Background information: Switzerland-India relations

September 2026

Switzerland and India have close and dynamic relations. This close relationship is reflected in the numerous agreements and treaties between the two countries, as well as frequent diplomatic visits at the highest levels. Switzerland and India's cooperation covers diverse areas, including diplomacy, economy, trade and investment, education, research and innovation, skill development, vocational education and training, development, climate change and environment, and culture.

Diplomacy

India is an important partner for Switzerland in Asia. This is underscored in Switzerland's Foreign Policy Strategy 2024-2027, which seeks to deepen relations with New Delhi. The relationship between the two countries has been strengthened over the years through regular high-level visits. Swiss President Doris Leuthard paid a State visit to India in August/September 2017. In Autumn 2019, Switzerland hosted the then-President Ram Nath Kovind for a State visit. More recently, in February 2026, Swiss President Guy Parmelin visited India to participate in the AI Impact Summit. In addition to presidential and ministerial visits, the two countries hold yearly diplomatic and thematic consultations and dialogues.

Switzerland and India have signed numerous bilateral agreements spanning several sectors including trade, development cooperation, vocational education and training, visas, migration, air traffic, investments, finance, taxation, disaster risk management, and cooperation in science and technology. The two countries signed the Treaty of Friendship on 14 August 1948. This was one of the first such treaties signed by independent India and an important milestone in Switzerland-India relations. Many agreements have followed since. Most recently, a Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) was signed between the EFTA States and India in March 2024; the agreement entered into force on 1 October 2025.

Switzerland has a large network of representations across India that promote its interests and provide services to Indian and Swiss citizens, companies, scientific partners, and cultural actors. In addition to the Swiss Embassy in New Delhi, there are Consulates General of Switzerland in Mumbai and Bengaluru, as well as Honorary Consulates in Kolkata and Chennai. There is also a Swiss Business Hub in Mumbai, an office of Pro Helvetia Swiss Arts Council in New Delhi, and a Swissnex office in Bengaluru. Switzerland Tourism has an office in Mumbai.

Economy

India is a priority country in Switzerland's foreign economic policy. As the fastest growing emerging economy globally, it presents a wide range of business opportunities for Swiss companies.

The Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement between EFTA States and India serves as the cornerstone of the economic relationship between Switzerland and India. In addition to facilitating market access, the TEPA stimulates new investments and promotes the creation of high-quality jobs. It is set to bring significant economic benefits, such as better integrated and more resilient supply chains, new opportunities for businesses and individuals on both sides leading to increased trade and investment flows, job creation, and economic growth.

Currently, there are over 350 Swiss companies present in India, operating in sectors such as machinery, electrical and metal engineering, precision engineering, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, logistics and certification services, aviation, shipping, agriculture, luxury goods, banking and financial services, construction, IT and telecommunications, and the food and beverage industry. According to estimations by the Swiss National Bank, Swiss companies have created around 150,000 direct well-paid jobs in the country. Cumulative investments in India totaled around CHF 10 billion between 2000 and 2025 (rank #12) according to the Indian Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Similarly, the International Monetary Fund ranks Switzerland #7 in terms of foreign investment stocks in India, with CHF 31.15 billion as of 2021.

There are subsidiaries of 155 Indian companies in Switzerland. The majority of these companies are active in technology (32%) and life sciences (21%) sectors. Around 56% of these companies are present in the cantons of Zug, Zurich, Basel, and the Lake Geneva region. According to the IMF, Switzerland is the 8th largest recipient of Indian FDIs stocks, amounting to CHF 3.29 billion.

Bilateral trade has increased steadily over the years. In 2025, Swiss exports of goods to India totaled CHF 2.1 billion, compared to an average of CHF1.7 billion over the previous ten years. Indian goods exports totaled CHF 2.05 billion in 2025, marking a 50% increase since 2014. Between 2015 and 2024, trade in services grew at an average annual rate of 7.7%, reaching CHF 5.0 billion in 2025. That year, Switzerland exported services worth CHF 1.55 billion to India and imported services worth CHF 3.5 billion.

There are several well-established intergovernmental dialogue channels between the two countries. The Joint Economic Commission regularly discusses economic issues of mutual interest in the presence of business representatives. Dialogue on financial matters, intellectual property rights and infrastructure financing is also ongoing. Another area of collaboration is the railway sector. A technical cooperation agreement signed in October 2024 led to the formation of a Joint Working Group, which is tasked with further advancing and deepening bilateral engagement in this field. Implementing and monitoring of the TEPA also involves setting up several committees.

Switzerland and India have implemented Automatic Exchange of Information (AEOI) in tax matters on a reciprocal basis since January 2018, with a first exchange of data taking place in autumn 2019. The Mutual Agreement with India confirms Switzerland's international commitment to implementing the AEOI standard, and that it is moving forward to strengthen its network of AEOI partner states.

The Embassy's economic section and the Swiss Business Hub India, which represents Switzerland Global Enterprise, the official export and investment promotion agency of the Swiss government, ensure an operational presence in India.

Education, research and innovation

Switzerland and India share a long-standing, high-trust partnership in Education, Research and Innovation. The 2003 bilateral Agreement on Scientific and Technological Cooperation provides the formal framework for joint research collaboration and project funding. The agreement is operationalised through a Joint Committee on Science and Technology, co-led by the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation and India's Department of Science and Technology, which meets every two years. A Joint Scientific Board was established in 2026 to meet more frequently, up to three to four times a year, and oversee operational-level cooperation arising from the Joint Committee.

The two countries have taken a significant step forward in strengthening their strategic partnership in science, research, and innovation through the launch of three new joint calls in 2026 under the Indo-Swiss Joint Research Programme (ISJRP). Since the beginning of the bilateral research cooperation, Switzerland has provided approximately CHF 19 million in funding, matched by India, supporting collaborative projects in areas including medical research and technology, biotechnology, renewable energy, climate, and other fields of strategic importance.

In 2026, the Swiss National Science Foundation, together with its Indian partners, launched three Indo-Swiss Joint Research Project calls: One Health, with India's Department of Biotechnology and Indian Council of Medical Research, addressing interconnected challenges relating to human, animal and environmental health; geoscientific research on natural hazards in mountain regions, with India's Ministry of Earth Sciences; and social sciences, with India's Indian Council of Social Science Research.

Since 2017, the Zurich University of Applied Sciences has served as the Swiss Leading House for South Asia. Switzerland is an increasingly important destination for Indian students seeking higher education abroad. The number of Indian students registered in the Swiss public university system increased from 268 in 2005 to 1,488 in 2023. In addition, an estimated 400 Indian students are currently studying management and hospitality-related programmes at specialised institutions.

The Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships (ESKAS) are a flagship instrument of Switzerland's international education and research cooperation, supporting international exchange and research collaboration with more than 180 countries. Through the Federal Commission for Scholarships for Foreign Students, Switzerland offers postgraduate research opportunities, including research fellowships, PhD scholarships, and postdoctoral scholarships, at Swiss higher education institutions. India is a priority country for the programme. Over 370 scholarships have been awarded to Indian researchers since 1961.

Operational presence in India is ensured through Swissnex in India (Bengaluru), which focuses on innovation outreach, startup programmes and academic exchange, and the Science and Technology Office at the Embassy of Switzerland in India (New Delhi), which supports bilateral science and technology relations, Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships and policy coordination.

Climate Change, Disaster Risk Reduction and Environment

Through the International Cooperation section at the Embassy, the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) is implementing projects in the field of climate change, disaster risk reduction, and environment.

SDC's work in India is aligned with Switzerland's Foreign Policy Strategy and International Cooperation Strategy. The recent and ongoing projects focus on energy efficiency, renewable energy, clean air, passive cooling, urban resilience, disaster risk management in the Himalayas, water resource management, and just transition. Switzerland also extends support for capacity building and response in times of humanitarian crises. The projects implemented in India are offering experience and learnings for other countries in South Asia, as well as Africa.

IC leverages Switzerland's strong and recognized expertise to co-develop solutions that are aligned with India's climate goals and international commitments. The IC section works with the national and sub-national government authorities, Swiss and Indian experts, universities and research institutes, private sector, think-tanks, non-government organizations and international organizations, creating opportunities for scientific and economic collaboration between India and Switzerland.

Through its cooperation projects, IC is contributing towards the implementation of the Government of India's climate change and environmental programmes and schemes such as the India Cooling Action Plan, National Mission for Sustaining the Himalayan Ecosystem, National Mission on Sustainable Habitat, Smart Cities Mission, National Solar Mission, National Framework for Energy Efficiency in Buildings, State Action Plans on Climate Change, and National Clean Air Programme among others.

Culture

The cultural exchange between Switzerland and India is vibrant and multifaceted, spanning a rich spectrum of artistic disciplines. Numerous Swiss artists, architects, and researchers have been active in the Indian subcontinent. Switzerland's engagement with architecture has long been a hallmark of its cultural presence abroad, with India standing as one of its most meaningful partners.

A pivotal figure in this shared architectural narrative is Swiss architect Le Corbusier, who designed the city of Chandigarh, and in doing so, deepened the cultural and intellectual ties between Switzerland and India. Painter, sculptor, art historian Alice Boner has contributed to the research of Indian architectural and sculptural legacy as well as to reviving Kathakali. Carl Gustav Jung and Hermann Hesse were deeply inspired by Indian philosophy and their journeys in India.

Film producers such as late Yash Chopra brought Switzerland and India closer through popular Hindi movies filmed in the Swiss Alps. Similarly, the Locarno International Film Festival has served a breaking ground for Indian film makers like Satyajit Ray who spread out their wings in the world from here on. During the 2024 edition of the festival, Indian film actor Shah Rukh Khan was honored with the *Pardo alla Carriera* (Career Achievement Award).

Since the opening of the liaison office of Pro Helvetia New Delhi, the Swiss Arts Council in 2007, cultural relations between the two countries have further intensified. Pro Helvetia focuses on contemporary literature, visual arts, dance, and design.