

Background Note

Title: Bridging Innovation and Action: Swiss Startup Solutions for India's Sustainability Priorities

(a) Startup Pitches: *Swissnex Sustainability Cohort India 2026*

(b) Panel Discussion: *Water Innovations for Climate-Resilient Urban Futures*

Date: 26th February 2026 (Thursday)

Time: 10:00 Hrs. to 11:30 Hrs

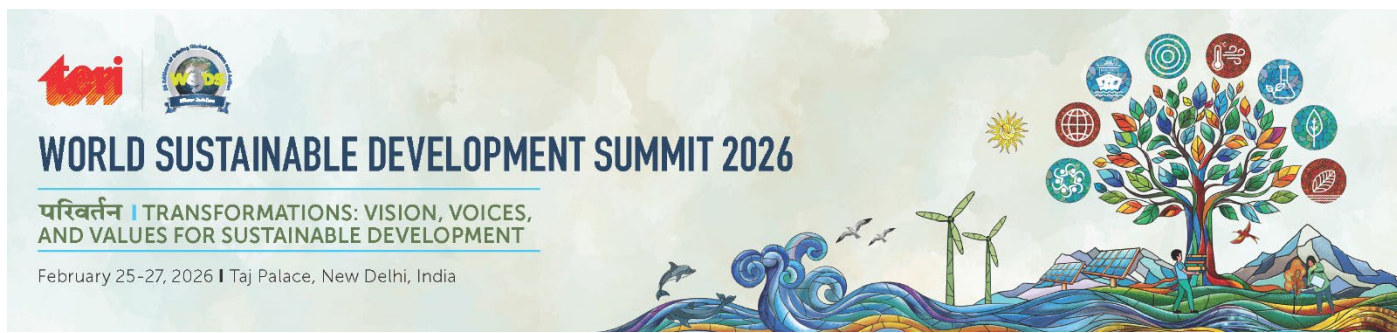
Venue: Jehangir, Taj Palace, New Delhi

India's sustainability transition is unfolding at an unprecedented scale and speed. Rapid urbanization, climate variability, increasing water stress, and rising energy demand are placing complex pressures on urban systems, particularly water supply, wastewater management, and climate resilience infrastructure. Addressing these challenges requires not only strong policy frameworks and public investment, but also the deployment of proven, scalable, and context-appropriate technological solutions. Bridging the gap between ambition and implementation has therefore become a central challenge for sustainable development.

Switzerland and India represent dynamic and highly complementary innovation ecosystems, each contributing distinct strengths to advancing global sustainability. Switzerland brings strengths in frontier technologies, precision engineering, digital solutions, and applied research, while India offers demonstrated global leadership in mission-driven sustainability action, with large-scale programmes on water security, climate resilience, urban transformation, and industrial decarbonisation that integrate policy & technological innovation, institutional capacity and collaborative partnerships.

Jointly convened by Swissnex in India, the innovation arm of the Consulate General of Switzerland, in collaboration with TERI's Water Resources Division, this session positions innovation not as an end in itself, but as an enabler of systemic transformation, grounded in shared values of resilience, inclusivity, environmental stewardship, and long-term impact.

The Startup Pitch segment, drawing from the Swissnex Sustainability Cohort India 2026, will showcase Swiss startups offering deployment-ready solutions across climate resilience, urban



mobility systems, ecosystem restoration, flood-risk assessments, and digital sustainability. Supported by WRI India as Knowledge Partner, the cohort brings added depth in policy insight, systems thinking, and contextual understanding of India's sustainability landscape. The pitches aim to catalyse dialogue with policymakers, utilities, urban authorities, industry leaders, and investors to accelerate pathways from pilots to implementation.

Complementing this, the Panel Discussion on "Water Innovations for Climate-Resilient Urban Futures" will bring together policymakers, researchers, urban practitioners, and industry leaders to examine how emerging technologies and integrated planning approaches can strengthen urban water systems against climate risks such as floods, droughts, heat stress, and water quality degradation while enhancing service delivery and water security. The discussion will focus on enabling frameworks for technology adoption, lessons from pilot projects, financing and scaling pathways, and the role of international collaboration in de-risking and scaling innovations.

Together, these sessions seek to bridge the gap between innovation and action, moving beyond pilots towards scalable solutions that contribute to India's water security and climate goals, while fostering deeper collaborations in sustainable development.

About the World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS)

The World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS) is the annual flagship Track II initiative organized by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI). Instituted in 2001, the Summit series has a legacy of over two decades for making 'sustainable development' a globally shared goal. The only independently convened international Summit on sustainable development and environment, based in the Global South, WSDS strives to provide long-term solutions for the benefit of global communities by assembling the world's most enlightened leaders and thinkers on a single platform. The 25th edition of the annual flagship event of The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI)—the World Sustainable Development Summit (WSDS)—will be held from 25-27 February 2026 in New Delhi. The deliberations of the **Silver Jubilee** edition of the Summit will focus on the umbrella theme of *Parivartan: Transformations: Vision, Voices and Values for Sustainable Development*.