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EXPANSION GUIDE

A Strategic Guide for Swiss Companies





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We provide strategic guidance and hands-on support across compliance, people, and operations, helping Swiss businesses navigate the India market, strengthen their local presence, and turn challenges into long-term growth.

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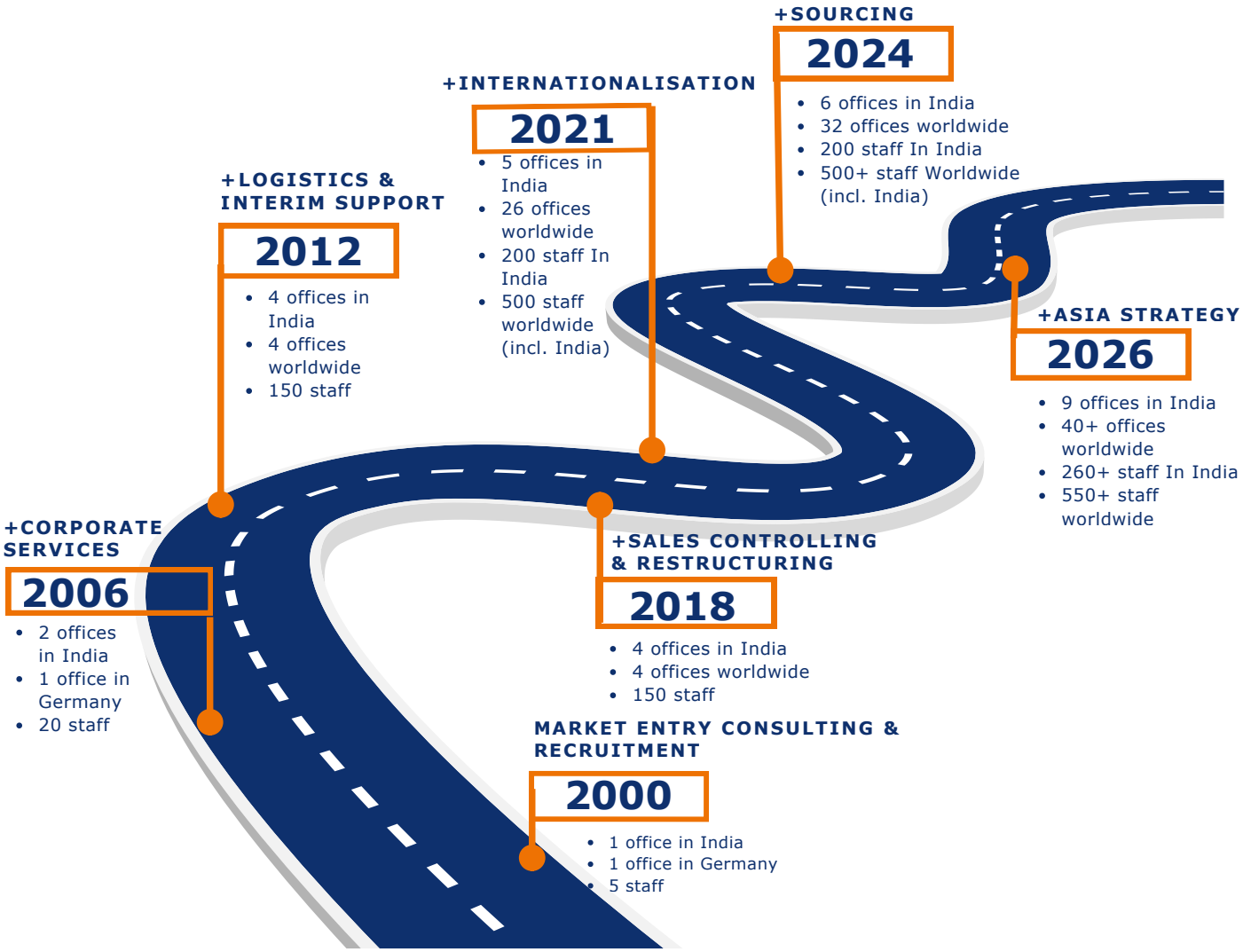
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- **MARKET GROWTH**
- **ORGANIC GROWTH**
- **ACCELERATED GROWTH**

HELPING SWISS FIRMS SUCCEED IN INDIA

Maier+Vidorno is an Altios International Group subsidiary dedicated to entering and growing in the complex Indian market, with over 260+ employees supporting clients from 9 offices across 8 branches.



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EXPERT NOTE



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Supporting Swiss Companies in India: From Presence to Performance

India is no longer simply a market-entry destination for Swiss companies. It is increasingly a strategic platform for long-term growth, manufacturing, sourcing, engineering, innovation, and global value creation. The key challenge is not only establishing a presence, but scaling operations while maintaining alignment between headquarters and local teams.

This is particularly important for Swiss SMEs and specialised mid-sized companies, whose strengths in technical expertise, precision, quality, and specialised capabilities must be matched with local knowledge of customer expectations, regulations, labour practices, pricing, and supplier ecosystems. As operations expand, companies must balance Swiss standards of reliability, ethics, and safety with the flexibility required to respond to Indian market realities.

Successful growth requires clear governance, strong local leadership, and regular communication between India and Switzerland. Headquarters need visibility, reliable reporting, and confidence in decision-making, while local teams require sufficient autonomy to respond effectively to customers, suppliers, regulators, and changing market conditions.

With over 35 years of international expansion experience, more than 750 professionals across the G30 network, and over 260 professionals in India, **Maier+Vidorno (Part of Altios Group)** supports Swiss companies throughout their India journey. Our services range from market prioritisation, business development, executive mentoring, and sourcing optimisation to executive search, HR and payroll management, accounting, tax, legal compliance, and supply-chain structuring. We also support acquisitions, post-merger integration, project management for manufacturing set-ups, and institutional facilitation.

A structured operating model lets companies focus on growth while effectively managing compliance, taxation, HR, supply chains, and local operations. Beyond serving the Indian market, local teams can contribute to global manufacturing, engineering, application support, analytics, and R&D, creating value across the wider group.

By combining proximity to Swiss decision-makers with execution capabilities in India, Maier+Vidorno helps companies strengthen accountability, reduce operational risk, and build resilient India operations. The objective is to establish an organisation that meets local requirements, maintains Swiss standards, and evolves with the company's long-term global ambitions. **We have supported over 40 Swiss companies in India and, through our ecosystem**, are connected with more than 430 Swiss companies operating here. This guide draws on our experience and information from various official sources.

BILATERAL INSIGHTS

A Deepening Economic Partnership

India and Switzerland have built a long-standing economic partnership spanning trade, investment, technology and institutional cooperation. The Treaty of Friendship signed in 1948 established the foundation for bilateral relations, which have since expanded to taxation, investment, social security, science and technology, transport and intellectual property. Today, India is Switzerland's fourth-largest trading partner in Asia and its largest in South Asia. Regular government and private-sector engagement through the Joint Economic Commission and sectoral dialogues has further strengthened cooperation, including in intellectual property, mobility and infrastructure.

The relationship has entered a new phase with the **India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA). Signed on 10 March 2024 after 21 rounds of negotiations and effective from 1 October 2025, TEPA connects India with Switzerland, Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein through a framework covering goods, services, investment, intellectual property, trade facilitation and sustainable development**. It also sets a collective EFTA objective to mobilise CHF 82 bn in investment in India over 15 years and support one million direct jobs.

TEPA strengthens the commercial case for Swiss companies. India provides improved market access for **94.7% of Switzerland's existing exports, excluding gold, with potential annual tariff savings of around CHF 167 million once transition periods are completed. Machinery, pharmaceuticals, precision and optical instruments, watches and processed agricultural products are among the key beneficiaries**. However, concessions are product-specific and phased over several years, making tariff schedules, product classification and rules of origin important considerations for exporters. **Beyond exports, EFTA's market access covers 99.6% of India's exports, reinforcing the case for Swiss companies to use India as a sourcing and manufacturing base for wider markets.**

From Market Access to Local Value Creation

Switzerland's corporate footprint increasingly reflects long-term localisation rather than simple market entry. The latest 2026 mapping identifies approximately **430+ Swiss companies** operating in India, associated with **210.000+ jobs**. Around 90% entered after India's 1991 economic liberalisation, **while 117 companies (30%) have manufacturing operation**s and **60 (14%) operate R&D centres**. More than half of Indian subsidiaries, approximately 63%, both manufacture and export from India, highlighting India's growing role in Swiss companies' global supply chains.

The footprint is concentrated in established industrial and commercial hubs: approximately **83% of companies are located across Maharashtra, Karnataka, Haryana, Delhi and Tamil Nadu, with Mumbai-Pune and Delhi-NCR** together accounting for around two-thirds of the presence. Recent expansions by companies including **Zurich Airline, Nestle, Roche, ABB, Feintool, Lonza, UBS and SoHHytec demonstrate the breadth of Swiss investment across healthcare, manufacturing, engineering, financial services and clean technology.**

Swiss companies are increasingly combining manufacturing, engineering, testing, installation, maintenance and customer support within India, creating deeper local capabilities and supplier networks.

Innovation is becoming an equally important pillar. **Approximately 60 Swiss-company R&D centres have been identified in India, spanning pharmaceuticals, food science, industrial engineering and digital healthcare.** Companies such as ABB, Novartis, Nestlé, Schindler, Bühler and Roche use Indian teams for product localisation, clinical development, engineering, data science and digital solutions. This reflects a broader shift from cost-based support towards knowledge-based value creation, with Indian engineering and scientific talent increasingly integrated into global innovation networks.

Looking Ahead

The Switzerland-India relationship is therefore evolving beyond traditional trade towards investment, manufacturing, innovation, technology and resilient supply chains. TEPA provides a stronger framework for this next phase, while Switzerland's established corporate presence gives companies a platform from which to capture its benefits.

For Swiss businesses, the opportunity increasingly lies not simply in exporting to India, but in building a long-term local presence, developing Indian capabilities, accessing specialised talent, strengthening supply chains and integrating India into global operations and innovation networks. As India continues to expand as a manufacturing and technology hub, the bilateral partnership is well positioned to become an increasingly important pillar of Swiss economic engagement in Asia.

Switzerland-India: Trade, Investment & Market Access at a Glance

CHF 82 bn

Investment ambition under TEPA

EFTA's collective investment objective for India over 15 years.

430+

Swiss Companies established corporate presence

Operating in India, associated with approximately 210.192 jobs

94.7%

Swiss Exports Eligible for Improved Market Access

Potential annual tariff savings of CHF 167 million under TEPA.

Sources: SECO, FOCBS, prov as of 2026

PRACTICAL BUSINESS INSIGHTS

From Agreement to Business Impact

The India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) creates a framework, but its commercial value is realised one product, one shipment and one contract at a time. For Swiss companies, the benefit depends not only on the tariff concession itself, but on whether the company can meet the classification, origin, customs and regulatory requirements needed to claim it.

TEPA should therefore be treated as an operating discipline, with product classification, origin evidence and customs documentation built into pricing, procurement and logistics from the outset.

1. Start with the tariff line, not the headline

TEPA concessions are product-specific. India has offered commitments in 105 service sub-sectors, while Switzerland's offer covers 128 sub-sectors. For goods, some duties are reduced immediately while others decline in stages over several years. Sensitive sectors, including dairy, soya, coal and selected agricultural products, remain excluded or protected, while certain products in sectors such as pharmaceuticals and medical devices are subject to safeguards.

Swiss companies should therefore:

- Classify each product under the correct Indian tariff code (HSN) and confirm the applicable concession schedule.
- Build phased tariff reductions into pricing and procurement plans rather than assuming an immediate reduction.
- Review the Indian classification with the importer, particularly where the Swiss and Indian classifications could differ.

2. Rules of origin: Swiss branding is not enough

Preferential duties apply only to goods that satisfy TEPA's product-specific rules of origin. Swiss ownership, a Swiss brand or a Swiss shipping address does not by itself qualify a product for preferential treatment.

Companies must establish where the product was manufactured, how much non-originating material it contains and whether the required processing took place in an EFTA state or India. TEPA also provides for bilateral cumulation, which can benefit companies combining Swiss and Indian inputs.

The applicable proof-of-origin mechanism should be confirmed for each product and shipment. Depending on the circumstances, this may involve an approved-exporter declaration, Certificate of Origin or EUR.1 movement certificate. Supporting records should be maintained in accordance with the applicable requirements.

3. The Indian importer carries the burden of proof

On the Indian side, the importer claims the preferential treatment at the time of import and must support the claim with the required documentation. Under India's customs origin rules (CAROTAR), the importer must retain supporting records and be able to substantiate the preferential claim if Customs requests verification.

This makes the exporter-importer relationship important. Where the importer is a distributor, the Swiss exporter depends on the distributor's documentation discipline. Where the importer is the company's own Indian subsidiary, origin records, product classification and customs filings should be aligned between the Swiss and Indian teams before the first shipment.

4. Services and professional mobility

TEPA improves access for digitally delivered services, commercially established businesses and temporarily travelling professionals. It also provides a framework for mutual recognition agreements in professions such as nursing, chartered accountancy and architecture.

These provisions are not automatic rights. Visa, licensing and professional-qualification requirements continue to apply under domestic rules.

5. Intellectual property and regulatory approvals

TEPA reinforces intellectual-property protection broadly in line with WTO/TRIPS standards while retaining India's public-health safeguards, including those relating to generic medicines and patent evergreening.

Swiss companies should nevertheless protect their intellectual property locally through the appropriate registration and enforcement mechanisms.

Similarly, tariff concessions do not replace Indian regulatory requirements. Depending on the sector, products may still require BIS certification, CDSCO approval, FSSAI compliance, testing, labelling or other sector-specific clearances. These requirements should therefore be assessed separately from the tariff benefit.

6. What TEPA means for different companies

TEPA's collective EFTA objective to mobilise ~82bn CHF in investment in India over 15 years and support one million direct jobs strengthens the case for productive investment alongside traditional export models.

The implications differ depending on a company's position:

- **Swiss companies already in India:** Review the cost of importing from Switzerland, assess whether additional components can be sourced locally and evaluate opportunities to expand manufacturing.

- **New entrants:** Lower tariffs may strengthen the case for direct exports initially, with a subsidiary, joint venture or local production becoming appropriate as volumes and market requirements develop.

- **Companies producing or sourcing in India:** Improved access to EFTA markets can strengthen India's role as a regional or global supply base, provided the relevant origin requirements are met.

- **Indian suppliers to Swiss customers:** Suppliers will need to meet expectations around quality, traceability, intellectual-property protection, sustainability and origin documentation.

TEPA does not replace a dedicated investment-protection agreement. Companies making significant capital commitments should therefore assess their investment structure, contractual protections and dispute-resolution arrangements separately.

Before the first preferential shipment: a checklist

- **Confirm the correct Indian tariff code** and applicable concession schedule.

- **Assess origin** at product level and retain the necessary supplier and production records.

- **Establish the applicable proof-of-origin process**, including approved-exporter or EUR.1 arrangements where relevant.

- **Brief the Indian importer** on the preference claim and applicable record-keeping requirements.

- **Confirm regulatory approvals** separately from tariff benefits.

- **Update contracts** and pricing to reflect phased tariff reductions.

How we support Swiss companies

Maier+Vidorno (Part of Altios Group) can support Swiss companies with:

- Product classification and tariff-benefit analysis.

- Origin assessment and documentation set-up.

- Customs and import-compliance support.

- Regulatory and licensing roadmaps.

- Review of supply, distribution and subsidiary structures to capture TEPA benefits.



"Swiss companies often assume the tariff benefit follows the brand. In practice, it follows the paperwork. The ones that gain most from TEPA are those that classify products correctly, prove origin properly, and align their Swiss and Indian teams before the first shipment."

Marius Heickmann, International Business Advisor - Altios Switzerland

BEYOND MARKET ENTRY



Establishing an India operation is only the first step. The next challenge is building an operating model that can adapt to local market conditions while remaining aligned with the Swiss headquarters.

Swiss companies have been investing in India for decades. According to Indian government data, India received 8.94 billion CHF in FDI from Switzerland between April 2000 and June 2025. Swiss presence is concentrated in machinery, electrical and metal industries (MEM), pharmaceuticals, finance, construction, sustainable technologies and cleantech, and ICT services. MEM accounts for about **71% of Swiss company entries since 2010 and 69% of Swiss employment in India.** Yet many subsidiaries still run as extensions of Zurich, Basel or Winterthur rather than as agile Indian businesses.

In practice, you cannot simply transplant headquarters processes. India-specific strategies need to account for local regulations, labour realities, price sensitivity, and customer expectations, while remaining aligned with Swiss standards on quality, precision, ethics, ESG, and safety. Corporate objectives therefore need to be translated into targets that are stretching but realistic in an Indian context, while headquarters need to understand the timelines, constraints, and opportunities that may not be visible from Europe.

This is especially true for Switzerland's distinctive industrial base, which combines large multinationals with a dense layer of specialised mid-sized, often family-owned companies and global niche leaders. That structure brings real advantages in India: a reputation for reliability, a long-term view, and a willingness to invest in technical quality and relationships. **But smaller organisations also have fewer internal resources for India-specific compliance, HR, customs, and market intelligence, making the right local partner even more critical.** This is particularly relevant under TEPA, where preferential duties depend on origin and documentation discipline that a lean team can easily underestimate.

CASE STUDY

Challenge

Regent Lighting, a Swiss lighting company, needed to establish its operations in India while navigating company formation, SEZ/DTA registrations in Noida, accounting, taxation, audit and secretarial compliance. It also needed appropriate financial reporting, debtor and creditor oversight, HR and payroll processes.



Solution

Maier+Vidorno (Part of Altios Group) supported the company's establishment and initial SEZ/DTA registrations and provided ongoing accounting and finance management. The support also covered MIS reporting, taxation, company secretarial and audit services, as well as HR and payroll administration.

Delivered Results

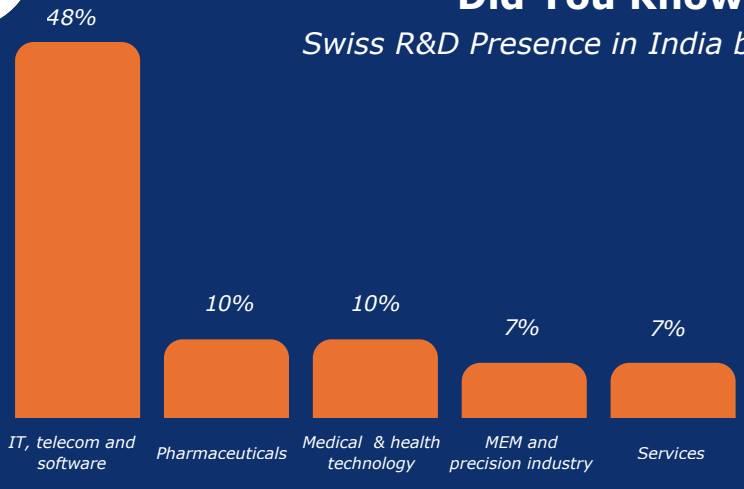
Regent Lighting established its India operations with the necessary corporate registrations and an integrated support structure covering finance, compliance, reporting, HR and payroll.

At the same time, the mandate in India is changing. Foreign groups across sectors are increasingly looking beyond sales and sourcing toward **Global Capability Centres (GCCs)** for engineering, design, analytics, and digital transformation. Switzerland already has an innovation bridge to India through Swissnex India in Bangalore and the Indo-Swiss Joint Research Programme. For Swiss companies known for precision engineering, life sciences, medical technology, and advanced manufacturing, these centres offer a natural extension: a way to turn an India entity from a cost-driven subsidiary into a creator of global value and innovation.

With the right strategy and governance, an India entity can contribute through manufacturing, engineering, design, analytics, and other global capabilities. At Maier+Vidorno (part of Altios Group), we support Swiss companies in building this operating model by combining local execution with coordination between India and headquarters.

Did You Know?

Swiss R&D Presence in India by Sector



5 key sectors account for approximately 82% of Swiss-company R&D centres in India, highlighting the country's role in innovation and specialised engineering.

SECTOR WISE OPPORTUNITIES

As of 2026, approximately 430 Swiss companies operate in India through subsidiaries, joint ventures and branches, according to the Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs. Their activities extend well beyond sales and distribution to include manufacturing, engineering, research and development (R&D), pharmaceutical development, digital services, sourcing and global business operations.

Swiss companies contribute to India's industrial development across a diverse range of sectors. Precision engineering supports automotive, aerospace and medical-device manufacturing, while laboratory and analytical technologies serve pharmaceuticals, chemicals, food safety and environmental testing. **Digital, energy and connectivity solutions enable modernisation across financial services, telecommunications, transport and industrial infrastructure.**

This established presence provides a foundation for further growth under the Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA). While preferential tariffs can improve the competitiveness of eligible Swiss exports, the broader opportunity lies in expanding local production, strengthening Indian supplier networks, developing technical capabilities and integrating Indian operations into global value chains.

The following sectoral overview highlights representative Swiss companies with an Indian presence and the opportunities available to them under TEPA. It is illustrative rather than exhaustive.

Sector	Swiss companies with an Indian presence	Nature and location of Indian operations	Opportunity under TEPA
MEM and precision engineering	ABB, Bühler, Schindler, Sulzer, Burckhardt Compression, Oerlikon, Endress+Hauser, GF	Manufacturing, engineering, R&D, application centres and after-sales services across Bengaluru, Pune, Mumbai, Aurangabad, Chennai and other industrial locations	Import specialised components at lower tariffs; expand local manufacturing, automation, semiconductor equipment, precision instruments and exports from India
Pharmaceuticals and healthcare	Novartis, Roche, Sandoz and Lonza	Novartis operates a major Development Hub in Hyderabad; Roche has digital and data centres in Pune and Hyderabad; Lonza announced a Hyderabad GCC in 2026	Clinical development, pharmaceutical R&D, data science, regulatory services, global capability centres and partnerships with Indian drug manufacturers

Sector	Swiss companies with an Indian presence	Nature and location of Indian operations	Opportunity under TEPA
MedTech and diagnostics	Roche Diagnostics, Straumann, Tecan, Hamilton Medical and Sonova	Sales, technical services, diagnostics, dental solutions, laboratory technology and hearing-care operations. Tecan established direct operations in Gurugram in 2026	Local assembly, laboratory automation, diagnostics, dental implants, hospital equipment, calibration and after-sales networks
Chemicals and specialty materials	Clariant, Sika, Givaudan and dsm-firmenich	Manufacturing, application development and customer-support facilities serving construction, automotive, personal care, food and industrial markets	Specialty chemicals, sustainable coatings, construction materials, flavours, fragrances, electronic chemicals and locally sourced bio-based inputs
Banking, insurance and professional services	UBS, Swiss Re, Zurich Insurance, Julius Baer, Partners Group and Kuehne+Nagel	Banking, wealth management, reinsurance, investment management, logistics and global business services. UBS consolidated approximately ~24.000 employees in India and announced plans to add up to ~3.000 positions in Hyderabad	Financial technology, risk analytics, AI, logistics, supply-chain management, advisory services and India-based global capability centres

Where Swiss Companies Can Capture the Greatest Value

3 key opportunities emerge under TEPA:

Localisation: Expand Indian manufacturing and supplier networks.

Knowledge and innovation: Leverage India's talent for R&D, digital services and global operations.

Market access: Use preferential tariffs to strengthen eligible exports.

Combining these opportunities can position India as a strategic hub for Swiss companies' domestic and global growth.

FINANCIAL COMPLIANCE ESSENTIALS

Swiss companies entering India often underestimate how different the compliance environment can be from operating within Switzerland. An Indian subsidiary is subject to the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), Reserve Bank of India (RBI) requirements, Goods and Services Tax (GST), direct tax including transfer pricing, and a labour and employment framework involving both central and state-level requirements.

The main difference is structural, though it will feel partly familiar. Switzerland combines a federal framework with significant cantonal variation, particularly in income taxation. India also combines central legislation with state-level requirements, but the variation reaches further: **indirect tax registrations, payroll levies, labour compliance, and incentives can all differ by state.** A Swiss finance team accustomed to managing most obligations through one federal and one cantonal return will need to pay particular attention to tax registrations, indirect taxes, payroll compliance, cross-border transactions, and ongoing reporting.

SWITZERLAND–INDIA COMPLIANCE & REGULATORY COMPARISON

COMPLIANCE AREA	IN SWITZERLAND	IN INDIA
CORPORATE TAX	Combined federal, cantonal and communal rates generally range from 12% to 21%, depending on location.	Eligible domestic companies may opt for the 22% concessional regime, plus surcharge and cess. Foreign companies generally face 35%, plus applicable charges.
INDIRECT TAX	VAT: 8.1% standard, 2.6% reduced and 3.8% accommodation. Registration generally applies above CHF 100,000 in annual taxable turnover.	GST is administered jointly by the Centre and States, with 5%, 18% and 40% rates, alongside nil-rated and concessional categories. State-wise registrations may be required.
CROSS-BORDER CAPITAL MOVEMENT	Generally permits cross-border payments and capital flows with limited foreign exchange formalities.	FEMA and RBI rules govern cross-border investments, remittances and repatriation, with reporting or approval requirements where applicable.
TRANSFER PRICING	Related-party transactions follow the arm's-length principle, broadly aligned with OECD standards.	Arm's-length pricing and documentation rules apply, with additional customs valuation scrutiny possible for related-party imports.

COMPLIANCE AREA	IN SWITZERLAND	IN INDIA
PAYROLL AND SOCIAL SECURITY	Social insurance covers pensions, disability, unemployment and accident insurance, alongside occupational pensions.	Compliance includes provident fund, employee insurance, gratuity and applicable state professional tax, alongside central and state labour laws.
REGULATORY STRUCTURE	Federal system, with cantons exercising significant tax and administrative powers.	Multi-tier system combining central requirements with state-level variations in taxation, labour laws, registrations and incentives.
DIVIDENDS AND TREATY RELIEF	The India-Switzerland tax treaty and Swiss relief rules help prevent double taxation on foreign dividends.	Dividends paid to Swiss parents may attract Indian withholding tax, subject to applicable treaty relief.

The practical implication is that financial compliance in India cannot simply be copied from the Swiss headquarters model. The underlying principles remain the same: **accurate books, timely filings, effective tax management, cash control, and reliable reporting**. But the processes and regulatory requirements are different. Companies need to consider where they operate, which registrations apply, how transactions move between India and Switzerland, and how central and state-level requirements interact.

A foreign-owned entity that treats compliance as a back-office function can face tax liabilities, interest, penalties, and documentation issues that could have been avoided through earlier planning. For a Swiss parent company, these issues can also affect reporting, cash management, and confidence in the India operation.

GOOD FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT IN INDIA RESTS ON THREE QUALITIES:

- **Transparency.** Headquarters should have a clear, real-time view of financial performance, risks, tax exposures, and cash position.
- **Predictability.** Swiss leadership should be able to plan capital allocation, working capital, and profit repatriation with a clear understanding of compliance requirements.
- **Operational efficiency.** Local teams should be able to focus on business operations while compliance processes are managed systematically.

Compliance should therefore be established as an ongoing operating discipline rather than addressed only at incorporation. Swiss companies entering India need appropriate registrations, reporting processes, tax controls, payroll systems, transfer pricing documentation, and cross-border transaction procedures from the outset.

WHERE SWISS SUBSIDIARIES MOST OFTEN RUN INTO TROUBLE

- **Transfer pricing.** Related-party transactions between a Swiss parent and its India entity require appropriate documentation and support. Related-party imports may also face separate customs valuation requirements.
- **Goods and Services Tax classification and registration.** Incorrect classification, registration gaps, or errors in tax treatment can create additional liabilities and compliance exposure.
- **Cross-border transactions.** FEMA and RBI requirements govern funding, remittances, investments, and profit repatriation between India and Switzerland.
- **Origin and customs documentation.** Under TEPA, preferential duty depends on origin proof and correct tariff classification, so errors here can cost money (see Practical Business Insights).
- **State-level and labour compliance.** Companies operating across multiple Indian states may face different registration, payroll, professional tax, labour, and incentive requirements, and wage, provident fund, employee insurance and gratuity obligations need to be managed according to the applicable workforce and location.

HOW WE SUPPORT SWISS COMPANIES IN INDIA:

- **Bookkeeping and group reporting** aligned with Indian statutory requirements and Swiss GAAP FER, IFRS or Swiss Code of Obligations consolidation requirements.
- **Goods and Services Tax (GST)** advisory covering registration, implementation, classification, and ongoing filing support.
- **Virtual Chief Financial Officer (CFO) services** where a senior local finance hire is not yet justified.
- **Budgeting, forecasting, and cash flow** planning based on Indian market conditions.
- **Direct and indirect tax advisory** with compliance support, including treaty and repatriation planning.
- **Support on cross-border transactions, foreign exchange requirements, and transfer pricing** documentation between India and Switzerland.
- **State-level compliance coordination** for companies operating across multiple Indian locations.

Effective financial compliance provides the foundation for reliable reporting, controlled risk, and sustainable growth in India.



"Swiss companies often approach India with a headquarters compliance mindset. The key is recognising early that India requires a different operating model, one that combines central regulations with state-level requirements and integrates tax, finance, payroll and regulatory compliance from day one."

Praveen Singhal, Managing Director, Maier+Vidorno (Part of Altios Group), India

SUPPLY CHAIN STRATEGY

India offers Swiss companies significant cost and manufacturing advantages, but realising those benefits requires more than identifying suppliers. Logistics networks, customs procedures and regulatory requirements can differ considerably from those in Switzerland and the wider European market. For companies whose reputation depends on precision and reliability, adapting supply chain operations to local conditions is essential.

Once suppliers have been identified and qualified (**see India Sourcing Strategy**), the focus shifts to ensuring that goods, documentation and compliance move smoothly from production to delivery. **Whether a Swiss company is importing industrial components, machinery or specialised equipment, effective supply chain management requires coordination across logistics, quality control, customs and local partners.**

What a well-managed supply chain requires

- **Logistics and import processes.** Selecting the right Incoterms, planning realistic lead times and choosing appropriate warehousing arrangements are essential to controlling costs and avoiding delays. Companies should also account for inland transportation and last-mile delivery, particularly when goods need to reach industrial facilities or remote project sites.

- **Ongoing quality control.** Supplier approval is only the starting point. Maintaining consistent quality requires defined specifications, inspections, regular audits and clear procedures for resolving production or delivery issues. This is particularly important for Swiss manufacturers operating in precision-sensitive industries.

- **Vendor and delivery management.** Suppliers need to be monitored against agreed production schedules, delivery commitments and performance standards. Building effective local relationships helps companies identify potential disruptions early while maintaining their expectations for traceability, ethics and compliance.

- **Customs, trade and product compliance.** Importing into India involves applicable customs valuation, documentation, tax and product regulations. Companies must also meet the requirements of their destination markets when goods are exported onwards. These obligations should be incorporated into operational planning rather than addressed only when a shipment is ready to move.

- **Making use of preferential trade arrangements.** The Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) between India and Switzerland can improve the competitiveness of qualifying goods. However, preferential treatment depends on the relevant product classification, applicable rules of origin and supporting documentation. Companies should retain appropriate origin evidence for each preferential shipment (see Practical Business Insights).

Understanding provisional duty bonds and the Special Valuation Branch

For Swiss subsidiaries importing goods from their parent company or affiliated entities, Indian Customs pays particular attention to whether the relationship has influenced the declared import price. In cases that need closer examination, the file is referred to the Special Valuation Branch (SVB), which investigates related-party pricing against India's customs valuation rules.

For Swiss subsidiaries importing goods from their parent company or affiliated entities, Indian Customs examines whether the relationship between the parties has influenced the declared import price. Cases requiring further examination may be referred to the Special Valuation Branch (SVB), which investigates related-party transactions under India's customs valuation rules.

While the investigation is ongoing, imports may be cleared through provisional assessment supported by a provisional duty bond. This allows shipments to continue while the declared value is reviewed.

Under the procedure revised in 2016, the additional duty deposit that previously accompanied provisional assessment was discontinued. The SVB's findings are communicated to customs ports through an investigation report, which supports the finalisation of provisional assessments.

Once the valuation is established, assessments are finalised on that basis unless circumstances of sale or the terms of the agreement with the related seller change. Importers are expected to declare relevant changes. Obtaining the investigation report can nevertheless take considerable time, leaving assessments provisional in the meantime.

Swiss companies should therefore:

- Monitor provisional duty bond validity and limits, renewing them when necessary.
- Maintain consistent documentation across ports of import.
- Align transfer pricing policies with declared customs values, recognising that the two are examined separately.
- Report relevant changes to related-party pricing or contractual terms promptly.

TEPA may reduce duties on qualifying goods, but it does not remove customs valuation scrutiny. Related-party imports must still be supported by defensible declared values and appropriate documentation.

From operational complexity to competitive advantage

An India supply chain should not be treated merely as a logistics cost centre. With appropriate planning, documentation and local coordination, it can help Swiss companies diversify suppliers, improve delivery reliability and reduce dependence on individual geographies.



"Swiss companies often come to us first for the basics: getting a supplier vetted, understanding a duty structure, setting up a warehouse. What we find is that once the operation is running, the same companies come back needing full import, export, and logistics support as their volumes grow. Building that relationship early makes the transition much smoother than trying to bolt on logistics infrastructure after the fact."

CASE STUDY

Challenge

A Swiss railway electrification company faced high import and logistics costs, customs bottlenecks and delays in Special Valuation Branch registration. The project involved oversized steel materials requiring specialised handling, alongside reliable logistics and security arrangements for deliveries to remote sites.

Solution

Maier+Vidorno (part of Altios Group) recommended an alternative inland customs-clearance location closer to the project sites to reduce costs on subsequent shipments. The team supported customs clearance and SVB registration, supervised the specialised unloading and reloading of oversized cargo, and coordinated logistics, security and local delivery partners.

Delivered results

Shipments were cleared without further delays or penalties, and oversized materials were delivered without damage. Revised routing reduced import and logistics costs, while SVB registration and customs approvals were completed. The support also helped maintain project timelines and establish a more cost-efficient approach for future shipments.

Did You Know?

5 PILLARS OF A RELIABLE INDIA SUPPLY CHAIN

Key operational priorities for Swiss companies importing from India.



WHY EXPORT ALONE FALLS SHORT?

India's industrial shift changes what exporters should be selling

India is increasingly positioning itself as a global manufacturing hub. Industrial modernisation, expanding manufacturing capacity and infrastructure investment are changing what Indian customers expect from international suppliers.

For Swiss companies, this creates opportunities beyond exporting finished products. De**mand increasingly extends to industrial machinery, automation systems, advanced components, engineering expertise and technical know-how**. Customers may also expect installation, training, spare parts and ongoing service close to their facilities rather than a product delivered from Switzerland with limited local support.

The implication is straightforward: winning an initial export order can establish a market foothold, but building a lasting position may require a broader operating model.

Why tariff reductions alone are not enough

The Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) between the EFTA states and India entered into force on 1 October 2025. It can improve the price competitiveness of qualifying Swiss goods, depending on the applicable tariff schedule and rules of origin.

However, lower tariffs do not establish local customer relationships, provide after-sales support or create a reliable service network. Companies that position themselves as long-term industrial partners can differentiate themselves by contributing technical capability and remaining accessible to customers.

This may involve working with local distributors, building service capabilities, developing manufacturing partnerships or establishing a direct presence. The right approach depends on the product, customer expectations, investment capacity and long-term growth ambitions.

Where Swiss Comapnies are Naturally well-placed

India installed 9.120 industrial robots in 2024, ranking sixth globally. Swiss suppliers can support industrial modernisation through advanced machinery, sensors and precision engineering.

Machinery, automation and precision engineering

Pharmaceuticals, life sciences and medical technology



Clean energy and infrastructure

Premium consumer goods, food and lifestyle

Medical-device imports accounted for around 60% of India's domestic consumption, as of March 2026. Opportunities include advanced equipment, technology partnerships and local manufacturing, subject to regulatory & after-sales requirements.

India had approximately 308 GW of installed non-fossil electricity capacity in September 2026, against its 500 GW target for 2030. Opportunities span grid equipment, energy storage, automation and energy efficiency.

India's growing consumer market offers opportunities for Swiss watches, chocolate, premium food and wellness products. Success depends on pricing, distribution, customer experience and applicable tariffs.

From product to presence: choosing the right operating model

Many Swiss companies begin by exporting through one or two distributors. As sales develop, they may need to reassess whether this arrangement provides sufficient control, market visibility and customer access.

The main options include:

- **Importer or distributor model:** A local partner manages sales and distribution, allowing the Swiss company to enter the market without immediately establishing its own operations.
- **Umbrella model:** A local partner provides a platform for selected operational or administrative activities, helping the company explore the market with a more structured local presence.
- **Own subsidiary:** The company establishes its own legal entity and hires a local team, providing greater control over sales, customers and operations.
- **Manufacturing joint venture:** The company partners with an Indian business to combine capabilities, investment and local market knowledge.
- **Contract manufacturing:** Production is entrusted to a third party, potentially supporting local supply or market expansion without requiring the company to build its own manufacturing facility.

Each option involves different levels of investment, control, operational complexity and exposure to risk. The right choice depends on the company's product, target segment, growth ambitions and need for local capabilities.

Building beyond the first export order

Exporting remains a practical way to test demand and establish initial customer relationships. However, as India becomes more important to a company's growth, a distributor arrangement or remote sales model may no longer provide sufficient local visibility and support.

The next step need not always be a subsidiary or manufacturing facility. It should be the operating model that aligns with the company's commercial objectives, investment capacity and desired level of control. For Swiss businesses, the opportunity lies in moving beyond individual transactions towards a market presence that can support sustained growth.



"Exporting can be the first step into India, but it is not always the best way to serve the market in the long run. As demand grows and customer expectations evolve, companies may need a local presence to respond faster, build stronger relationships and compete more effectively."

PRE-SHIPMENT PLANNING

WINNING THE ORDER IS ONLY HALF THE JOB

For Swiss exporters selling into India, securing an order is not the same as securing payment. Delayed receivables can create working-capital pressure even when the buyer is an established business. For smaller Swiss manufacturers, the impact can be significant: production costs, raw materials, freight and documentation may all need to be financed before the customer pays.

This is particularly relevant for customised machinery, industrial components and technical equipment, where production commitments are substantial, and the exporter may have limited flexibility to redirect goods once they have been manufactured.

Payment terms should therefore be considered at the start of the commercial relationship, not after the order has been won.

PAYMENT RISK IN INDIA IS A COMMERCIAL ISSUE

Payment delays are a commercial risk that exporters should assess when entering any new market. Based on their experience with individual customers and transactions, companies may encounter delayed receivables or requests to extend payment terms.

A buyer may request rapid delivery while negotiating extended payment terms. Once the goods have been dispatched, however, the exporter may have less leverage to resolve outstanding issues.

The objective is to agree on a payment structure that reflects the buyer's creditworthiness, the size of the order, the production timeline and the level of risk the exporter is prepared to carry.

ADVANCE PAYMENT SHOULD BE CONSIDERED FOR NEW BUYERS

For a first-time Indian customer, advance payment can help reduce exposure before production begins. Full payment upfront is not always commercially realistic, but milestone-linked terms can balance the interests of both parties.

A possible structure includes:

- An agreed percentage payable when the order is confirmed.
- A further payment when production reaches a specified milestone, where appropriate.
- The remaining balance before shipment or when the goods are ready for dispatch.

The exact arrangement should depend on the product, order value, buyer profile and bargaining position. Advance payment terms are particularly worth considering until the exporter has established confidence in the customer's creditworthiness and payment behaviour.

LETTERS OF CREDIT CAN PROVIDE ADDITIONAL SECURITY

A Letter of Credit (LC) may be appropriate for a large order, a new buyer or a transaction with limited payment history. Under an LC, a bank undertakes to pay the exporter provided the stipulated documentary conditions are met.

However, LCs are not always the simplest solution. Arranging and confirming one can involve bank charges, internal approvals and detailed documentation. Discrepancies in shipping documents can also complicate payment.

Exporters should assess LCs case by case, taking into account the order value, buyer profile, urgency, margins and likelihood of repeat business. Where an LC is used, the documentary requirements should be reviewed carefully before shipment.

CONSIDER EXPORT CREDIT INSURANCE

Swiss exporters can also explore Swiss Export Risk Insurance (SERV), Switzerland's official export credit agency.

SERV offers products including supplier credit insurance, pre-shipment risk insurance and letter-of-credit confirmation insurance. Depending on the product and transaction, cover can help exporters manage eligible payment and production risks, offer customers more flexible payment terms, and improve access to bank financing.

Coverage is subject to the applicable conditions, eligibility requirements and underwriting assessment. Swiss exporters should assess available cover before committing to commercial terms.

CONTRACTS NEED INDIA-SPECIFIC PAYMENT DISCIPLINE

A well-drafted contract should specify how and when payment is due and what happens if the buyer fails to meet its obligations.

Swiss exporters should consider addressing:

- Payment milestones and due dates.
- Conditions for production commencement and shipment release.
- Responsibilities for invoices and supporting documentation.
- Interest or other contractual consequences for delayed payment, where applicable.
- Dispute-resolution mechanisms and governing law.
- Conditions for withholding future deliveries when payments remain overdue.

Payments involving India are subject to applicable foreign-exchange regulation. Exporters should seek appropriate advice on the requirements relevant to their transactions. They should also obtain Indian legal advice on whether their chosen court or arbitral mechanism can be effectively enforced in India.

USE FUTURE ORDERS TO PREVENT RECEIVABLES FROM ACCUMULATING

Payment recovery generally requires consistent follow-up rather than a single reminder after the due date. Exporters should establish a process for monitoring invoices, escalating overdue balances and documenting communications with buyers.

If a customer places a new order while an earlier invoice remains unpaid, the exporter should assess whether the outstanding amount needs to be settled before the next shipment is released, subject to existing contractual commitments and applicable law.

This helps prevent receivables from accumulating and reduces the risk of unintentionally extending more credit than the business can support.

RECOGNISE THE LIMITS OF REMOTE EXPORTING

Direct exports and distributor arrangements can be effective entry routes into India. As business volumes grow, however, companies may need greater local visibility into customer relationships, distributor performance and payment processes.

This can mean strengthening distributor agreements, appointing local sales support, improving credit monitoring or establishing a more direct presence in India. The appropriate response depends on the company's exposure and growth objectives.

How Maier+Vidorno (Part of Altios Group) supports Swiss exporters

We can support exporters with the commercial and operational measures needed to manage risk:

- Assessing Indian buyers and distributors before commercial terms are agreed.
- Structuring milestone-linked payment terms suited to the order and buyer profile.
- Coordinating with banks, SERV and local advisors on letters of credit and credit insurance.
- Reviewing commercial contracts and India-specific payment and dispute-resolution provisions.
- Establishing structured follow-up mechanisms for overdue receivables.
- Advising when a distributor or direct-export model may need stronger local support.



"The risk for Swiss exporters in India is rarely in finding customers. It is in making sure payments are secured, followed up on, and never allowed to accumulate into working capital pressure. Companies that build payment discipline into their India strategy from the beginning are the ones that scale sustainably."

Praveen Singhal, Managing Director, Maier+Vidorno (Part of Altios Group), India

ESTABLISHING MANUFACTURING SET-UP

For Swiss manufacturers considering India, establishing a facility means translating technical requirements, quality expectations and growth plans into a workable local operation. A structured approach connects site selection with execution, keeping decisions aligned with headquarters' expectations on cost, timelines and control.

Phase 1- Site Selection & Site Acquisition

The process begins by defining production capacity, building specifications, machinery, utilities, workforce needs and proximity to suppliers and customers. These requirements guide the choice between a new-build facility, an existing industrial property or a build-to-suit option.

Potential locations are compared across infrastructure, power reliability, water availability, logistics, workforce skills, operating costs and expansion potential. Within preferred locations, individual properties are assessed for technical suitability, commercial terms and adaptations required for production.

Site inspections and joint visits with the company's technical team validate conditions on the ground. Legal, technical and commercial due diligence informs the final selection, followed by negotiations and purchase or lease arrangements that address infrastructure commitments, applicable approvals and future growth.

Phase 2- PMC - Project Management & Company Incorporation

This phase brings together facility development and the organisational setup required to begin operations. Company incorporation can progress alongside site selection and acquisition where needed.

- **Project planning and execution:** Coordinate facility design, engineering, approvals, contractor selection and procurement. Manage construction or adaptation, machinery installation and utility connections against agreed timelines, budgets and quality requirements.
- **Company incorporation and administrative setup:** Support entity structuring, incorporation and relevant registrations, while establishing accounting, HR, payroll and reporting processes.
- **Commissioning and operational readiness:** Coordinate equipment commissioning, operational approvals, recruitment and workforce preparation so that the facility, people and business systems are ready for production.

Maier+Vidorno, part of the ALTIOS Group, supports both phases through location analysis, site search and acquisition support, greenfield and brownfield project management, company incorporation and operational setup.

CASE STUDY

Challenges

- A Swiss advanced composites manufacturer with over 30 years of experience required a brownfield manufacturing facility in India to support its international business across industrial, energy and aeronautical sectors.
- The company needed to compare six potential locations and identify properties that met its technical, infrastructure and operational requirements.
- Site suitability needed to be verified on the ground before progressing towards an investment commitment.



Solutions

- Assessed six client-selected locations against agreed criteria, narrowing the search to two priority locations.
- Evaluated more than 20 potential sites across technical fit, infrastructure, commercial terms and operational suitability.
- Conducted initial inspections followed by joint client visits, producing a focused shortlist of validated site options.
- Supported commercial discussions, providing a basis for detailed due diligence, negotiation and subsequent implementation.

Delivered Results

- Narrowed six locations to two priority locations aligned with the client's requirements.
- Delivered a focused shortlist of site options, validated through two rounds of on-ground assessment.
- Provided a comparative basis for selecting preferred sites and progressing towards detailed due diligence, acquisition and implementation.

INDIA SOURCING STRATEGY

Finding the right suppliers in India

While supply chain strategy focuses on how goods move, sourcing strategy is about finding, evaluating and contracting the right suppliers. **India's manufacturing base, competitive costs and expanding supplier network across automotive, industrial equipment, food and beverage, pharmaceuticals, textiles and engineering make it an attractive sourcing destination for Swiss companies.**

Done well, sourcing from India can reduce costs, diversify supplier bases and provide access to manufacturing capabilities across a range of industries. The benefits, however, depend on selecting suppliers whose capabilities and operating standards match the buyer's requirements.

Why India makes commercial sense for Swiss importers

For Swiss companies, the case for sourcing from India rests on capability, quality, cost and resilience rather than tariff savings alone.

Since 1 January 2024, Switzerland has abolished customs duties on industrial products, regardless of their country of origin. Import VAT, customs declarations and other applicable regulatory requirements still apply.

This makes it particularly important to evaluate Indian suppliers on their actual commercial and operational merits. A low quotation does not necessarily translate into lower total costs if the supplier cannot maintain consistent quality, meet delivery commitments or provide the required documentation.

For companies whose reputation depends on precision, the cost of a quality failure can outweigh the initial price advantage.

Evaluating potential suppliers

India's supplier landscape varies significantly across regions and industry clusters. A structured assessment helps Swiss companies distinguish between suppliers that can meet their requirements consistently and those whose capabilities may not be suited to the intended application.

Technical capability and production capacity. Assess whether the supplier has the equipment, workforce, production processes and capacity needed to meet specifications and expected volumes.

Quality systems and certifications. Review quality-control procedures, relevant certifications, inspection processes and the supplier's ability to maintain consistent product standards.

Commercial reliability. Evaluate quotations alongside production lead times, payment terms, minimum order quantities, tooling costs, export experience and the ability to meet contractual commitments.

Traceability and documentation. Establish whether the supplier can maintain the records, product documentation and traceability required by the buyer and the destination market.

Responsible business practices. Assess labour practices, workplace safety and environmental compliance alongside the technical and commercial requirements of the sourcing arrangement.

The assessment should be proportionate to the supplier, product and risk involved. A supplier that appears attractive on price should not be approved until its ability to meet the required standards has been established.

Responsible sourcing is part of the process

Swiss companies may be subject to due diligence and reporting obligations under Articles 964j–964l of the Swiss Code of Obligations concerning conflict minerals and child labour. The applicable requirements depend on factors such as the materials involved, import or processing volumes and the company's circumstances. Exemptions apply to certain SMEs and low-risk activities.

Companies should assess which obligations apply to their operations and sourcing arrangements. Supplier assessments can complement these legal requirements by examining labour practices, workplace safety and environmental compliance.

Responsible sourcing is not separate from commercial risk management. Identifying issues before entering a long-term agreement can help companies make better-informed supplier decisions and protect their reputation.

Sources: SECO, FOCBS,Swiss Federal Council – Due Diligence and Transparency Ordinance (DDTrO).

What a structured sourcing process looks like



SEARCH AND SHORTLIST
Identify suppliers with relevant industry experience, technical capabilities and production capacity. Industry clusters can provide a starting point for finding potential partners, but location alone should not determine supplier selection.

EVALUATE CAPABILITIES
Review manufacturing processes, quality systems, certifications, management, export track record and compliance practices. Establish whether the supplier can meet the specifications and standards required by the Swiss buyer.

REQUEST AND COMPARE QUOTATIONS
Compare quotations against consistent specifications. Assess pricing alongside production lead times, payment terms, minimum order quantities, tooling costs and other relevant commercial conditions.

TEST AND VALIDATE
Review samples, conduct appropriate quality checks and verify that the product meets the required specifications before committing to larger orders. Where necessary, use a pilot order to validate the supplier's ability to deliver consistently.

CONTRACT AND APPROVE
Finalise supply agreements covering product specifications, pricing, payment terms, delivery obligations, quality requirements, intellectual property protection, licences and applicable approvals. Responsibilities should be clearly allocated before production begins.

Once the supplier has been approved, ongoing delivery coordination, shipment monitoring and operational quality management become part of the wider supply chain process (see Supply Chain Strategy).

Building a sourcing relationship that lasts

Successful sourcing is not simply about negotiating the lowest price. It requires a clear understanding of supplier capabilities, realistic commercial expectations and agreements that define quality, responsibilities and performance. For Swiss companies, India can provide both cost advantages and greater supplier diversification. The key is to establish a structured selection process that identifies the right partners before commercial commitments are made.

WHAT MAKES MAIER+VIDORNO (PART OF ALTIOS GROUP) SOURCING FROM INDIA SO SPECIAL?





"Swiss companies evaluating India as a sourcing base need to look beyond competitive pricing. Success depends on selecting capable suppliers, validating quality and building reliable delivery processes, supported by a clear understanding of local tax, customs and regulatory requirements."

Jatin Gupta, Vice President - Strategic Consulting & Projects, Maier+Vidorno (Part of Altios Group), India

MAKING TEPA WORK

From Agreement to Business Impact

Market Access Offer	Description of Market Access Offer
R0 to 2.5% End duty	Duty reduction to 2.5% end duty as of entry into force
R0 to 50% (Eif+5)	Duty reduction to 50% of original duty as of 5 years after entry into force
R5 to 2.5% End duty	Progressive duty reduction to 2.5% end duty over 5 years
R5 to 5% End duty	Progressive duty reduction to 5% end duty over 5 years
R5 to 50%	Progressive duty reduction to 50% of original duty over 5 years
R10 to 50%	Progressive duty reduction to 50% of original duty over 10 years
R5 to 50% (Eif+5)	Progressive duty reduction to 50% of original duty over 5 years, starting 5 years after entry into force
R10 to 50% (Eif+5)	Progressive duty reduction to 50% of original duty over 10 years, starting 5 years after entry into force
Wine	Tariff reduction as set out in Attachment 1 to Appendix 2.C.3
Reduction by 1% from Bound Rate	Duty reduction by 1% from the existing bound rate of India
Exclusion	No market access commitment



Practical Business Impact

For Swiss companies already in India, TEPA offers an opportunity to review import costs, expand local manufacturing and source more components from Indian suppliers.

For new entrants, lower tariffs may strengthen the case for exporting to India, while the investment framework can support subsidiaries, joint ventures, technology partnerships and local production.

For companies manufacturing or sourcing in India, improved access to EFTA markets can make India a stronger regional and global supply-chain base.

Indian suppliers, in turn, will need to meet Swiss expectations around quality, traceability, intellectual-property protection, sustainability and origin documentation.

Overall, TEPA moves the relationship beyond conventional exports and imports. It creates a framework for deeper manufacturing, investment, technology and supply-chain partnerships- although its real impact will depend on how effectively companies use its provisions.

Example: Tariff Line 9031.4900 (Sensors) — *Under the E7 market access offer, the base duty of 8.25% will be progressively reduced over seven years, reaching 0% by 1 January 2031.*

E7 Tariff Reduction Schedule

Year	Base Rate	% of Marke	01.10. 2025	01.01. 2026	01.01. 2027	01.01. 2028	01.01. 2029	01.01. 2030	01.01. 2031
Year 1	8.25%	1.18%	**7.07%**	–	–	–	–	–	–
Year 2	8.25%	1.18%	–	**5.89%**	–	–	–	–	–
Year 3	8.25%	1.18%	–	–	**4.72%**	–	–	–	–
Year 4	8.25%	1.18%	–	–	–	**3.54%**	–	–	–
Year 5	8.25%	1.18%	–	–	–	–	**2.36%**	–	–
Year 6	8.25%	1.18%	–	–	–	–	–	**1.18%**	–
Year 7	8.25%	1.18%	–	–	–	–	–	–	**0%**

TEPA's implementation started on October 1st 2025, which was launched in September 2025 during the first EFTA Prosperity Summit.

TEPA: PRIORITIES FOR GROWTH

TEPA provides a stronger framework for Swiss companies to grow in India. Translating that framework into commercial results, however, requires a clear market strategy and effective execution on the ground. At Maier+Vidorno, part of the ALTIOS Group, we see this as an opportunity for Swiss businesses to review their India operations and growth plans from pricing and sourcing to local production, investment and supply-chain development.

- **Build for the long term:** With around 430 Swiss companies supporting approximately 210.000 jobs, Swiss businesses already have a substantial presence in India. The next step is to build on this foundation through investments that strengthen local capabilities and support long-term growth.

- **Translate TEPA into business decisions:** Companies should assess how product-specific tariff reductions and implementation timelines affect their pricing, sourcing and margins. Rules of origin, documentation, Indian certifications and regulatory requirements need to be incorporated into commercial planning from the outset.

- **Strengthen local execution:** Reliable suppliers, suitable technology partners and a capable local team are essential to building a competitive business in India. Local production should be assessed against demand, costs and operational requirements, with consistent standards for quality, traceability and responsible sourcing.

- **Connect innovation with market needs:** Collaboration with Indian businesses, universities and research institutions can help Swiss companies adapt their expertise to local requirements. Swissnex and the Indo-Swiss Innovation Platform can support connections in areas such as healthcare, sustainability and digital transformation.

- **Develop the workforce alongside the business:** Growth plans need to be supported by the right technical and managerial capabilities. Apprenticeships, vocational education and partnerships with Indian institutions can help companies develop skilled teams and create opportunities for young professionals.

- **Maintain a structured dialogue on business conditions:** Regulatory predictability, transparent procedures and timely resolution of operational concerns remain important for investment decisions. Engagement with the Embassy, Swiss Business Hub India and the India–EFTA Desk can help companies communicate practical challenges and access relevant support.

- **Evaluate locations against operational needs:** Companies should assess emerging industrial locations alongside established clusters, considering infrastructure, talent availability, supplier networks and logistics. Resource efficiency and environmental responsibility should form part of investment and operational planning.

- **Track outcomes over time:** Investment, employment, non-gold trade and companies' operating experiences will provide useful indicators of progress. TEPA's benefits will develop progressively, making regular review essential to identify what is working and where further support is needed.

HR, TALENT & SKILLS STRATEGY



For Swiss companies entering or expanding in India, people strategy is central to subsidiary success.

Access to the right talent, effective recruitment and retention, appropriate HR policies, and strong links between education and industry all influence how quickly a business can establish and scale its Indian operations.

India offers a large and increasingly skilled workforce, but companies can face challenges in finding people with the right combination of technical expertise, practical experience and sector-specific capabilities. Switzerland's experience in vocational education and industry-linked training offers useful lessons, while Swiss companies already operating in India are contributing directly to the development of these capabilities.

Building an Industry-Ready Talent Pipeline

Switzerland's contribution to India extends beyond investment and technology. Swiss institutions and companies have supported the development of technicians, engineers, researchers and other professionals needed to operate an increasingly advanced economy.

A defining feature of the Swiss model is the close integration of **technical education, practical training and industry involvement**. Rather than relying solely on academic qualifications, the model emphasises applied skills, workplace learning and practical assessment. In India, these principles have been adapted across vocational education, technical training, rural skills development and industry-oriented programmes.

The **Swiss Vocational Education and Training Initiative India**, launched in 2008, was among the early efforts to adapt Switzerland's dual-training approach to Indian conditions. Its pilot combined classroom instruction with supervised practical learning on the factory floor. By 2015, approximately 4.000 people had participated, demonstrating that competency-based learning, practical assessment and employer involvement could be adapted to the Indian context.

Extending Skills Development Beyond Industry

Swiss-supported skills development has also expanded beyond traditional industrial occupations. The Indo-Swiss Centre of Excellence in Pune, involving the Syngenta Foundation India, Swiss companies Burckhardt Compression and Sulzer, and the Malhotra Weikfield Foundation, combines vocational learning with agricultural entrepreneurship and practical training.

In 2025-26, the Centre trained 1.277 rural youth in agri-entrepreneurship and supported 266 I-RISE participants. The initiative illustrates how Swiss expertise and local partnerships can be applied to agricultural skills, employability and livelihood development, not only manufacturing.

Swiss companies are also creating training infrastructure directly within their operations. Schindler operates certified training centres in Mumbai, Pune, Noida and Bengaluru, providing practical instruction in elevator installation, maintenance, safety and modernisation. Bühler's Bengaluru campus combines manufacturing facilities with an Application and Training Centre and the International Rice Milling Academy, training plant operators, engineers and managers in milling, food processing, automation and product quality.

These examples demonstrate the value of connecting training with actual technologies, processes and occupational requirements rather than treating education and employment as separate systems.

Skills for India's Next Phase of Growth

As India expands its manufacturing, technology, healthcare and R&D capabilities, demand is shifting towards more specialised and multidisciplinary skills. Priority areas include:

- Automation, robotics and industrial software
- Precision machining and advanced assembly
- Electronics, sensors and industrial IoT
- Quality management and regulatory compliance
- Equipment installation, maintenance and troubleshooting
- Data science, artificial intelligence and cybersecurity
- Pharmaceutical, medtech and laboratory skills
- Energy efficiency and sustainable manufacturing
- Product development and applied research

The demand will increasingly be for professionals who can work across disciplines- for example, combining mechanical engineering with software, manufacturing with data analytics, or scientific research with commercial product development.

This is particularly relevant in the context of the India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA). The agreement's ambition of attracting USD 100 billion in EFTA investment and facilitating one million direct jobs over 15 years makes workforce readiness an important factor in India's ability to absorb and sustain new investment.

For Swiss companies, this means that talent strategy should begin before recruitment. Partnerships with universities, Industrial Training Institutes, vocational institutions and industry bodies can help companies build the specialised talent pipelines they will require as their Indian operations expand.

From Talent Development to HR Strategy

Developing an available talent pool is only one part of the challenge. Once established in India, Swiss subsidiaries must also attract, retain, motivate and manage Indian employees effectively.

Applying Swiss salary benchmarks or simply transferring the parent company's HR policies to India is rarely sufficient. HR strategies need to reflect Indian labour-market conditions while remaining consistent with the expectations and governance standards of the Swiss parent company.

HR AREA	IN SWITZERLAND	IN INDIA
LABOUR LAW FRAMEWORK	Employment contract law sits in the Code of Obligations, with the Labour Act covering working time and health protection. Many sectors add collective labour agreements (GAV/CLA).	India's Labour Codes consolidate central laws on wages, industrial relations, social security & workplace safety. Compliance requires meeting both central and state-level requirements.
WORKING HOURS	Maximum 45 hours weekly for office, industrial and technical staff; 50 for others. Typical contractual hours are 41-42 weekly.	Up to 8 hours daily and 48 weekly; overtime is paid at twice the regular rate.
SEVERANCE / END-OF-SERVICE	Generally, no statutory severance, except in limited cases or where contracts or collective agreements provide otherwise.	Gratuity generally follows five years' service; fixed-term employees qualify proportionately after one year, subject to applicable rules.
SOCIAL SECURITY	Includes federal pensions, disability, unemployment and loss-of-earnings insurance, plus mandatory occupational pensions and accident insurance, with shared contributions.	Includes EPF, ESI, gratuity and other statutory contributions, depending on the establishment and employee category.
TERMINATION / RETRENCHMENT	Notice periods are one month in year one, two months in years two–nine, and three months thereafter; abusive dismissal protections apply.	Covered workers generally receive one month's notice or pay in lieu. Final settlement is due within two working days, with additional rules for larger establishments.
REGULATORY STRUCTURE	Federal framework administered by cantonal labour inspectorates, supplemented by sector-specific collective agreements.	Multi-tier framework combining central Labour Codes with final rules and state-level requirements.

For Swiss subsidiaries, this translates into practical considerations around employment contracts, working hours, payroll, social security, workplace safety, and workforce expansion across different states. Some obligations are stricter than Swiss managers expect.

COMMON PEOPLE CHALLENGES INCLUDE:

- **High attrition**, particularly in sales, plant level positions, and mid management.
- **Compensation expectations** that differ from headquarters benchmarks, including how pay is structured and communicated.
- **Global performance management frameworks** that do not always reflect Indian working practices.
- **Communication gaps** between Swiss leadership and Indian teams around decision-making and feedback, Management styles that favour flat structures and consensus can meet teams who expect clearer direction from the top.

The solution is not to choose between a Swiss or Indian approach, but to build an integrated people strategy: retain the governance, values and standards expected by the Swiss parent while adapting recruitment, rewards, management and development practices to the Indian market.

Building the Swiss-Indian Talent Ecosystem

The strongest approach connects the entire talent lifecycle - from skills development and vocational training to recruitment, career development and leadership.

Swiss companies can contribute by partnering with educational institutions, developing apprenticeship and training programmes, investing in technical capabilities and creating opportunities for employees to learn directly from experienced professionals. At the same time, subsidiaries need locally effective HR systems that can attract and retain the people developed through this ecosystem.

For Swiss groups, therefore, HR in India should be treated not simply as an administrative function but as a strategic capability supporting growth, localisation and long-term integration with the wider group.

How we support Swiss companies in India:

- Executive search and leadership recruitment.
- Compensation benchmarking based on Indian market conditions.
- HR policy design aligned with applicable Labour Codes.
- Payroll and statutory compliance across central and state requirements.
- Locally effective performance management systems.
- Change management and cultural integration between Swiss leadership and Indian teams.

For a Swiss group, HR in India should be treated as a strategic business function that supports the subsidiary's growth, performance, and long-term integration with the wider group.



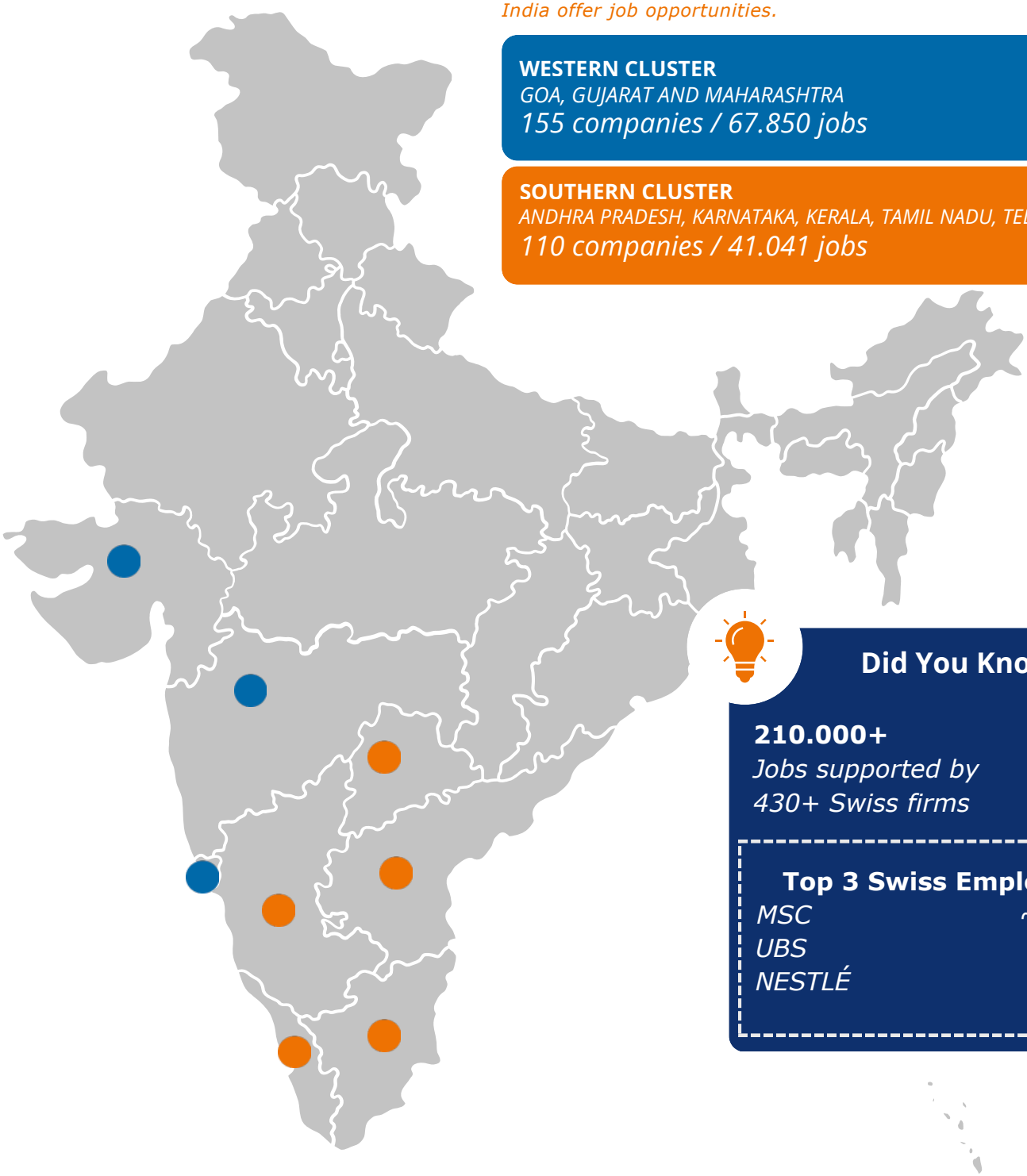
"We don't just place candidates and move on. We stay close to the leaders we recruit for our clients, often for years afterward. That's what has taught us what actually works when a Swiss company is trying to build a team in India, not in theory, but in practice."

Samriti Parashar, Vice President, Maier+Vidorno (Part of Altios Group), India

Top 2 clusters in India where Swiss companies having presence in India offer job opportunities.

WESTERN CLUSTER
GOA, GUJARAT AND MAHARASHTRA
155 companies / 67.850 jobs

SOUTHERN CLUSTER
ANDHRA PRADESH, KARNATAKA, KERALA, TAMIL NADU, TELANGANA
110 companies / 41.041 jobs



Did You Know?

210.000+
Jobs supported by 430+ Swiss firms

Top 3 Swiss Employers

MSC	*~22.000*
UBS	*20.000*
NESTLÉ	*19.157*

IT & ERP INTEGRATION

A well-integrated Information Technology (IT) and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) environment gives headquarters timely and reliable visibility into the India operation. Many India operations struggle with inconsistent data, disconnected systems, and reporting delays. Aligning Systems, Applications and Products in Data Processing (SAP) or another ERP system with local operations creates a consistent flow of information across sales, delivery, inventory, and finance.

At Maier+Vidorno (part of Altios Group), we build this integration around your actual supply chain, not around a generic template bolted onto whatever system you already run in Switzerland. That means sales, delivery, and finance stay consistent with each other rather than living in three separate spreadsheets that someone has to reconcile manually every month's end. **Our dedicated Import, Export, and Logistics team manages the supply chain side of this in a fully compliant and transparent way, while the system integration itself gives you the visibility and control to actually see what's happening on the ground, not just what a monthly report tells you happened weeks ago.**

How we help:

- Integrate ERP and SAP systems with your local India operations, rather than running them as disconnected parallel systems.
- Maintain clean and consistent product, inventory, and stock master data, so headquarters and the India team are always looking at the same numbers.
- Standardise and manage customer and vendor master records to eliminate the duplication and inconsistency that tends to creep in as an operation grows.
- Automate performance reporting and analytics, so periodic reviews are based on current data rather than someone's best reconstruction of last quarter.
- Ensure full traceability and process control at every stage, from the original quotation through the purchase order to final delivery.
- Align local books with group reporting, so Indian statutory accounts and Swiss consolidation (Swiss GAAP FER or IFRS) draw on the same underlying data.

For a Swiss group, effective system integration improves data accuracy, reporting visibility, and operational control across the India operation.



"Good system integration is what lets a Swiss parent company sleep at night. When the data is clean and it flows in real time, headquarters stop needing to ask what's really happening in India because they can already see it."

Ashish Malik, General Manager - IT & ERP, Maier+Vidorno (Part of Altios Group), India

DIAGNOSING BOTTLENECKS

Many Swiss companies in India instinctively blame the market when performance disappoints, when in fact the real issues are usually closer to home. Leaders tend to treat symptoms like slow growth or rising costs as the problem itself, rather than looking for what's actually causing them underneath.

A useful Switzerland-India diagnostic lens comes down to one question: is this a people issue, a process issue, or a practice issue?

A few examples of what each looks like in practice:

- **People issues.** Unclear roles, weak incentives, and friction between Swiss leadership expectations and how Indian teams are used to working.
- **Process issues**. Inefficient workflows, legacy systems that were never designed for the current scale of the business, and bottlenecks that nobody has had time to properly fix.
- **Practice issues.** Gaps in governance, poor communication between headquarters and the subsidiary, and management that reacts to problems rather than anticipating them.

For Swiss subsidiaries, the best starting point is structured, India-specific diagnostics rather than a generic organisational review imported from Switzerland.



We recommend starting with:

- A leadership impact assessment.
- Functional effectiveness reviews across the key parts of the business.
- Market and channel analysis.
- Organizational due diligence.

This structured approach gives you the clarity needed to design solutions that actually last, rather than quick fixes that paper over the same problem until it resurfaces a year later.

For many foreign companies operating in India, talent management isn't really about recruitment at all. It's about retention, genuine engagement, and building leadership capability locally rather than importing it wholesale. Getting that diagnosis right, honestly and specifically, is usually what separates a subsidiary that keeps cycling through the same problems from one that actually fixes them.



"India rarely tells you the whole story when a business underperforms. Slow growth, rising costs or operational inefficiencies are often symptoms rather than root causes. For Swiss companies, we use a simple diagnostic lens: is it a people issue, a process issue, or a practice issue? Finding that answer is the first step toward building a stronger and more sustainable operation."

Klaus Maier, Managing Partner, Maier+Vidorno (Part of Altios Group), India

ORGANISATIONAL CHANGE

India's market has little patience for complacency. A subsidiary that wants to stay competitive has to keep evolving: introducing new products, adapting how it goes to market, staying ahead of changing regulations, and keeping pace with customer expectations that shift faster than most Swiss headquarters anticipate.

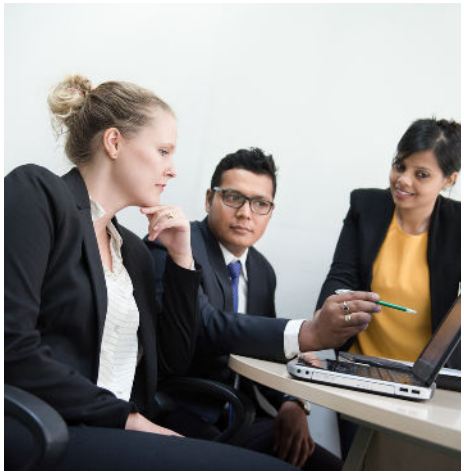
But transformation in India rarely looks like a grand strategic announcement. It looks like careful design, real local adaptation, and consistent execution over months, not a single decisive intervention.

Our experience shows successful subsidiary leaders do three things well:

- Define a strategy that is genuinely relevant to local conditions while staying aligned with the group's global vision.
- Build structures and roles that are transparent and hold people accountable, rather than leaving responsibility diffuse.
- Equip their teams with the tools and confidence to adapt as conditions change, rather than treating every shift as a crisis.

Our services typically focus on:

- Business strategy design tailored to the Indian context.
- Organisational structuring, whether the goal is growth or recovery from underperformance.
- Sales channel and partner management planning.
- Technology and process optimisation.



We work collaboratively with subsidiary heads to design changes that actually stick, respecting the realities of the local culture while still delivering the value shareholders in Switzerland expect to see, and while keeping the standards of quality and reliability that Swiss customers associate with the group.



"Swiss companies operating in India often run into challenges tied to systems, workforce, or market strategy, and frequently a combination of all three at once. Our role is to help identify what's genuinely critical and build a targeted plan that covers finance, legal, compliance, HR, strategy, and operations together, rather than addressing each in isolation."

TURNAROUND STRATEGY

In times of crisis, when operations drift off course despite strong planning and governance, organisations face distinctive challenges. For Swiss companies operating in India, often managing cross-border structures, dual reporting frameworks, and stakeholder expectations between headquarters in Zurich, Basel, or Winterthur and local teams, these situations can become particularly complex.

Our approach combines the following strategic elements to address these challenges effectively:

- Organisational due diligence and health checkups to assess the root cause of issues.
- Performance improvement planning with clear, actionable milestones.
- Interim leadership for critical C-suite roles (CFO, CHRO, CTO, CLO, and others).
- Communication strategies to rebuild trust with employees, stakeholders, and headquarters.

Turnaround management requires a structured response that addresses operational, financial, organisational, and leadership issues simultaneously. For a Swiss parent company, effective local management and clear communication with headquarters are particularly important when a subsidiary is underperforming or facing operational difficulties.

For Switzerland's many specialised mid-sized and family-owned manufacturers, the stakes are often sharper still. With smaller internal teams and closer owner involvement, a crisis in India cannot simply be absorbed by a large corporate function back home. It needs to be resolved directly, quickly, and with someone on the ground who understands both the Swiss shareholder's expectations and the realities of the Indian operation.

Common indicators of organisational underperformance:

- **Financial pressure:** declining profitability, working capital constraints, or capital tied up in underperforming activities.
- **Employee engagement challenges:** declining morale, higher attrition, or difficulties retaining key employees.
- **Operational disruption:** production delays, inefficient processes, or prolonged decision-making.
- **Leadership gaps:** senior management turnover, unclear accountability, or insufficient local leadership capacity.

For Swiss subsidiaries, identifying these issues early allows management to assess their underlying causes and implement corrective measures before they materially affect financial performance, employees, customers, or the wider group.

WHEN THINGS GO OFF TRACK?

COMMON SIGNS OF ORGANISATIONAL CRISIS



CAPITAL AT RISK

€1–5 MILLION LOCKED CAPITAL IN NON-PERFORMING UNITS

CULTURE IN FREEFALL

40–60% DROP IN MORALE OR EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT





PARALYSIS FROM WITHIN

INTERNAL CONFLICT RESULTED IN 2–6 MONTHS OF PRODUCTION STANDSTILL

TURBULENCE REACHES THE TOP

~30% C-LEVEL ATTRITION RISK IN UNSTABLE BUSINESS UNITS



CURIOUS?

HOW WE CAN HELP YOU DRIVE REAL BUSINESS IMPACT?



"When a Swiss subsidiary in India runs into real trouble, the instinct from headquarters is often to send someone from Switzerland to fix it. What actually works is the opposite: local expertise that understands both worlds, moving fast enough to stabilise the situation before it becomes a boardroom crisis in Zurich or Basel."

Manish Dwivedi, Assistant General Manager - HR, Maier+Vidorno(Part of Altios Group), India

LEGAL DUE DILIGENCE

Many Swiss subsidiaries pursue acquisitions or joint ventures in India to establish a manufacturing footprint, acquire local capabilities, or accelerate market access. These opportunities can also involve risks relating to ownership, compliance, contracts, liabilities, employment matters, and licences.

We support secure growth with:

- Legal due diligence covering ownership, regulatory compliance, contracts, and litigation.
- Financial due diligence covering profitability, tax compliance, liabilities, risk, and cash flows.
- Human Resources (HR) due diligence covering statutory obligations, policies, employee relations, and disputes.

Our approach helps identify material risks before a transaction is completed. It also covers licences and registrations relevant to the target business. Depending on the sector, requirements may include **Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO), and other sector-specific approvals.**

For Swiss small and medium-sized enterprises entering India through an acquisition or joint venture, locally led due diligence can provide a clearer understanding of regulatory, operational, financial, and employment-related risks before signing. Findings should feed directly into the deal terms, including warranties, indemnities, price adjustments, and conditions to closing, so that identified risks are priced or protected rather than only noted.

Key areas to examine include:

- Tax and regulatory exposure.
- Employment and statutory compliance.
- Licences and registrations.
- Contracts and contingent liabilities.
- Financial performance and cash flows.
- Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) considerations, including how supply chain and labour practices measure against Swiss and EU expectations.
- Ownership and related-party arrangements.
- Investment structure and dispute resolution, including FEMA requirements for share transfers and investments by non-residents, and whether the agreed forum can be enforced in India (see What Swiss Exporters Must Plan Before Shipping?).

Due diligence in India requires an assessment of both the financial statements and the regulatory and operational environment in which the business actually operates.



"Swiss companies often come to us assuming due diligence in India works the way it does at home. It doesn't. The liabilities that hurt most are rarely on the balance sheet; they're in labour compliance, informal arrangements, and licences that were never quite finalised. That's exactly where local, ground-level access makes the difference."

Dhrub Thakur, Sr. Vice President - Legal & HR, Maier+Vidorno (Part of Altios Group) India

ALTIOS | 35 years

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- FDI Representation & Lead Generation

Speak to us today to see how we can help you





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