

OVERVIEW

ASEAN-SWITZERLAND SECTORAL DIALOGUE RELATIONS

1. Switzerland was conferred the status of Sectoral Dialogue Partner of ASEAN at the 49th ASEAN Foreign Ministers' Meeting (AMM) on 24 July 2016 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. Prior to the conferment of this formal partnership, ASEAN and Switzerland had long forged partnership through a number of cooperative activities.
2. The ASEAN-Switzerland Sectoral Dialogue Relations was institutionalised through the convening of the 1st ASEAN-Switzerland Joint Sectoral Cooperation (AS-JSCC) Meeting on 28 November 2016 at the ASEAN Headquarters/ASEAN Secretariat in Jakarta. To date, nine AS-JSCC Meetings have been held from 2016-2024, to review progress and chart the future direction of the ASEAN-Switzerland Sectoral Dialogue Partnership. The 10th AS-JSCC Meeting is scheduled to take place on 10 November 2025 at the ASEAN Headquarters/ASEAN Secretariat.
3. The ASEAN-Switzerland Sectoral Dialogue Partnerships: Practical Cooperation Areas (PCA) (2022-2026) was adopted *ad-referendum* in July 2022 to serve as a guiding framework for practical cooperation to further substantiate the partnership.
4. Five Trilateral Ministerial Meetings between the Chair of ASEAN, the ASEAN Secretariat and Switzerland have been held at the sidelines of the AMM in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2022, and 2024 to review the ongoing cooperation to advance ASEAN-Switzerland Sectoral Dialogue Partnership and explore further opportunities for collaboration. The 6th Trilateral Meeting between Malaysia, Switzerland and the ASEAN Secretariat is scheduled to take place on 8 July 2025 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

A. Political-Security Cooperation

5. Switzerland accredited its first Ambassador to ASEAN in 2009. The current Ambassador of Switzerland to ASEAN, H.E. Olivier Zehnder, presented his Letter of Credence on 17 April 2023.
6. Switzerland has been supporting the activities and work plans of the ASEAN Intergovernmental Commission on Human Rights (AICHR) and the ASEAN Institute for Peace and Reconciliation (ASEAN-IPR), including through the organisation of workshop, seminar and high-level dialogue.
7. Switzerland also supports ASEAN in the areas of advancing the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) Agenda; cybersecurity; and addressing humanitarian aspects of landmines and explosive remnants of war in the region.

B. Economic Cooperation

8. On economic cooperation, data from ASEAN Statistics shows that Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) flows from Switzerland to ASEAN accounted for US\$ -1.14 billion in 2024, an increase of 54.0% from US\$ -2.47 billion in 2023.¹ In 2024, the total two-way trade between ASEAN and Switzerland reached US\$ 28.33 billion, reflecting a decrease of 0.7% compared to US\$ 28.54 billion in 2023.²

9. In tourism, the number of tourist arrivals from Switzerland to ASEAN increased significantly to 447,805 in 2024 from 379,117 in 2023.³

10. Switzerland partnered with ASEAN in strengthening the ASEAN Social Forestry Network (ASFN) to address interlinked issues of food security, poverty and climate change through the ASEAN-Swiss Partnership on Social Forestry and Climate Change (ASFCC). Switzerland continues to support ASEAN's initiatives in the promotion of responsible investment in food, agriculture and forestry as well as in mainstreaming social forestry practices at scale.

11. Following the initial virtual interface with Head of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research of Switzerland in 2020, the 2nd ASEAN Economic Ministers (AEM) Open-Ended Troika Dialogue with Switzerland Trade Minister, was held virtually on 13 September 2022. This Meeting was preceded by the virtual ASEAN SEOM-Switzerland Dialogue which was held on 11 August 2021.

12. The 3rd AEM Open-Ended Troika Dialogue with Switzerland Trade Minister, held on 19 September 2024 in Vientiane, Lao PDR. During the Meeting, the Ministers welcomed the finalisation and adoption of the Joint Declaration of Cooperation (JDC) between ASEAN and the European Free Trade Association (EFTA). The Meeting underscored the potential of the JDC for collaboration in priority sectors such as trade, services, electronic commerce, intellectual property rights, and sustainable development. The Meeting expressed optimism that the implementation of the JDC would lead to expansion and diversification of trade and investment between ASEAN and EFTA.

C. Socio-Cultural Cooperation

13. In the area of humanitarian assistance and disaster management, Switzerland has been working with the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management (AHA Centre). It committed to

¹ Based on ASEAN FDI Statistics database, preliminary as of 8 June 2025.

² Based on ASEAN Statistics, preliminary IMTS data as of 13 Maret 2025.

³ Based on ASEAN Tourism Statistics database, preliminary data as of 19 March 2025.

contributing to multi-year activities from 2018 to 2020 to support the implementation of the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response (AADMER). The Memorandum of Intent (MOI) between the AHA Centre and Switzerland was signed on 1 August 2019, to support the strengthening of AHA Centre's capacity and role as the operational coordinating centre for humanitarian assistance on disaster management.

14. In 2022, the implementation of the MOI entered phase 2 (2022-2024) to support the implementation of the AHA Centre Work Plan (2021-2025) in enhancing ASEAN capacities in disaster management and response. This Phase included support for activities aimed at strengthening disaster resilience in the region, including the ASEAN's Strategic Policy Dialogue on Disaster Management (SPDDM) and the ASEAN Senior Executive Programme in Disaster Management (SEPDM).

15. ASEAN and Switzerland continue to promote cooperation in technical vocational education and training (TVET) through consultation, broader collaboration as well as capacity building initiatives. This includes the ongoing ASEAN-Swiss TVET Initiative (ASTI) (2022-2026), focusing on CLM countries and supports the implementation of the IAI Work Plan IV (2021-2025).

16. Switzerland also supports ASEAN in the areas of sustainable water resources management and protection and promotion of the rights of migrant workers.

■ ■ ■