



## Background information: Swiss-Indian relations

September 2025

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**Switzerland and India have close and dynamic relations based on peace and friendship. 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 broad-based, multi-sectoral 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, as well as culture.**

### Diplomacy

India is an important partner for Switzerland in Asia. This is underscored in Switzerland's Foreign Policy Strategy 2024-2027 that seeks to deepen relations with India. The relationship between the two countries has been reinforced over the years with regular high-level visits. In addition to presidential and ministerial visits, the two countries hold yearly diplomatic and thematic consultations and dialogues. Swiss President Mrs. 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. Switzerland and India conduct regularly foreign office consultations -.

Switzerland and India have signed numerous bilateral agreements encompassing several sectors including trade, development cooperation, vocational education and training, visas, migration, air traffic, investments, finance, taxation, disaster management, and cooperation in science and technology. The two countries signed the Treaty of Friendship on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1948. This was one of the first such treaties signed by independent India and an important milestone in Swiss-Indian relations. Many agreements have followed, and recently, a Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) was signed between the EFTA States and India in March 2024.

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 Bangalore, as well as Honorary Consulates in Kolkata and Chennai. There is also a Swiss Business Hub in Mumbai, a Liaison 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 (TEPA) between EFTA and India—which enters into force on October 1, 2025—serves as the cornerstone of the economic relationship between Switzerland and India for the foreseeable future. In addition to facilitating market access, TEPA sets specific targets for investment and job creation by EFTA countries over the next 15 years. The implementation of TEPA will deepen bilateral ties and foster close coordination on key investment-related issues such as the business climate, regulatory frameworks, and intellectual property rights.

Switzerland and India have enjoyed strong and growing bilateral ties over the last two decades. Currently, over 330 Swiss companies are present in various sectors in India, including machinery, electrical and metal, precision engineering, chemicals and pharmaceuticals, logistics and certification services, aviation, shipping, agriculture, luxury goods, banking and financial services, construction, IT and telecommunications, as well as the food and beverage sector. According to the estimations of the Swiss National Bank, Swiss companies have created around 150,000 direct well-paid jobs in the country. Cumulative investments to India amounted to around CHF 10 billion between 2000 and 2025 (rank #12) according to the Indian Ministry of Commerce and Industry. Similarly, with CHF 31.15 billion as of 2021, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) ranks Switzerland 7# in terms of foreign investments stocks in India.

Similarly, India's footprint in the world is growing, including in Switzerland, which has subsidiaries of around 155 Indian companies. These companies are mainly active in the areas of technology (32%) and life sciences (21%). Around 56% of these companies were present in cantons Zug, Zurich, Basel, and Lake Geneva region. According to the IMF, Switzerland is the 8<sup>th</sup> largest recipient of Indian FDI stocks, amounting to CHF 3.29 billion.

In line with the stronger bilateral ties, trade between India and Switzerland has been growing steadily over the last years, especially for Indian exports to Switzerland. In 2024, Swiss goods exports to India amounted to CHF 2.03 billion, compared to CHF 1.7 billion average over the last ten years. Conversely, Indian goods exports in 2024 totaled CHF 2.09 billion, reflecting a 50% increase since 2014. In terms of trade in services, between 2015 and 2024, bilateral trade has grown at an average annual rate of 7.7%, reaching CHF 4.5 billion in 2024. In that year, Switzerland exported CHF 1.27 billion in services to India and imported CHF 3.24 billion. The main exports to India include [licenses](#) (CHF 265.1 million), [transport services](#) (CHF 247.9 million), ICT (CHF 209.5 million), and tourism (CHF 177.9 million). The main imports from India are ICT (CHF 1.26 billion), consultancy (CHF 547.4 million), professional services (CHF 315.7 million), and transport (CHF 315.5 million).

Several well-established intergovernmental dialogues exist between the two countries. The Joint Economic Commission meets regularly to discuss economic issues of mutual interest in presence of business representatives. In addition, dialogues on financial matters, intellectual property rights, and infrastructure financing are also open and ongoing. Another ongoing area of Indo-Swiss collaboration is the railway sector, which holds strong potential. A technical cooperation agreement signed in October 2024 led to the establishment of a *Joint Working Group* to further advance and deepen bilateral engagement in this field. A similar agreement is expected to be signed for general transport shortly. TEPA implementation and monitoring also adds 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.

## **Trade and investment**

The Swiss Business Hub India (SBHI) represents Switzerland Global Enterprise, the official export and investment promotion agency of the Swiss government which is mandated by the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs. Set up in 2001, the SBHI is located at the Consulate General of Switzerland in Mumbai, at the Embassy of Switzerland in New Delhi and the Consulate General of Switzerland in Bengaluru.

The SBHI supports annually more than 40 Swiss companies with concrete market entry projects and many more with initial market entry information and guidance. With an experienced team of in-house consultants and its network of specialized experts, the SBHI provides services such as overview of industry sectors, business partner search, market entry information and virtual interactions with relevant stakeholders. The SBHI regularly identifies business opportunities in India and carries out physical as well as virtual activities to present these to Swiss companies. With the signing of TEPA, the SBHI is committed to further support Swiss businesses in understanding and leveraging opportunities from the free trade agreement to expand their presence in the Indian market.

Further, the SBHI promotes Switzerland as a competitive business location and facilitates investments of Indian companies by providing free advisory services to potential Indian investors. The SBHI collaborates closely with cantonal and regional economic development agencies in assessing projects and connecting prospective investors with relevant stakeholders and experts in Switzerland. To attract Indian investors, the SBHI organizes focused events and meetings.

Link: [www.s-ge.com](http://www.s-ge.com)

## **Education, research and innovation**

Switzerland and India signed an agreement for scientific and technological cooperation in 2003. Both sides have invested about CHF 19 million each in this cooperation so far to support projects on translational medical research, medical technology, blue sky research in biotechnology, renewable energy research, systems medicine, climate change as well as in the social sciences. The Joint Committee meeting on Science and Technology, led by Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) and Indian Department of Science and Technology meets every two years. Further joint funding calls are expected in the areas of climate change, in the social sciences, and 'One Health', which will address research challenges in the interdependent areas of human, animal and environmental health.

Since 2017, the Zurich University of Applied Sciences is the Leading House among Swiss universities for the South Asia area. Mandated by the Swiss State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI), it promotes and fosters scientific cooperation with key institutions in India.

The Indo-Swiss Innovation Platform was launched in October 2023 to give the Indo-Swiss collaboration a more strategic and systemic dimension, moving beyond ad hoc-only collaborations. The Platform aims to contribute towards achieving the United Nations

Sustainable Development Goals and will prioritise activities in the areas of health, sustainability and digital transformation.

Switzerland is becoming an important destination for Indian students seeking higher education abroad. The number of Indian students registered in the Swiss public university system has grown from 268 in 2005 to 1,488 in 2023. Additionally, it is estimated that there are currently about 400 Indian students studying management and courses related to the hospitality industry in dedicated schools. India is a priority country for the Swiss Government Excellence Scholarships. Approximately 176 scholarships have been awarded to applicants from India to pursue post graduate research in Switzerland between 2015-2025.

Swissnex in India, established in 2010, is part of the Swiss global network connecting Switzerland with the world in education, research, and innovation. Its presence in India, with health, digital transformation and sustainability, highlights the importance that Switzerland places in its cooperation with India in these sectors.

## **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 in India. The aim is to support India's transition to low-carbon and climate resilient development pathway that supports sustainable growth.

The International Cooperation section's work in India is aligned with Switzerland's Foreign Policy Strategy and International Cooperation Strategy. Thematically, the recent and on-going 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.

Leveraging Switzerland's strong and recognized expertise to co-develop solutions that are aligned with India's climate goals and international commitments, the International Cooperation 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, opening up opportunities for scientific and economic collaboration between India and Switzerland that can be replicated in other parts of South Asia and the world.

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

Links: <https://climalayas.in/>, | <https://lc3.ch/>, | <http://www.beepindia.org/> | <http://capacitiesindia.org/>, <https://solar.iwmi.org/>

## Culture

Switzerland and India have a long history of cultural ties. Numerous Swiss artists, architects, and researchers have been active in the Indian subcontinent. Le Corbusier (architect) designed the city of Chandigarh and Alice Boner (painter, sculptor, art historian) 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.

In recent years famous Swiss architects like Mario Botta and Herzog & De Meuron have designed buildings for well-known Indian institutions. Celebrated architect Peter Zumthor came to India in 2024 to find many young Indian architecture students to be very knowledgeable about his work. Celebrated performers like Masha Dimitri, Gilles Jobin have left their footprints in India by mentoring young Indian artists. On the Indian side, film producers such as late Mr. 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.

The Embassy continues to engage itself broadly in the field of architecture, design, film promotion, languages and literature, contemporary arts and artistic exchanges, art in education, as well as innovation in traditional art initiatives. The engagement in arts follows primarily a dual approach; looking for worthwhile engagements and platforming of Swiss artists, the Embassy is equally keen to find dynamic and knowledgeable local partners, who have all the necessary context-knowledge. Under the current biannual initiative "Sustainability with a Plus" the network of representations in India is exploring the dimension of sustainability also in the cultural scene.

Since the opening of the liaison office of Pro Helvetia – Swiss Arts Council, in New Delhi in 2007, cultural relations between the two countries have further intensified. Pro Helvetia focuses its efforts on contemporary literature, visual arts, dance and design. Moreover, an ever-increasing number of Indian and Swiss artists had the opportunity to profit from the residency programs in Switzerland as well as in India offered by Pro Helvetia.

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