financial integration. Presented by China as an inclusive project, the BRI primarily seeks to secure its supply chains and increase its economic influence. In 2019, Switzerland and China signed an economic and financial memorandum of understanding on cooperation in third markets as part of this framework. Indonesia is a key partner in the BRI, while India, Japan and South Korea have not yet joined the initiative.

In January 2025, Indonesia joined BRICS, whose members include China and India. This informal intergovernmental cooperation group, which is made up of major emerging economies with a broad spectrum of political and economic systems, aims to promote a multipolar world order and shift the balance of global economic governance as an alternative to the system originally built by the West.

3.2 Regional trends

Security

The global security landscape has become more volatile, exacerbated by Russia's war against Ukraine and new risks of escalation in the Middle East. This strategy identifies three areas of tension in Asia with the potential to disrupt the global security order.

First, North Korea's nuclear and ballistic programmes pose an existential threat to South Korea and Japan. Missile launches by Pyongyang, in violation of the UN Security Council's resolutions, are increasing the risk of escalation. The military rapprochement between Russia and North Korea is also causing grave concerns and highlights the growing interdependence between the security arenas of Eastern Europe and East Asia.

7 The SIPRI data includes Hong Kong and Macau for China but not Taiwan (Chinese Taipei)

Figure 3: Defence spending over the period 2013–23 as a percentage (source: [SIPRI](#))⁷

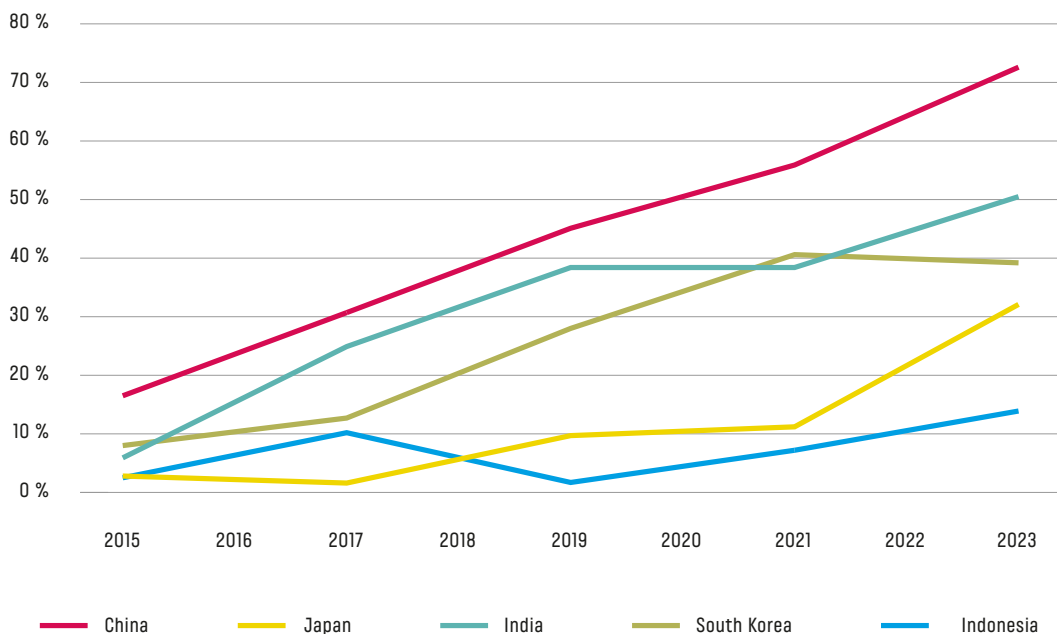
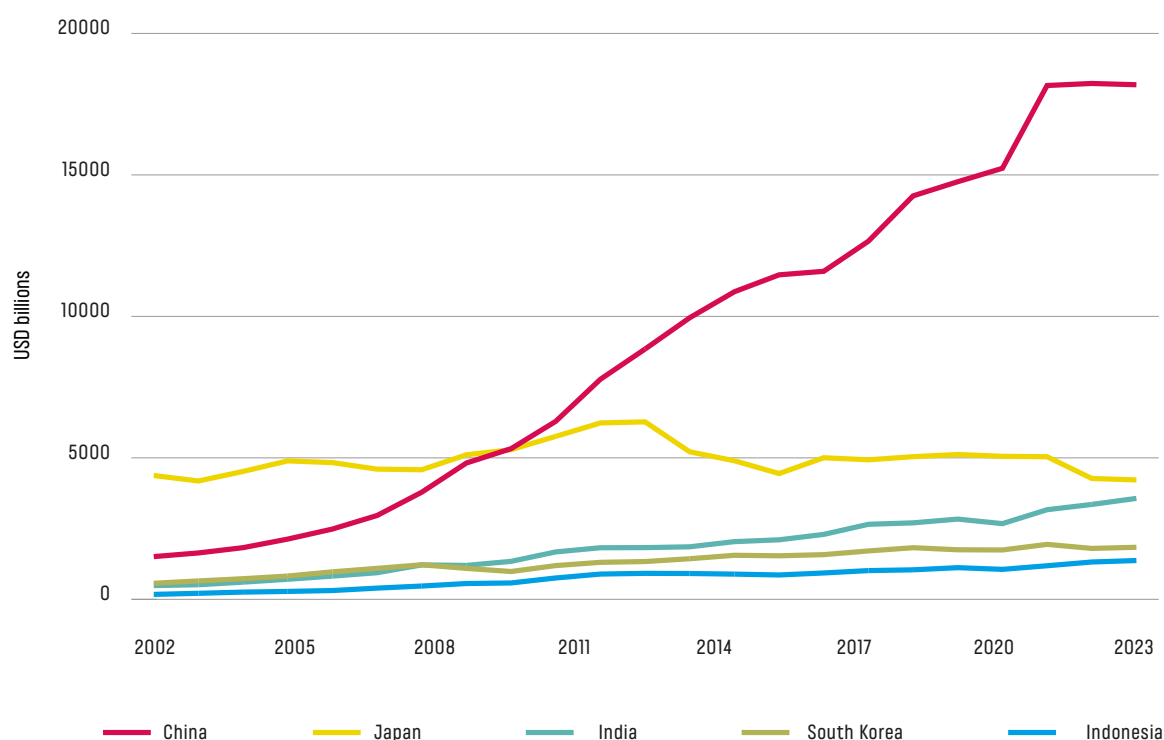


Figure 4: Nominal GDP by country between 2001 and 2022 in USD billions (source: IMF)



Second, China's belligerent rhetoric and increasing military exercises around Taiwan are also cause for concern. A conflict in this area would have unprecedented repercussions for global value chains.

Third, tensions in the South China Sea have been aggravated by concurrent territorial claims, militarisation of the area, growing Chinese pressure through grey zone activities, and strategic concerns over freedom of navigation.

In addition, several territorial disputes persist in the East China Sea along the contested borders between India and Pakistan on the one hand, and India and China on the other. These disputes add to the complexity of the Asian security landscape and heighten the risk of sudden crises.

While global defence spending rose by 27% between 2013 and 2023, over the same period China's spending went up by almost 75% and India's by 50%, amounting to USD 309.5 billion and USD 83.3 billion respectively. Such figures reflect China and India's ambitions to extend their global influence and upgrade their military capabilities.

Japan, while only having increased its defence spending by around 30% over the same period, adopted a new security policy in December 2022. This reform includes counter-attack capabilities and provides for national security spending to be increased by 2% of its GDP by 2027. South Korea is now the world's eighth biggest arms exporter, strengthening the role it plays in the defence industry.

covered by this strategy have very different approaches. South Korea and Japan advocate a peaceful, rules-based cyberspace with the aim of ensuring an open and secure internet accessible to everyone. Conversely, China and India favour greater state intervention and tighter control of the digital sphere.

Economy

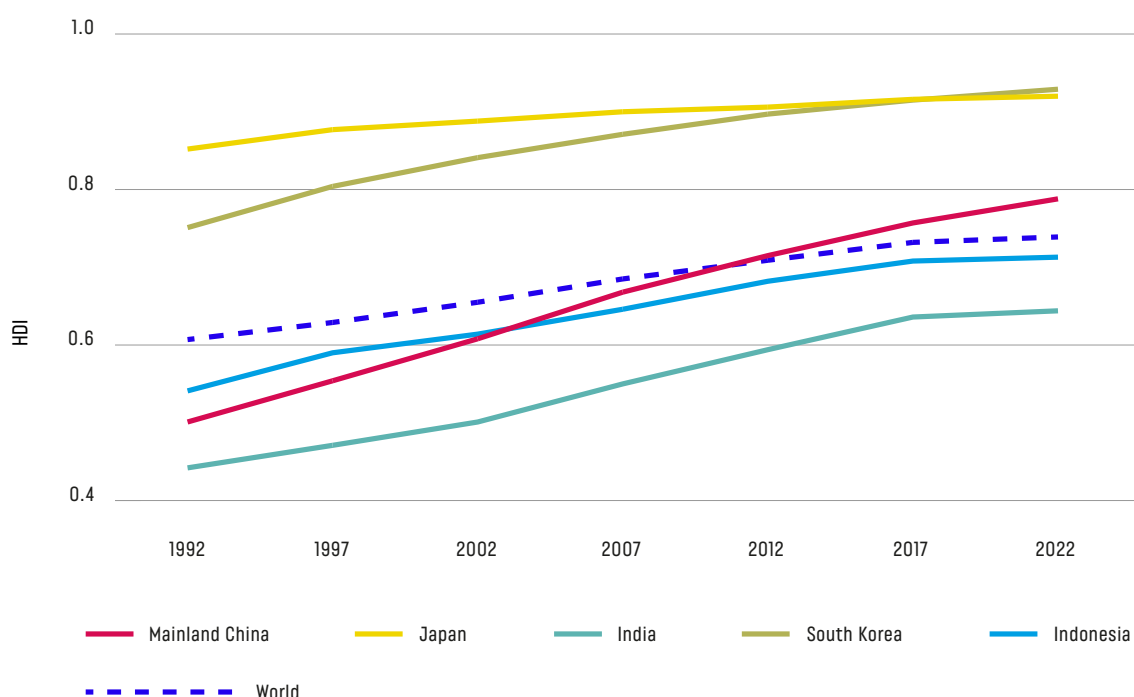
In 2000, the five Asian G20 countries covered by this strategy accounted for 22% of global GDP. That figure now stands at 32% (2025). This growth has mainly been driven by China. In contrast, the share of GDP made up by the G7 countries has decreased, falling from 65% in 2000 to around 35% in 2025.

Other indicators, such as the Human Development Index (HDI), also reflect the impressive rise of the countries covered by this strategy. The HDI, which measures life expectancy, years of schooling and GDP per capita, shows that with the exception of Japan, major progress has been made in the other four countries. Between 1992 and 2022, their average HDI score climbed from 0.49 to 0.72,⁸ a significant improvement compared with the global average, which only rose from 0.60 to 0.74 over the same period.⁹

⁸ Weighted average based on population

⁹ United Nations Development Programme (2022): [Human Development Index](#)

Figure 5: HDI by country between 1992 and 2022 (source: [UNDP](#))



The Asia-Pacific region is experiencing increasing economic integration with signs of sectoral fragmentation based on geopolitical rather than regional lines. In response to geopolitical uncertainty, many states are signing FTAs such as the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) and the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), with a key role for ASEAN and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) forum. Asia – especially the G20 countries – is essential to global value chains with China playing a dominant role in industrial production. China, Japan and India are the world's second, fourth and fifth biggest economies respectively.

In view of geopolitical tensions, many countries are seeking to reduce their dependence on Chinese suppliers and are planning to relocate certain economic activities – to India and South East Asia for example. Japan, while retaining China as their main trading partner, is diversifying its supply chains to reduce this dependence.

India and Indonesia are also emerging as alternatives to China for labour-intensive production processes. India, which is estimated to achieve an annual economic growth of 6.5% between 2024 and 2031,¹⁰ is benefiting from what is known as the China Plus One strategy.¹¹ Indonesia, not least thanks to its natural resources, is playing a strategic role in supply chains that are crucial to the global energy transition.

¹⁰ See IMF database: [IMF DATAMAPPER](#)

¹¹ China Plus One is a trade strategy that aims to avoid investing exclusively in China and to diversify activities in other countries.

Education, research and innovation

The Asian G20 countries play a major part in global research and innovation. Investment in research and development (R&D) is increasing in China, India, Japan and South Korea.

China, which spends 2.6% of its GDP on R&D, and South Korea, which spends 5.2%, are striving to become technology leaders. Japan spends 3.4% of its GDP on R&D and specialises in areas such as robotics and electronics. India, despite more modest R&D investment (0.7% of GDP), is experiencing a substantial increase in investments in absolute terms. Indonesia is lagging behind, spending just 0.3% of GDP on R&D.¹²

China accounts for 47% of global patent applications and 21% of scientific publications.^{13 14}

The five countries covered by the strategy have advanced over the past ten years in the Global Innovation Index of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). This index factors in such aspects as scientific publications, risk capital, technological infrastructure and numbers of engineers.

In China, research focuses on strategic sectors such as artificial intelligence (AI), semi-conductors and quantum technologies. Japan and South Korea are also strengthening their technological sovereignty capabilities. Japan, through its ASPIRE programme,¹⁵ is engaging in international collaboration in areas such as AI, energy and quantum science. South Korea, which focuses on applied research, is investing in key sectors like the metaverse and biotech.

Japan and South Korea are also expanding their trilateral cooperation with the US, focusing on cutting-edge technologies in the fields of space, AI and cancer treatment.

12 See the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization's database:

[UNESCO UIS statistics](#) [LINK? \(fehlt im Word\)](#)

13 World Intellectual Property Organization (2023): [WIPO IP Facts and Figures 2023](#)

14 Scimago Journal & Country Rank (2023): [Country Rankings](#)

15 Adopting Sustainable Partnerships for Innovative Research Ecosystem

Figure 6: Ranking of the five countries covered by the strategy in WIPO's Global Innovation Index for the period 2015–24. (source: [WIPO](#))

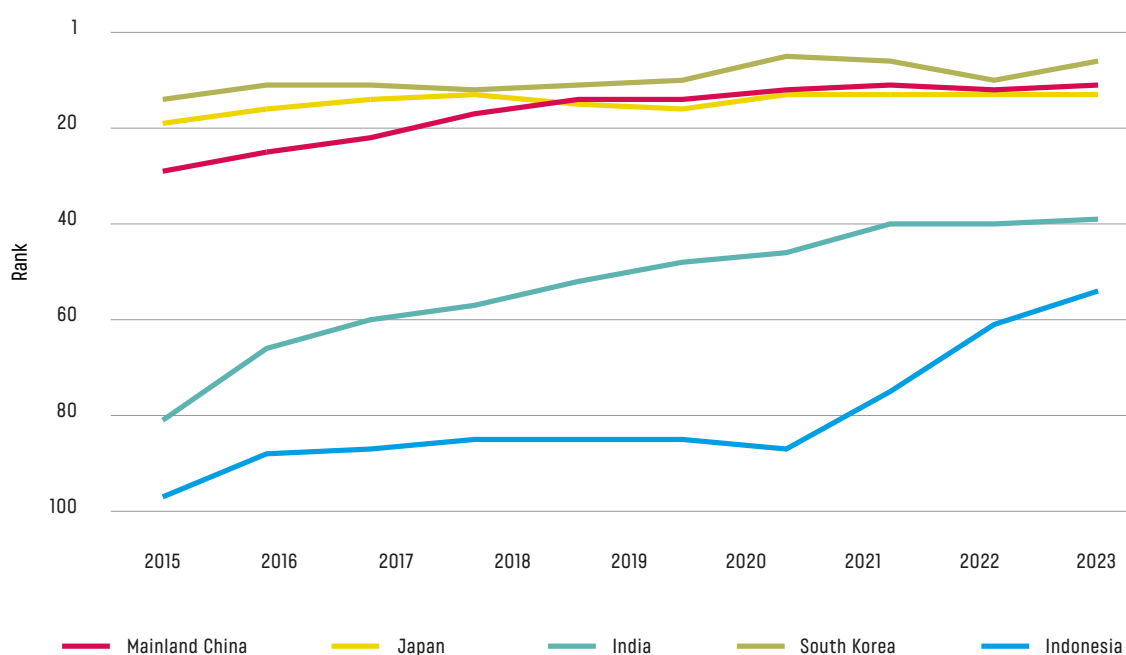
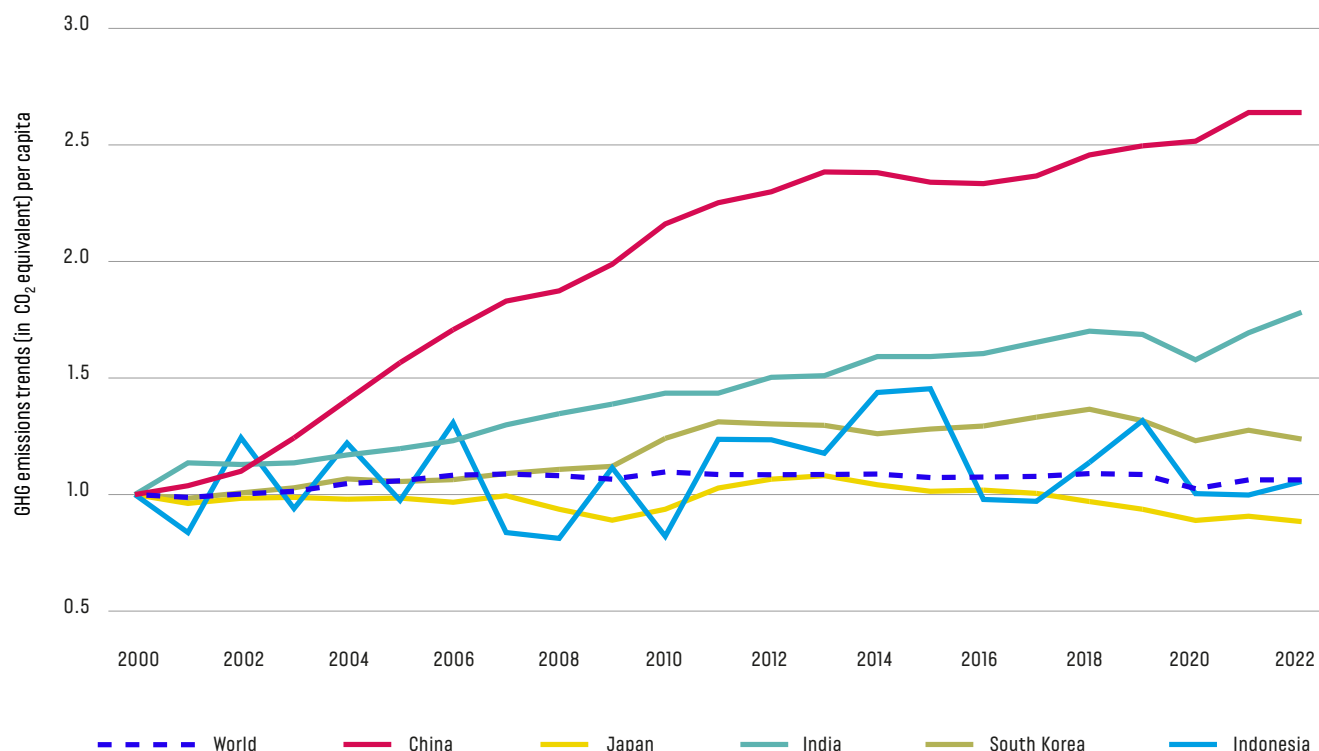


Figure 7: GHG emissions trends (in CO₂ equivalent) per capita in the countries covered by this strategy, 2000–22
[source: [Climate Watch](#)]. Emissions have been normalised to the year 2000 value.



Energy and climate

In Asia, unsustainable development models have a high environmental cost. At current emission levels, by 2040 Asia alone would exhaust the remaining global carbon budget compatible with the Paris Agreement goal of 1.5°C. This means the participation of the five countries covered by this strategy in global efforts to cut emissions is vital if the Paris goal is to be met.

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from these countries account for almost 45% of global emissions. China alone is responsible for 30% of global emissions, while India accounts for 8%.¹⁶

The electricity and heating sectors are the main emitters in these countries. In India, 75% of electricity is generated by coal-fired plants, while this share stands at 70% in Indonesia and 60% in China. In Japan and South Korea, a third of electricity is generated using coal and natural gas. However, increasing use is being made of renewable energies: a third of China's electricity comes from renewable energy, compared with around 25% in India and Japan. Indonesia and South

Korea are lagging behind at just under 10%.¹⁷ At the G20 summit in 2023, these countries pledged to triple their renewable energy production capacity by 2030, a promise reiterated at the 28th Conference of the Parties of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 28).

Despite the progress being made, the national contributions of these countries are still insufficient to achieve global climate goals. China aims to stabilise its emissions, but India's are set to continue rising after 2030. In Indonesia, the construction of coal-fired power plants is also exacerbating emissions. In Japan and South Korea, concerns over energy security are holding back the transition to net zero emissions, a goal to be achieved by 2050.

¹⁶ Emissions Database for Global Atmospheric Research (2024): [GHG emissions of all world countries – JRC/IEA 2024 Report](#)

¹⁷ Our World in Data (2024): [Electricity mix: Explore data on where our electricity comes from and how this is changing](#)

Demographics and migration

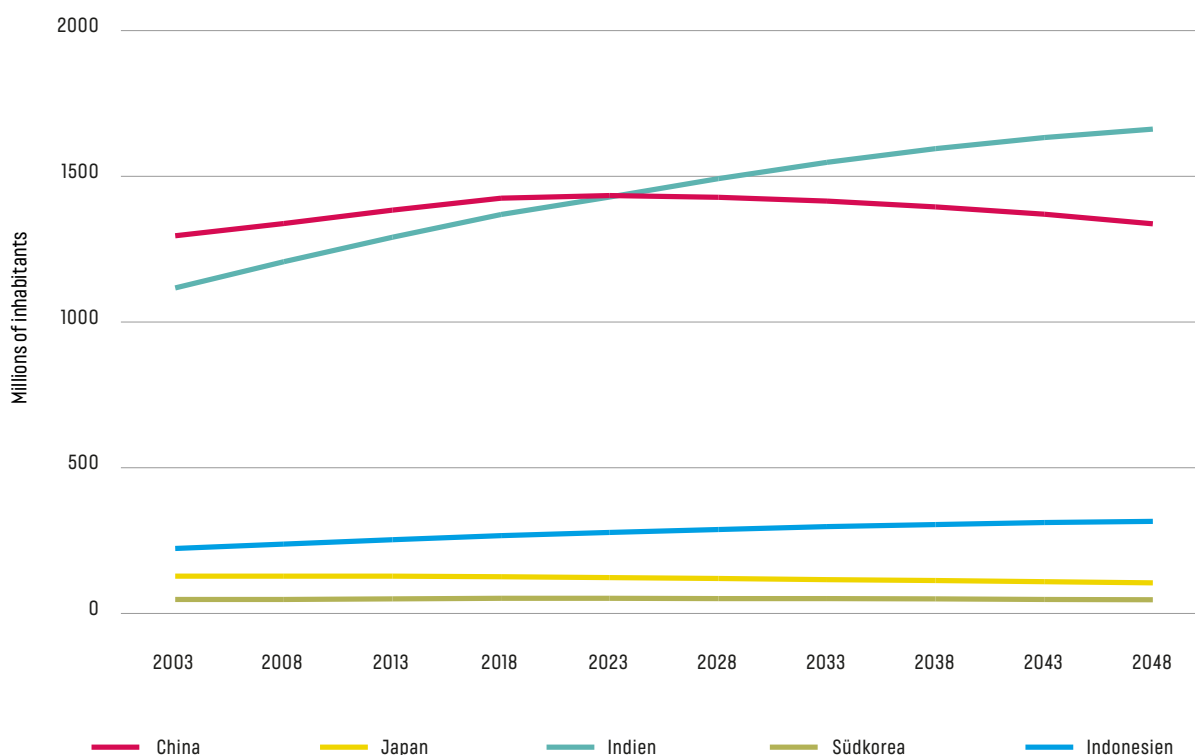
The Asian G20 countries make up around 40% of the world's population. China and India combined represent a third of humanity. These countries will remain amongst the most populous after 2050, but their demographic trends are diverging. The populations of China, Japan and South Korea are falling, while those of India and Indonesia are set to continue growing by 7% and 4.5% respectively by 2040.¹⁸ These trends are also having an impact on the countries' demographic structure – the former having ageing populations and the latter younger ones.

Migratory flows also reflect this diversity. Historically, these countries have not been very open to immigration, with negative net migration rates for China, India and Indonesia. While Japan and South Korea do attract migrants, these flows are not sufficient to fill the labour shortage linked to their ageing populations. The percentage of foreign nationals remains low, standing at between 2% and 4% in Japan and South Korea and at less than 1% in China, India and Indonesia.¹⁹ However, emigration is significant for India, which has the largest global diaspora at 18 million, as well as for China, with 10.7 million.²⁰

18 Vgl. Datenbank des Bevölkerungsfonds der Vereinten Nationen: [UNFPA Population Data Portal](#).

19 United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2020): [International Migrant Stock 2020: Destination and Origin](#).
20 Ebd.

Figure 8: Population trend by country in millions of inhabitants for the period 2003–48, census and projections (source: [UNFPA](#))



4 Swiss interests

Switzerland's foreign policy is based on the interests and values enshrined in the Federal Constitution. In order to protect these interests and values, relations with these five Asian G20 countries require special attention – as each one of them plays a vital role in terms of trade, security, innovation, technological development, combating climate change, and economic growth.

4.1 Peace and security

Asia faces growing security challenges, especially on the Korean Peninsula, around the Taiwan Strait and in the South China Sea. These regions are trouble spots where an escalation could have disastrous humanitarian consequences and serious repercussions for regional and international stability, human security and global prosperity.

Switzerland is monitoring these developments closely – not least because of the impact they could have on global supply chains, whereby the Taiwan Strait is a key element. The inter-connections between certain crises, such as those observed

between the security situations in Ukraine and on the Korean Peninsula, are also amplifying the risks. Other disputes like the border conflict between China and India, which led to human fatalities in 2020, highlight just how fragile bilateral relations in the region are.

Switzerland advocates all of the fundamental principles set out in its foreign policy: respect for international law, territorial sovereignty and the peaceful settlement of disputes, in line with the United Nations Charter. It is committed to playing a neutral role, promoting dialogue and providing good offices to facilitate constructive talks between parties.

Switzerland's main efforts in these areas include its participation in the Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission (NNSC) in Korea and the organisation of an annual round table dedicated to the security situation in North East Asia.

Figure 9: Foreign trade between Switzerland and the Asian G20 countries between 2006 and 2023 in CHF millions (excluding precious metals and precious stones and gems; source: [FOCBS](#))

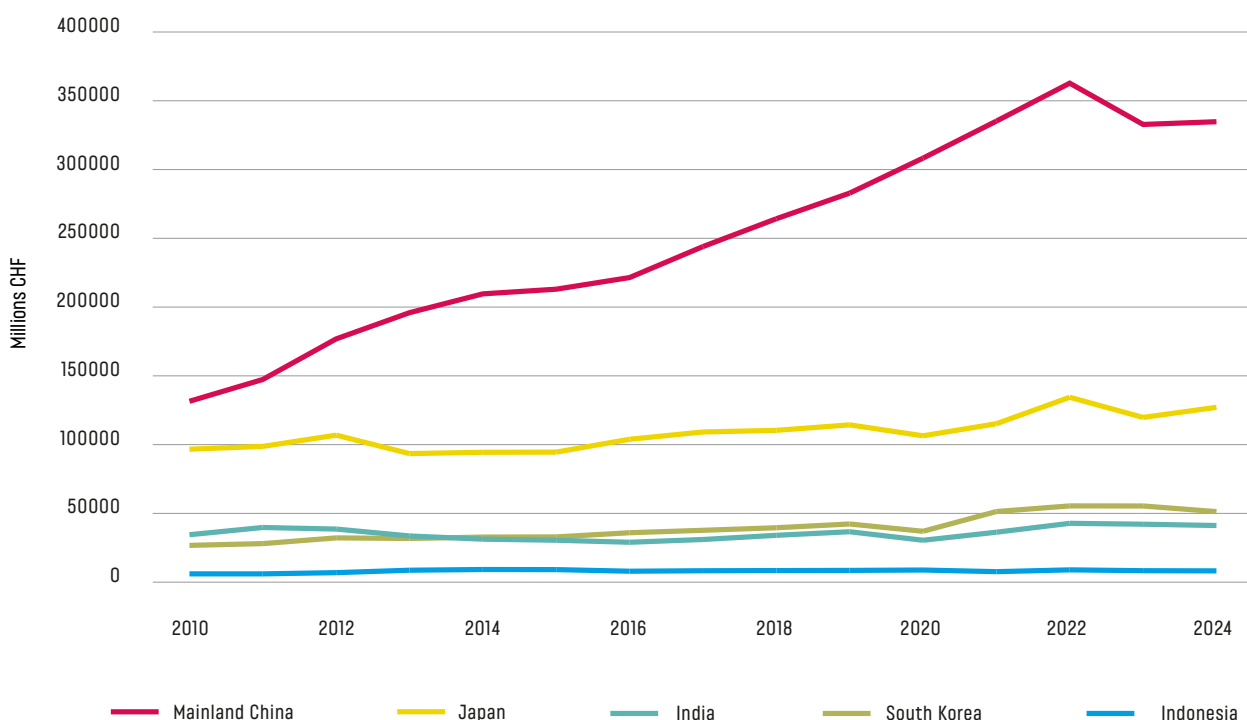
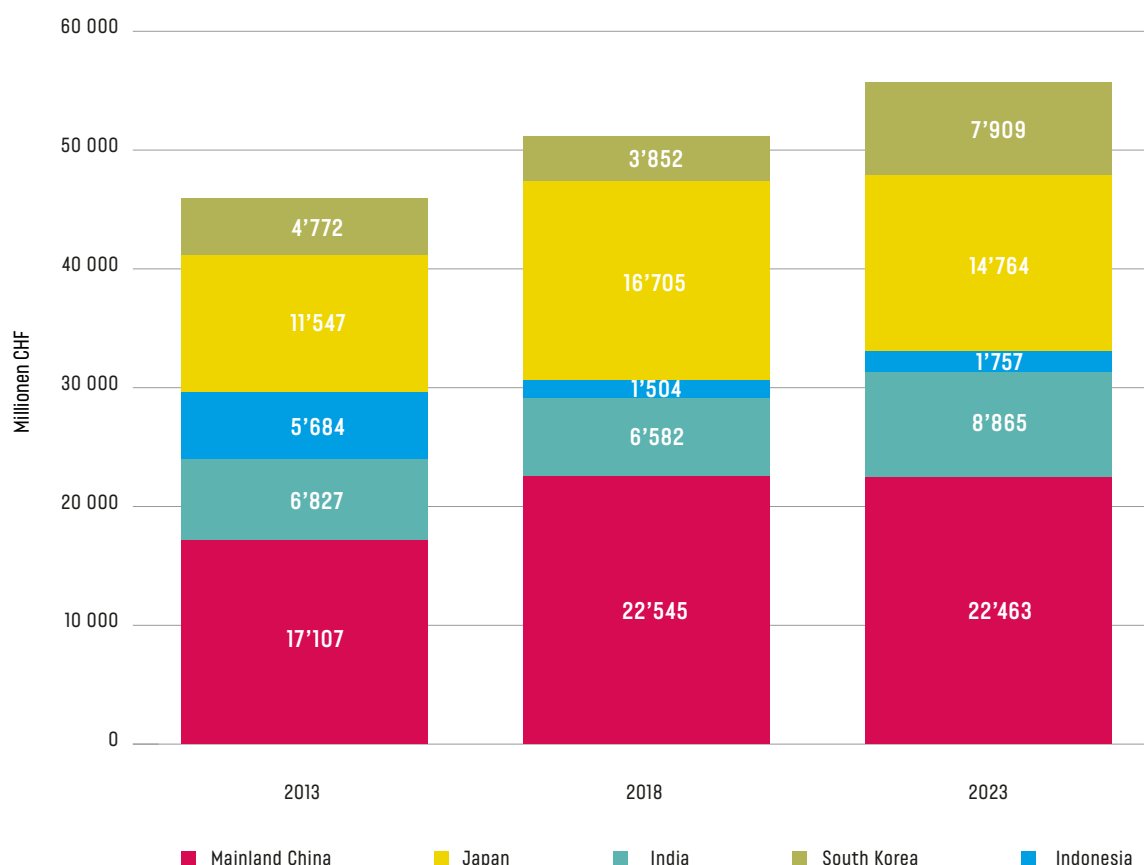


Figure 10: Direct Swiss investment in the five countries covered by the strategy between 2013 and 2023 in CHF millions (source: [SNB](#))



Faced with the growing risk of nuclear build-up and a proliferation of conventional arms in the region, Switzerland is actively seeking to reinforce the arms control architecture and prevent the destabilising application of civilian technologies for military purposes.

4.2 Prosperity and competitiveness

This new strategy is aligned with Switzerland's foreign economic policy strategy, which aims to promote rules-based free trade, diversify markets and strengthen economic multilateralism. Thanks to its integration in the global economy, Switzerland enjoys access to a wide range of markets, which enhances its resilience in times of crisis.

China is Switzerland's third most important trading partner after the EU and the US, while Japan, South Korea and India are amongst its ten biggest trading partners. Indonesia is in 28th place. The Asian G20 countries' share of Swiss foreign trade rose between 2000 and 2023, climbing from 8% to 13%,²¹ while China and Japan are also major beneficiaries of

direct Swiss investment abroad.²²

In view of geo-economic developments, Switzerland is strengthening its partnerships with these Asian G20 countries to secure optimal conditions for Swiss economic actors. Switzerland is the only European country to have negotiated FTAs with these five countries. Now it is seeking to update the existing agreements with South Korea and China to better reflect developments and standards in global trade, including sustainable development, which will enable it to improve the competitiveness of Swiss companies within these markets.

As part of its foreign economic policy strategy, Switzerland places special emphasis on multilateralism by seeking global solutions and actively participating in organisations such as the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) and the International Labour Organization (ILO). This includes promoting a level playing field for the private sector to address challenges relating to trade, climate and digitalisation.

21 Federal Office for Customs and Border Security: [Foreign trade statistics: data](#)

22 Swiss National Bank: [Swiss direct investment abroad – by type of capital and by economic activity](#)

In line with its [International Strategy on Education, Research and Innovation](#), Switzerland is intensifying its collaboration with these Asian G20 countries. Framework agreements for cooperation exist with all countries except Indonesia, and areas such as quantum technology and biotechnology are being prioritised. In relation to India, promising areas include sustainable development and health, supported by bilateral committees to assess progress and optimise conditions for cooperation.

The Swissnex network is particularly active in this region of the world and has a presence in China, India, Japan and South Korea. Its goal is to strengthen Switzerland's position as a global centre of innovation and to develop cooperation opportunities in education, research and innovation (ERI).

In relation to sustainable development, Swiss actors are involved in upgrading infrastructure in Asia – particularly in China, India, Japan and South Korea – where opportunities are opening up for Swiss technologies. Indonesia is a priority country for SECO's economic cooperation and development activities, which contribute towards developing competitiveness, tourism and renewable energies.

The Asian G20 countries are also becoming more involved in international cooperation. Their development agencies' programmes are not limited to the Asia region but are increasingly focused on Africa. Switzerland therefore intends to step up its international cooperation by working with these development cooperation agencies, envisaging joint initiatives in areas such as health, education, climate protection and disaster prevention and management.

4.3 Environment

Switzerland is expanding its multilateral and intergovernmental cooperation to address the triple planetary crisis: global warming, loss of biodiversity and pollution. The five countries targeted by this strategy play a crucial role in implementing global solutions in these areas.

In line with the International Cooperation Strategy 2025–28, Switzerland's environment-related efforts in Asia prioritise climate change mitigation and adaptation, particularly in the areas of water management, energy, food security and disaster risk reduction (DRR).

In Indonesia, Switzerland's main activities are in DRR. Indonesia is particularly vulnerable to natural disasters and faces rising water levels, storms and drought, posing a threat to infrastructure and food security. In India, heatwaves, cyclones and flooding are jeopardising water resources and agriculture. Faced with these challenges, India and Indonesia must upgrade their adaptation strategies, in particular by means of early warning systems and resilient planning and development measures – areas where Switzerland can contribute with its expertise.

In climate negotiations, Switzerland works closely with South Korea in the Environmental Integrity Group and with Japan to establish a solid multilateral framework. It is calling on China and India to step up their efforts to achieve the net zero target by 2050 and to contribute to climate financing.

Switzerland has signed an FTA with Indonesia which grants tariff concessions on sustainable palm oil, while also incorporating a verification system to protect the forests and ecosystems there.

To tackle plastic pollution, Switzerland, Japan and South Korea are participating in the High Ambition Coalition to End Plastic Pollution, which aims to establish a legally binding international instrument to reduce plastic pollution by 2040.

4.4 Democracy and governance

Switzerland's foreign policy seeks to strengthen global democratic resilience and to protect democratic institutions and processes, particularly in places where they are under threat. Democratic diplomacy aims to counter any new instances of democratic regression by encouraging inter-governmental and multi-stakeholder dialogue, building a positive narrative around the added value of democracy, and fostering positive democratic developments.

In addition to diplomacy for democracy, Switzerland promotes institutional and social conditions to bolster democratic resilience. This means it also advocates respect for human rights and the rule of law, which are essential components of robust democratic societies. These two concepts are mutually reinforcing and perform a crucial control function. Human rights are universal and universally applicable, regardless of governmental systems.

Some countries in the Asia G20 region have democratic forms of governance and are amongst the most stable democracies in the world. In terms of strengthening democratic resilience, this makes it a region of great interest for Switzerland's diplomacy for democracy. To this end, it supports bilateral and multilateral platforms for dialogue such as regular exchanges with countries like Indonesia and South Korea, as well as regional forums like the Bali Democracy Forum.

The human rights situation varies in the different Asian G20 countries. Some of these countries respect and promote human rights, while the democratic space is being reduced in others. In the case of the latter, human rights defenders are often persecuted, risking imprisonment or threats to their lives. The rights of ethnic, linguistic and religious minorities are frequently violated. Capital punishment is legal in all of the countries covered by this strategy. Freedom of expression, the right of assembly and access to independent courts are also restricted in many regions. A free press and access to justice are essential elements of a functioning democracy.

Switzerland's human rights diplomacy focuses on China, India and Indonesia, where there are divergences in terms of the understanding and protection of human rights. Switzerland champions freedom of expression, the abolition of capital punishment, torture prevention and the protection of minorities. The inclusion of human rights in all bilateral and multilateral exchanges has proven successful. Local missions play a key role in regularly raising these issues with host governments, working together with civil society and supporting internal reforms. Coordinating with partners sharing the same values also enables Switzerland to act more effectively.

5 Multilateralism

Multilateralism is vitally important for the countries covered by this strategy, each of them seeking to shape the international order through their activities on multilateral forums. Switzerland advocates a rules-based international order, supported by effective multilateral institutions, and promotes solutions to global challenges that respect international law, including humanitarian law and human rights. As a member of the UN Human Rights Council from 2025 to 2027, it is committed to upholding and promoting human rights, particularly in the region covered by this strategy, and to extending collaboration with China, India, Indonesia, Japan and South Korea.

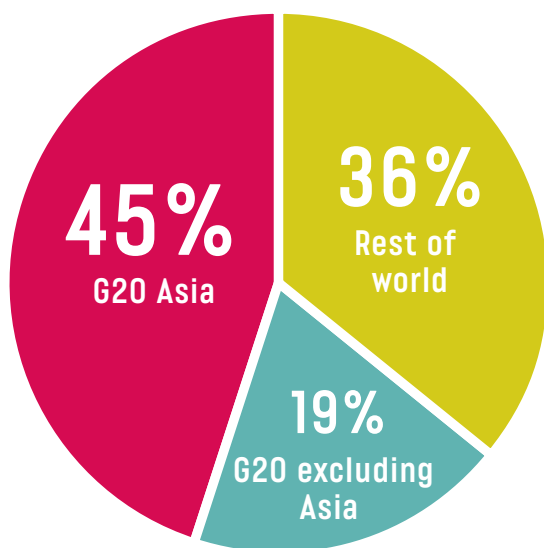
China uses multilateralism to support its economic prosperity and promote its values. Through initiatives like the BRI and the Global Development Initiative, it advocates a multipolar vision, while influencing international norms, especially in relation to human rights. A major actor in forums such as the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, G77 and BRICS, it positions itself as the guardian of countries in the South.

India portrays itself as a balancing power in a multipolar world. Participating in the G20, G77 and BRICS, it focuses on dialogue and cooperation, while positioning itself as a climate champion and spokesperson for the South.

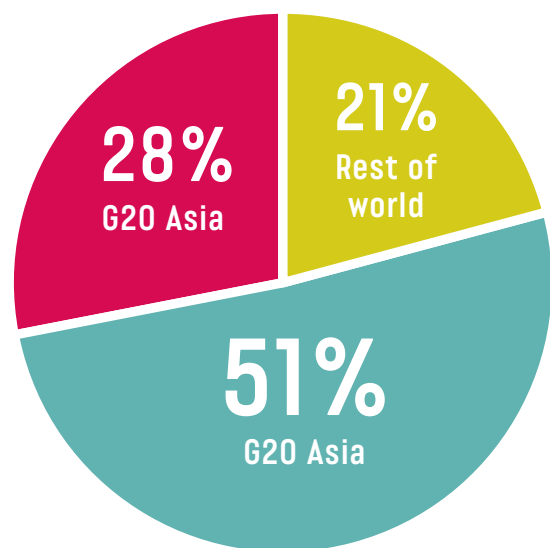
As an influential member of ASEAN and the only G20 member in South East Asia, Indonesia fosters regional cooperation and is diversifying its range of partnerships. In early 2025, Indonesia joined BRICS. It also aspires to play a global role by organising summits such as the Bali Democracy Forum and is currently negotiating membership of the OECD.

Japan supports a rules-based international order. It is strengthening ties with South East Asia, in particular by investing in the development of ASEAN countries. Japan is seeking to consolidate the G7's role in tackling global issues, such as economic security and climate change.

Figure 11: Percentage of world population and global GDP accounted for by the G20 countries (in and outside of Asia) in 2023 (source: [IMF](#) and [UNFPA](#))



Percentage of world population



Percentage of global GDP

South Korea is calling for international norms that favour peaceful conflict resolution. It promotes sovereignty, non-interference and human rights, while developing standards in future-oriented sectors such as AI and green technologies.

5.1 United Nations

During its seat on the UN Security Council (2023–24), Switzerland strengthened its relations with the East Asian countries, particularly South Korea and Japan, prioritising sustainable peacebuilding, the protection of civilians, climate security and the Council's effectiveness.

As a permanent member of the Security Council and key actor in the multilateral system, China is an important interlocutor for Switzerland. Beijing's growing influence in global governance is leading to greater dialogue on issues such as the climate, public health, development and human rights. Divergences nevertheless continue to exist, with China focusing on sovereignty and non-interference while redefining the discourse on human rights. Switzerland will continue to advocate for human rights and transparency in its dealings with the Chinese government in a constructive manner.

India is an influential actor in the UN system, positioning itself in coalitions like the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) and the G77. While its collaboration with Switzerland is limited, India is a major contributor to UN peacekeeping missions and plays a key role in discussions on sustainable development.

Thanks to its recent mandates at the UN Security Council (2019–20) and the UN Human Rights Council (2024–26) as well as its presidency of the G20 (2022), Indonesia has consolidated its role at the multilateral level. It often supports the positions of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation and the NAM.

5.2 G20

Established in 1999 in response to the financial crises during the 1990s, the **G20** has become a leading forum for global economic cooperation. Initially reserved for finance ministers and governors of central banks, it has included heads of state and government since 2008, increasing its global influence. The G20 is made up of 19 countries (including the five countries covered by this strategy), the EU and the African Union.

While not a member, Switzerland attaches great importance to the G20 and endeavours to strengthen relations with its non-European members in line with Objective 8 of the FPS 2024–27, which is aimed at diversifying foreign trade and improving economic resilience.

The G20, which does not have a permanent secretariat, is based on an alternating presidency which determines its annual priorities. There are two elements to its activities: the Finance Track, which focuses on economic and monetary issues, and the Sherpa Track, which addresses other areas such as the climate, trade, research and innovation, and health.

The five Asian G20 members covered by this strategy view this forum as a strategic lever for tackling global issues, which extend to priorities such as the 2030 Agenda, health crisis management and gender equality. China, India and Indonesia are calling for greater emphasis to be placed on the needs of the countries of the South, focusing on debt, sustainable development and more equitable policies.

As a major financial centre with a systemically important bank, Switzerland intends to actively participate in G20 discussions influencing the international financial architecture. It also aligns with the G20's goals such as combating climate change and promoting sustainable development. Since 2016, Switzerland has been invited to participate in the Finance Track every year and contributes to various Sherpa Track working groups, in particular those dealing with trade, investment and health. It has also been invited to participate in the working groups on research and innovation.

5.3 Other multilateral formats

The **OECD** gives strategic priority to its activities concerning the Indo-Pacific region. While Japan and South Korea are OECD members, China, India and Indonesia are amongst its five key partners. In 2024, Indonesia began the process to gain full membership.

Relations between the OECD and the region are also being reinforced thanks to partnerships with APEC and ASEAN. In addition to its offices in Tokyo, Jakarta and Beijing, the OECD wishes to establish a presence in New Delhi. The organisation aims to harmonise national and regional norms with its own standards.

Switzerland supports this active approach by the OECD, which will enable the development of international standards that guarantee greater stability. Switzerland's active participation within the OECD in areas like digital transformation, strengthening the resilience of global value chains and the transition to low-carbon models is in line with the OECD's objectives to promote best practice under its Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific²³.

²³ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (2024): [Implementation Plan for the OECD Strategic Framework for the Indo-Pacific](#)

ASEAN is committed to promoting peace, stability, economic progress and social development in South East Asia. Its major achievements include an advanced level of economic integration between its ten members and the absence of internal conflicts. ASEAN has established a culture of dialogue and cooperation that is unique in Asia. The association also acts as a platform for involving other actors in extended regional cooperation via various dialogue formats.

China, India, Japan and South Korea are amongst ASEAN's six global strategic partners, alongside the US and Australia. As a founding member, Indonesia plays a central role in the organisation's operation.

Since 2016, Switzerland has engaged in a partnership of sectoral dialogue with ASEAN, bolstering its presence in South East Asia. This partnership enables high-level exchanges and technical cooperation, in particular on peace, security, sustainability and digitalisation. These efforts are part of the [South East Asia Strategy 2023–26](#) action plan.

Switzerland is actively involved in the **Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank** (AIIB), which was established in 2015 on China's initiative and is based in Beijing. Holding around 27% of the voting rights, China plays a central role amongst the 90 members. Providing an alternative to the Bretton Woods institutions, the AIIB finances infrastructure projects in key areas like transport, energy and digital connectivity. As a founding member, Switzerland seeks to ensure respect for international environmental and social norms as well as promoting sustainable infrastructure.

As regards the major regional trade agreements, Switzerland does not intend to join the RCEP or the CPTPP at present. It is closely monitoring developments in these agreements – involving China, Japan, South Korea and Indonesia in particular – to assess their economic potential and political viability with a view to possible accession.

6 Bilateral priorities

6.1 China²⁴

CHINA	Population: 1.418 billion [2025]	GDP (nominal): USD 19.5 billion [2025 estimate]	Swiss representation since: 1950
	Demographic growth: -0.06 % [2024]	Annual growth in GDP: +4.5 % [2025 estimate]	Swiss community: 2,978 people ²⁵ [2025]
	HDI ranking: 75/191 [2022]	GDP per capita: USD 14,870 [2025 estimate]	Trade volume: CHF 33.5 billion [2024]

Country overview

China is a key geopolitical and economic player, shaping the international order with its rise to power. It is a one-party state that has been run by the Communist Party of China (CPC) since 1949. The current president, Xi Jinping, holds centralised power as both general secretary of the CPC and chairman of the Central Military Commission (CMC). China's political system is extremely hierarchical with power concentrated at the top of the party. The fight against corruption and the extension of the presidential mandate are part of the major political reforms undertaken by Xi since coming to power in 2012.

The world's second largest economy after the US, China has enjoyed phenomenal growth since the economic reforms introduced by Deng Xiaoping to become a major player in global trade. More recently, technological advancements have become the bedrock of its economic development and ambitions for strategic autonomy. This desire is reflected in its rise to prominence in the electric vehicle and energy storage sectors. Militarily, China is rapidly upgrading its armed forces and consolidating its presence in the South China Sea and around Taiwan.

The Chinese government has also tightened political control and imposed restrictions on civil liberties and rights. The CPC justifies these measures by pointing to improvements in socio-economic conditions and the absolute necessity for national unity. Dissidents and calls for greater autonomy for ethnic, religious and other minorities are perceived as a threat to the system and repressed. With the aim of strengthening social control and maintaining internal stability, China is also taking advantage of the opportunities presented by digitalisation. Surveillance measures reached new levels with the introduction of the zero-COVID policy.

Switzerland and China

Diplomatic relations between Switzerland and China date back to 1950 when Switzerland became one of the first western countries to recognise the People's Republic of China. This act marked the beginning of pragmatic cooperation based on economic and political interests, while taking account of the two countries' different political systems. 2025 marks the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries. While Sino-Swiss relations are good and based on around 20 active dialogues, they are not without challenges, especially due to political differences and concerns over human rights. In 2016, the two countries entered into an 'innovative strategic partnership' with an annual strategic dialogue being held between the respective foreign ministers. Switzerland is the only country that maintains a specific dialogue on labour and employment with China.

Switzerland also expresses its concerns over the human rights situation in China, in particular on such issues as freedom of expression, the situation of ethnic and religious minorities in the autonomous regions of Tibet and Xinjiang, and the restriction of freedoms in Hong Kong. These concerns are addressed at both bilateral level – especially under the dialogue on human rights – and at multilateral level, in particular within the UN bodies.

China's growing influence is also being felt in Switzerland with an increasing level of public diplomacy activities as well as espionage on Swiss territory. Switzerland is a major target in view of its role as host state to many international organisations and the presence of diasporas with links to China. Another issue is Swiss economic and scientific assets, which could be targeted by economic and industrial espionage.

²⁴ This section extends the China Strategy 2021–24. As set out in the dispatch on the 2023–27 legislative period, this update aims to improve the coherence, effectiveness and relevance of Sino-Swiss relations. The principles of bilateral cooperation set out in section 3.3 of the China Strategy 2024–27 continue to apply.

²⁵ Mainland China: 1047, Hong Kong: 1544, Macao: 24, Taiwan (Chinese Taipei): 363.

In line with its One China policy, Switzerland does not have diplomatic relations with the authorities in Taiwan (Chinese Taipei) even though technical cooperation in the scientific, economic and cultural fields is possible and desirable. In this respect, Switzerland also recognises the democratic nature of Taiwan's authorities and its society.²⁶

In 2013, Switzerland became the first country in continental Europe to sign an FTA with China. Negotiations to optimise this agreement began in 2024. Today, China is Switzerland's third most important trading partner. Switzerland mainly exports pharmaceuticals, machinery, watches and state-of-the-art technology; from China it imports electronic products, textiles and other manufactured goods.

The level of Swiss investment in China has increased significantly in recent decades. Major Swiss companies have established a strong presence in China, investing in production plants, research and development facilities and local partnerships. However, the complex regulatory environment, geopolitical landscape and recent COVID-19 pandemic mean that a strategic approach and continual adaptation are required.

Various formats exist to maintain and expand financial cooperation, the cornerstone of which is the high-level working group. Bilateral cooperation projects primarily focus on the market and are led by economic actors. They include the China-Switzerland Stock Connect programme established in 2021. This link between the Swiss SIX stock exchange and those in Shanghai and Shenzhen is a prime example of private sector initiatives.

Research and innovation are also a vital element of bilateral relations. Despite challenges related to data protection and research security due to China's legislative framework, Swiss and Chinese universities are endeavouring to continue their partnerships. In parallel, Swissnex, present in Shanghai since 2008, plays a key role in developing collaborative projects between ERI actors, particularly in the areas of energy, sustainable development and health technologies.

²⁶ See the Federal Council report (2023) in response to postulate [21.3967 CPE-N](#) of 25 June 2021 [Relations avec Taiwan \(Taïpei chinois\) : situation actuelle et possibilités d'approfondissement](#) (Relations with Taiwan (Chinese Taipei): current situation and opportunities for deepening relations)

Objectives and measures

Multilateralism

- 1. Switzerland is strengthening its dialogues with China at the multilateral level.**
 - a.** Holding an annual bilateral dialogue with China on respective priorities at the UN and other multilateral bodies.
 - b.** Continuing discussions with European partners and the G7 on multilateral issues involving China.
 - c.** Cooperating with China on multilateral forums in order to strengthen international law.
-

Peace and security

- 2. Switzerland is protecting its security interests by engaging in discussions with China on strategic issues and regional stability.**
 - a.** Deepening dialogue with China on peacebuilding, arms control, disarmament and export control policies.
-

Prosperity and competitiveness

- 3. Switzerland is strengthening its economic, financial and scientific relations with China while ensuring a balanced and secure framework for cooperation.**
 - a.** Optimising the FTA with China, improving market access and strengthening provisions on labour and the environment.
 - b.** Supporting Swiss companies operating in China through measures based on WTO rules.
 - c.** Promoting cooperation on ERI in bilateral and multilateral formats and working to ensure research security.
 - d.** Stepping up dialogue on international cooperation and humanitarian responses with government agencies and academic institutions.
 - e.** Maintaining pragmatic cooperation with Taiwan (Chinese Taipei) in the form of technical exchanges on economic, scientific and cultural affairs.
-

Environment

- 4. Switzerland is engaging with China on the environment, climate and health.**
 - a.** · Developing environmental, climate and health initiatives with China in Switzerland's international cooperation countries.
-

Democracy and governance

- 5. Switzerland is committed to ensuring that China upholds human rights and the rule of law.**
 - a.** Advocating respect for the universality and indivisibility of human rights in China by using all available platforms, including the bilateral dialogue on human rights.
 - b.** Stepping up action to counter espionage and Chinese influence in Switzerland, in particular by protecting communities from China living in Switzerland.
-

Cross-cutting objective

- 6. Switzerland is growing its expertise in relation to China.**
 - a.** Supporting the development of expertise on China (training sessions, language courses, etc.) within the Federal Administration.
 - b.** Increasing exchanges with Swiss actors that contribute to the implementation of the Asia G20 strategy.

6.2 India

INDIA

Population:
1.456 billion (2025)

Demographic growth:
+0.88 % (2024)

HDI ranking:
134/191 (2022)

GDP (nominal):
USD 4.27 billion (2025 estimate)

Annual growth in GDP:
+6.5 % (2025 estimate)

GDP per capita:
2,940 USD (2025 estimate)

Swiss representation since:
1915

Swiss community:
582 people (2025)

Trade volume:
CHF 4.1 billion (2024)

Country overview

India is the world's most populous parliamentary democracy and fifth biggest economy, with a GDP estimated at USD 4.27 billion and a projected growth of 6.5% (2025). Its population – the largest in the world at over 1.43 billion since 2023 – is continuing to grow, although demographic projections point to a slowdown over the coming decades.

India's economic boom is being driven by a rapidly growing middle class, estimated at over 300 million, and an environment conducive to business. These conditions are attracting huge levels of foreign investment, particularly in the IT, infrastructure, energy and green technology sectors. Recognised as a world leader in IT and software services, India plays a strategic role in global supply chains. Ambitious structural reforms and its enormous internal market have enabled India to maintain one of the strongest economic growth rates in the world, consolidating its position as a global economic powerhouse.

However, such dynamic developments also give rise to persistent challenges. Significant disparities still exist between urban and rural areas and the caste system continues to influence the social structure. Growing polarisation is affecting relations between the Hindu majority and religious minorities, particularly Muslims. Targeted internet shutdowns have also had an adverse impact on freedom of expression and the media.

India is playing an increasingly important role geopolitically in a region faced with security tensions and economic challenges. It is strengthening its strategic position by pursuing a proactive defence policy and through the central role it plays in critical sectors, such as IT and renewable energies.

On the international stage, India is increasingly becoming a key actor in global governance, hosting events like the G20 and the 2023 World Climate Action Summit. Within BRICS, Indian diplomacy is aligned with its vision of a balanced multi-polarity where dialogue and cooperation represent the pillars of global stability.

Aware of its growing influence, India conducts an active foreign policy, engaging in major strategic partnerships with Russia, the US, the EU and other global protagonists.

Switzerland and India

Switzerland recognised India when it gained independence in 1947 and immediately established diplomatic relations. The two countries have a close and dynamic relationship, which is reflected in the various bilateral treaties and agreements as well as frequent high-level diplomatic meetings. Politics, the economy (innovation) and the environment (sustainability) are the three main elements of bilateral relations. Through select contact with the authorities and civil society, Switzerland promotes respect for human rights, particularly the rights of religious minorities. More generally, Switzerland engages in a constructive dialogue with India on peace and security issues.

In India, Swiss SMEs benefit from an expanding market for high-end consumer goods, high-precision systems and high-tech solutions. With its major pharmaceutical industry and rapidly expanding research ecosystem, India presents opportunities for partnerships in R&D, especially in biotech and medical technology. The signing of a bilateral cooperation agreement in 2022, which focuses on research and innovation, has further strengthened the framework for these partnerships.

In terms of sustainable development, India has implemented ambitious policies to promote renewable energies. It aims to reach 500GW of renewable energy capacity by 2030, creating opportunities for Swiss companies specialising in green technologies and smart infrastructure. Switzerland is also providing support with climate-related disaster preparedness and helping communities to manage the risks posed by extreme environmental events.

More recently, the signing of the Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) between EFTA and India on 10 March 2024, after 16 years of negotiations, represents a major milestone for trade policy. Switzerland and the other EFTA states were the first European partners to sign such an agreement with India. The ratification process is under way.

India has become a major hub for high-tech industries such as IT, cybersecurity, fintech and advanced manufacturing. Bangalore, where Switzerland set up its Swissnex location in 2010, is at the very forefront of India's technological revolution. This dynamic presents opportunities for collaboration with Switzerland, especially in technological innovation, the life sciences and renewable energies, in which Swiss expertise is highly regarded worldwide.

Objectives and measures

Peace and security

- 1. Switzerland and India are working together to promote peace and security efforts.**
 - a. Pursuing dialogue with India on Russia's war against Ukraine and other global security issues.
-

Prosperity and competitiveness

- 2. Switzerland and India are intensifying their relations on the economy and innovation.**
 - a. Implementing the TEPA by following up on investment promotion and sustainable development provisions.
 - b. Concluding a new bilateral agreement on investment protection.
 - c. Facilitating access for Swiss companies to major infrastructure projects as part of the Team Switzerland mandate by expanding the network of key technical and financial actors.
 - d. Extending cooperation on innovation and digitalisation through Indo-Swiss Innovation Platform programmes, while increasing the number of its research instruments and specialist members.
 - 3. Switzerland is promoting relations between peoples with India.**
 - a. Improving framework conditions to ensure that visa applications from tourists, researchers and investors are processed efficiently.
-

Environment

- 4. Switzerland is continuing its partnership with India on climate, natural hazard management and the environment.**
 - a. Supporting the Indian authorities in achieving their GHG emissions reduction targets and in developing climate resilience, including at regional level.
 - b. Strengthening cooperation on natural hazard management and prevention, in particular by supporting research on hazards in mountainous areas and promoting regional collaboration.
-

Democracy and governance

- 5. Switzerland is committed to promoting democratic resilience and respect for human rights and the rule of law in India.**
 - a. Continuing discussions on human rights, including the rights of minority groups and the freedom of expression, through exchanges with the authorities and civil society.
 - 6. Switzerland remains committed to the issue of business and human rights.**
 - a. Encouraging companies to assume social responsibility by facilitating exchanges between the private sector and civil society through thematic events and workshops.
-

6.3 Indonesia²⁷

INDONESIA

Population:
284 million (2025)

Demographic growth:
+0.8% (2024)

HDI ranking:
112/191 (2022)

GDP (nominal):
USD 1.49 billion (2025 estimate)

Annual growth in GDP:
+5.1% (2025 estimate)

GDP per capita:
USD 5,250 (2023)

Swiss representation since:
1863

Swiss community:
1198 people (2025)

Trade volume:
CHF 820 million (2024)

Country overview

Indonesia is the only G20 country in South East Asia. The archipelago, which includes over 17,000 islands, is the world's fourth most populous country.²⁸ It is also achieving dynamic economic growth: long-term forecasts indicate that Indonesia could become the world's fourth biggest economy (after China, India and the US) by 2050.²⁹ The multiculturalism of Indonesia, a democratic republic with a presidential system and more than 300 ethnic groups, has a major influence on its political system, which is built on a culture of consensus.

Indonesia is taking advantage of its growing importance to pursue a committed and independent foreign policy. It plays a leadership role in ASEAN, whose secretariat is located in Jakarta, and aims to be a spokesperson for the countries of the South, in particular as a member of BRICS. At global level, Indonesia also supports effective multilateralism and is endeavouring to position itself as a bridge-builder. It is one of the world's most populous democracies and hosts the Bali Democracy Forum, a high-level dialogue aimed at promoting democratic values in the Asia-Pacific region.

Indonesia has achieved significant socio-economic development over the past two decades. A middle class enjoying rising living standards has also emerged. Although Indonesia's abundance of mineral resources – important in the global energy transition – is providing the country with new sources of revenue, it still faces major economic and social challenges. There is also room for improvement in terms of productivity and competitiveness. In addition, rapid urbanisation is creating new requirements for urban infrastructure. There are also continuing issues in relation to respect for human rights, in particular the protection of minority groups and torture prevention. Indonesia has an active civil society and media. However, there is a growing trend towards concentration of power as well as restrictions on democratic participation and freedom of expression.

The downside of Indonesia's dynamic economic development is the extent of its environmental problems. Tropical deforestation poses a threat to biodiversity and is contributing to climate change. Despite aiming to achieve net zero by 2060, Indonesia's GHG emissions are rising rapidly – and it is already amongst the world's ten main CO₂ emitters.³⁰ At the same time Indonesia is more affected than average by climate change because of its large coastal population in low-lying areas. The level of damage caused by flooding and landslides has risen over recent years. Irrespective of climate change, Indonesia is regularly hit by natural disasters due to its location on the Pacific Ring of Fire.

Switzerland and Indonesia

In 1863, Switzerland opened a first representation in Batavia (present-day Jakarta). In 1949, it recognised Indonesia's independence from the Netherlands. In 1951, an Indonesian representation was opened in Bern. Bilateral relations are strong and dynamic. In addition to diplomatic visits held at Federal Council level, political consultations and meetings of the Swiss-Indonesian Joint Economic and Trade Commission are held on a regular basis. In the field of human rights, Switzerland is working closely with local authorities in Indonesia, particularly on the priority issues of torture prevention and corporate responsibility to protect human rights.

For Switzerland, Indonesia is a partner with great potential. While the bilateral trade volume remains relatively modest, the size and dynamic nature of the Indonesian economy is opening up new trading opportunities. The Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) between EFTA and Indonesia has also created a framework conducive to extending bilateral economic relations. As a contribution towards rainforest protection, the agreement only permits the import of palm oil at reduced customs duties if it has been produced according to recognised sustainability criteria. The bilateral agreement on investment protection, which entered into force in 2024, also improves the legal certainty of direct Swiss investment in Indonesia.

²⁷ Indonesia is also part of the Federal Council's South East Asia Strategy 2023–26

²⁸ United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, Population Division (2024): [World Population Prospects 2024](#).

²⁹ Bloomberg (2020): [An Economist's Guide to the World in 2025](#).

³⁰ The World Bank (2024): [World Development Indicators \(CO₂ emissions\)](#).

As part of SECO's economic development cooperation activities, Switzerland aims to support Indonesia's transition to a sustainable, resilient and competitive economy. It is focusing on supporting political and regulatory frameworks that foster prosperity, develop competitive human capital and promote sustainable infrastructure. Switzerland is also helping to improve Indonesia's capacity to deal with natural disasters.

Objectives and measures

Prosperity and competitiveness

- 1. Switzerland and Indonesia are expanding their bilateral economic relations.**
 - a.** Supporting the implementation of the CEPA between EFTA and Indonesia.
 - b.** Making well-coordinated use of all trade diplomacy and export promotion instruments.
 - c.** Facilitating access to major Indonesian infrastructure projects for Swiss companies.
 - 2. Switzerland is helping to improve the competitiveness of Indonesia's private sector.**
 - a.** Helping to foster conditions conducive to developing a resilient and competitive private sector.
 - b.** Assisting Indonesian SMEs in gaining access to international markets and financial services.
 - c.** Holding a regular dialogue on labour and employment issues.
-

Environment

- 3. Switzerland is increasing cooperation with Indonesia on sustainable development and natural disaster prevention.**
 - a.** Monitoring adherence to sustainable development provisions in the CEPA between EFTA and Indonesia.
 - b.** Promoting sustainable infrastructure and resilient, inclusive urban development.
 - c.** Improving the Indonesian authorities' disaster risk management capacity by providing training and exchanging expertise.
-

Democracy and governance

- 4. Switzerland is deepening its cooperation with Indonesia on the promotion of human rights and democratic development.**
 - a.** Continuing local consultations and practical cooperation on human rights.
 - b.** Strengthening cooperation on democracy promotion.

6.4 Japan

JAPAN

Population:
124 million (2025)

Demographic growth:
-0.5% (2024)

HDI ranking:
24/191 (2022)

GDP (nominal):
USD 4.39 billion (2025 estimate)

Annual growth in GDP:
+1.1% (2025 estimate)

GDP per capita:
USD 35,610 (2025 estimate)

Swiss representation since:
1906

Swiss community:
2,052 people (2025)

Trade volume:
CHF 12.7 billion (2024)

Country overview

A parliamentary democracy and constitutional monarchy, Japan has a resilient political system with a wide range of political parties. The Liberal Democratic Party is the dominant power in Japanese politics and has governed the country almost continuously since the party's foundation in 1955. Forecasts on the country's downward demographic trend indicate the population will stabilise around 2030, with the over-65s making up between 30-35% of the overall total.

Japan is the world's fourth largest economy – its GDP stands at USD 4.39 billion – and only Asian member of the G7. In view of its challenging demographic situation, Japan's economic growth is relatively weak, but its industries continue to play a leading role in sectors such as robotics, electronics and the automotive industry. Japan has one of the highest levels of national debt as a percentage of GDP (around 260%) in the world, but is also amongst the major creditor countries. Japan is a strong advocate of greater economic integration in view of its strategic interests in maintaining close ties with regional and global economies, its contracting domestic market and its island location. It takes the initiative on concluding FTAs, which represent the driving force within the CPTPP, and adopts a proactive and efficient approach towards shaping emerging provisions on economic security and supply chains at regional and international level.

Japan has been a strong advocate of multilateralism and the rule of law on the international stage for many years. This is reflected by the fact that Japan has sat as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for longer than any other country and is the biggest donor to the International Criminal Court (ICC).

Japan is playing an increasingly important role geopolitically against a regional backdrop marked by security tensions and economic challenges. In the region, Japan has been pursuing its Free and Open Indo-Pacific strategy for over a decade. This focuses on promoting international law, prosperity through free trade, infrastructure building and development cooperation. The concept also provides a foundation for deepening relations with countries sharing the same values, such as European states. While pacifism has been a fundamental part of Japan's identity since the Second World War, the changing security environment prompted the country to adopt a national security strategy in 2022 which, for the first time, adapts its principles and resources to deal with the scenario of a military attack on its territory.

Japan was one of the first non-western countries to develop global soft power. Its creative scene and cultural industries (video gaming, virtual reality, design, animation, manga, contemporary art) have generated major international interest in Japan, increasing the country's appeal abroad.

Switzerland and Japan

After a delegation of representatives from Switzerland's watchmaking industry visited Japan in 1863, the two countries signed a trade and friendship agreement in 1864. In 1906, Switzerland opened a representation in Tokyo. The two countries have good, stable diplomatic relations with frequent diplomatic contact, including six Swiss presidential visits to Japan between 2017 and 2024 and various discussions at Federal Council and Japanese government level. Since 2009, Switzerland and Japan have been conducting a political dialogue aimed at strengthening bilateral relations and cooperation between the two countries.

Switzerland and Japan enjoy excellent cooperation within multilateral bodies and work closely together on matters such as the UN Security Council's working methods, reforms at the WTO and good governance practices at the OECD.

Today, these longstanding and strong relations primarily focus on mutual cooperation on economic affairs and ERI, particularly in the AI, robotics and renewable energies sectors. For Switzerland, Japan is a priority country for export promotion and its third most important trading partner in Asia after China and India. The FTA between Switzerland and Japan signed in 2009 represents a pioneering achievement and is the first of its kind signed by Japan with an industrialised nation. The two countries also engage in a regular financial dialogue to coordinate their positions on financial policy.

Switzerland created its very first science attaché post in Tokyo in 1976. In 2007, the two countries signed a cooperation agreement on science and technology – which has also resulted in regular meetings of the joint committee. In 2022, a Swissnex site was inaugurated in Osaka to improve networking between the Swiss and Japanese science and technology ecosystems.

Objectives and measures

Peace and security

- 5. Switzerland is strengthening its cooperation with Japan to defend the rule of law and the multilateral order.**
- a.** Continuing joint initiatives within multilateral bodies to improve the architecture for peacebuilding and preserving the rule of law.
 - b.** Stepping up cooperation in regional initiatives promoting international security.
-

Prosperity and competitiveness

- 6. Switzerland is developing economic and technological exchanges with Japan through structured partnership.**
- a.** Aiming to extend the framework to speed up open innovation with the participation of the private sector and scientific community.
 - b.** Deepening talks on economic policy and framework conditions in areas such as finance, e-commerce and data spaces, including the equivalence of data protection.
-
- 7. Switzerland is strengthening Swiss SMEs' export economy to Japan.**
- a.** Continuing the support provided by the Swiss Business Hub and Swiss embassy, facilitating access to the Japanese market for Swiss companies and their activities locally.
-
- 8. Switzerland is positioning itself as a trustworthy partner and innovative actor to tackle shared challenges with Japan.**
- a.** Stepping up cooperation in the strategic areas set out in the 2023 memorandum of cooperation on science, technology and innovation.
 - b.** Promoting Swiss resources in innovation, creativity, sustainability and health at the World Expo 2025 in Osaka and beyond by involving business and academic institutions.
 - c.** Increasing the visibility of Switzerland's strengths in innovation and sustainability amongst young decision-makers and opinion leaders.
 - d.** Broadening cultural exchange and institutional links between the two countries, including at regional, cantonal and partner city level.

6.5 South Korea

SOUTH KOREA	Population: 52 million (2024)	GDP (nominal): USD 1.95 billion (2025 estimate)	Swiss representation since: 1965
	Demographic growth: -0.02% (2024)	Annual growth in GDP: +2.2% (2025 estimate)	Swiss community: 322 people (2025)
	HDI ranking: 19/191 (2022)	GDP per capita: USD 37,670 (2025 estimate)	Trade volume: CHF 5.1 billion (2024)

Country overview

South Korea is a democratic republic that emerged from an authoritarian regime in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Today, it has a semi-presidential system, an independent judiciary and strong protections for civil and political freedoms. The two main political groups – the progressives and the conservatives – are very polarised, sometimes creating a confrontational climate on the political stage.

South Korea, a member of the OECD and G20, ranks 14th among the world's economies and fourth in Asia, according to the IMF. The country's growing power – with GDP per capita rising from USD 64 in 1955 to USD 37,670 in 2025 – highlights the success of its export-led industrialisation strategy. South Korea has become a global leader in high-tech industries such as semiconductors, pharmaceuticals and shipbuilding, and is now the world's tenth biggest arms exporter. These developments have largely been driven by powerful South Korean family conglomerates, accounting for around 60% of the country's GDP. Despite this progress, the demographic trend in South Korea – which has the lowest birth rate ever recorded worldwide – is putting a strain on the country's social welfare system (especially pensions and healthcare) and workforce.

On the diplomatic front, South Korea continues to play an increasingly significant international role, hosting global events and extending its diplomatic network. It opened around ten new representations in 2024 and plans to raise its development aid budget from USD 5.7 billion in 2024 to USD 8.8 billion in 2025. South Korea also aspires to become a global leader in digital technology governance – its Digital Bill of Rights project, for example, aims to establish international norms on the management of technologies to ensure they meet ethical standards and provide social benefits.

South Korea's soft power, especially in the cultural sector, has significantly raised the country's profile as a dynamic, creative and modern nation, while also playing an important part in its diplomatic efforts. Its global influence covers music (K-pop), cinema, cuisine, the fashion industry and the beauty sector. These successful achievements – the product of an entrepreneurial culture actively supported by the state – are generating major economic benefits, contributing to export growth and attracting growing numbers of tourists.

Switzerland and South Korea

The Federal Council recognised the government of South Korea in 1962 and decided to set up an embassy in Seoul in 1969. The first bilateral agreements were concluded in 1971 (investment promotion and protection), 1975 (air transport) and 1977 (guarantee and protection of patents and trademarks). Switzerland plays a historic role in peacebuilding efforts on the Korean Peninsula as a member, alongside Sweden, of the NNCS, which has been monitoring the armistice agreement between North Korea and South Korea since 1953. The convergence of Swiss and South Korean priorities within multilateral bodies provides a solid foundation for extending bilateral ties and addressing common global challenges.

In South Korea, Swiss SME's benefit from opportunities in biotech, precision machining, clean technology and consumer goods. Swiss expertise in precision machining is meeting South Korea's growing demand to improve its manufacturing capabilities. Swiss innovations are also benefiting from synergies in the fields of hydrogen and sustainable transport. South Korea's pharmaceutical sector, which has joint R&D projects with Switzerland, as well as the luxury goods market – particularly Swiss watches and jewellery – are promising sectors too.

Switzerland and South Korea have well-established economic relations that also benefit from the FTA between EFTA and South Korea, which entered into force in 2006. However, the benefits of this agreement have been eroded due in the main to the more favourable FTA between South Korea and the EU. An update of the agreement is not considered a priority by Seoul at this stage.

With one of the highest R&D budgets among OECD countries, South Korea's focus on innovation opens up opportunities for collaboration in sectors where Switzerland possesses well-established expertise such as biotech, quantum technology and battery development. Platforms like the Swiss-Korean Innovation Week, launched by the Swiss embassy in South Korea, and the Life Science Initiative support these efforts by encouraging networking between actors from science, business, culture and politics.

In May 2023, Switzerland and South Korea signed a joint declaration on research cooperation focusing on digitalisation, biotech and quantum technology. This partnership combines Switzerland's strengths in basic research with South Korea's focus on applied and business-led research.

Cooperation on quantum technology has been prioritised with joint funding initiatives supporting up to ten projects over a three-year period. Switzerland, which is a leader in quantum technology, sees this partnership as an excellent opportunity for collaboration.

Objectives and measures

Peace and security

- 1. Switzerland and South Korea are continuing their peacebuilding and security efforts**
 - a.** Engaging in close cooperation within multilateral bodies to support reform of the peacebuilding architecture.
 - b.** Maintaining Switzerland's role in promoting stability on the Korean peninsula, in particular through the NNSC and efforts to facilitate dialogue.

Prosperity and competitiveness

- 2. Switzerland and South Korea are stepping up their economic and scientific cooperation.**
 - a.** Aiming to maintain a level playing field for Swiss exports and seeking to revise the FTA between EFTA and South Korea.
 - b.** Increasing cooperation on science and technology, especially in the fields of digitalisation, biotech, life sciences and quantum technology as set out in the 2023 joint declaration, building on platforms such as the Swiss-Korean Innovation Week and the Life Science Initiative.
 - c.** Aiming to improve trade diplomacy and export promotion instruments by focusing on high added-value and innovative sectors.
 - d.** Facilitating access to South Korea's innovation ecosystem for Swiss start-ups by creating links with incubators, research centres and industrial partners.

Environment

- 3. Switzerland and South Korea are intensifying their cooperation on environmental sustainability.**
 - a.** Supporting and extending multilateral cooperation on climate action, green finance and the environment.
 - b.** Identifying and promoting opportunities for Swiss environmental technologies.

Democracy and governance

- 4. Switzerland is encouraging discussions with South Korea on democracy, governance and science diplomacy.**
 - a.** Fostering exchanges on science diplomacy, particularly on the ethics of AI, cybersecurity and quantum technology, and incorporating South Korea into the activities of the Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator (GESDA) foundation.

Cross-cutting objective

- 5. Switzerland is promoting exchanges between peoples with South Korea.**
 - a.** Supporting the development of structured partnerships between municipalities and encouraging cooperation between cultural, academic and economic actors.

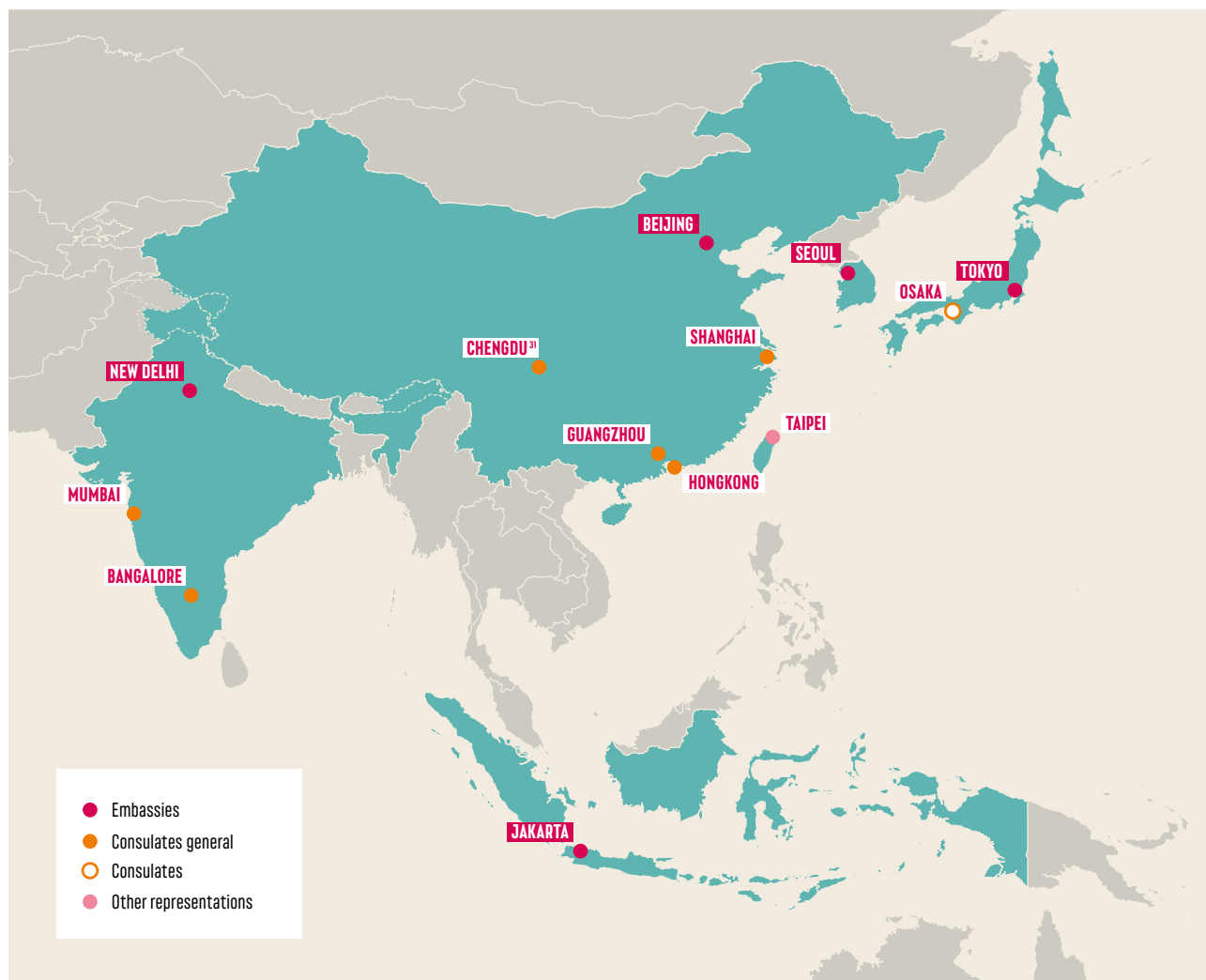


Figure 13: Map of Swiss representations in the Asia G20 region

The depiction of the boundaries, names and designations on this map does not mean that Switzerland approves of or recognises them officially.

³¹ The Swiss consulate general in Chengdu is temporarily closed as of the publication date of this strategy

List of abbreviations

AI	Artificial intelligence	GDP	Gross domestic product
AIB	Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank	GESDA	<i>Geneva Science and Diplomacy Anticipator</i>
APEC	Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation	HDI	Human Development Index
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations	IDWG	Interdepartmental working group
AUKUS	Australia-United Kingdom-United States (trilateral security partnership)	IMF	International Monetary Fund
BRI	<i>Belt and Road Initiative</i>	NAM	Non-Aligned Movement
BRICS	India, China, South Africa, Egypt, Ethiopia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates and Indonesia (situation as at January 2025).	NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
CHF	Swiss franc	NNSC	Neutral Nations Supervisory Commission
CPC	The Communist Party of China	OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
CPTPP	Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership	Quad	Quadrilateral security dialogue
EFTA	European Free Trade Association	R&D	Research and development
EU	European Union	RCEP	Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership
FDFA	Federal Department of Foreign Affairs	SECO	State Secretariat for Economic Affairs
FPS 2024–27	Foreign Policy Strategy 2024–27	SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
FTA	Free trade agreement	TEPA	Free trade agreement between EFTA and India (Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement)
G7	Group of the world's seven most advanced economies (Germany, Canada, US, France, Italy, Japan, UK)	UN	The United Nations
G20	Intergovernmental forum made up of the 19 countries with the most developed economies	USD	United States dollar
		WTO	World Trade Organization
		WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization

Glossary

A regularly updated glossary of foreign policy terminology is available on the FDFA's website. The Strategies [Glossary](#) aims to ensure a common understanding of the terms used.





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