

ACADEMIA-INDUSTRY TRAINING (AIT) BRAZIL 2025 / 2026

The State Secretariat for Education, Research, and Innovation (SERI) has mandated the University of St. Gallen as the Leading House for the Latin American Region to develop scientific relations and bilateral collaboration with partner institutions in Latin America. The Academia-Industry Training (AIT) is an initiative by the Leading House and Swissnex in Brazil. The AIT helps Swiss startup talents innovate and develop their entrepreneurial and business skills. Swissnex in Brazil serves in cooperation with the Department of Foreign Affairs as an annex of the Consulate General of Switzerland in Rio de Janeiro and São Paulo and acts as a global network on behalf of Switzerland to expand education, research, and innovation.

The AIT Brazil, whose goal is to connect Swiss researcher-entrepreneurs with their Brazilian peers, consists of two phases: a training camp in São Paulo and another city in Brazil (i.e., Rio de Janeiro, Florianópolis, etc.,) predominantly organized by Swissnex in Brazil, and a second training camp in Switzerland headed by the Leading House. This is the 11th cycle of the AIT Brazil, running from June 2025 to April 2026. 10 Swiss participants will be chosen, and an Innovation Award will be given to the most promising Swiss startup on the last day of the Switzerland Camp in March 2026.

The AIT aims to transform high-level applied research into market applications. Entry is awarded on a competitive basis to selected projects with entrepreneurial potential. The main objectives of the program are to help participants advance business plans, establish further contacts with the industry, and clarify intellectual property issues. The AIT will provide the opportunity to network at an international level, foster new partnerships and collaborations, and have access to an emerging market. The program is meant for Master or PhD students, PostDocs, and researchers from Swiss universities, Universities of Applied Science, and research institutes as well as centers of technological excellence with research track record working on a non-profit basis. The entire event will be free of charge for the 10 selected Swiss participants, including food, travel, and accommodation expenses in Brazil and Switzerland.

Aims and Objectives

1. Promote innovation
 - Help participants transform their research into a high-potential startup
 - Augment relevant skills to take research from the lab to the marketplace
 - Improve market application by developing participants' ideas with the help of peers, experts, and potential customers
2. Favor the exchange of knowledge and expertise between Switzerland and Brazil
 - Provide connectivity to industry-specific, high-level researchers
 - Assist engagement between researchers and entrepreneurs to understand new market opportunities and exploit new synergies
 - Incentivize transfer of know-how
3. Provide researchers the tools needed for a better understanding industry environment
 - Deliver interactive workshops on entrepreneurship, business plans,, intellectual property, market entry scenarios, funding strategies, and pitching
 - Encourage best business practices and social impact
 - Induce an entrepreneurial spirit and a focus on sustainability
4. Promote networks to foster new partnerships and collaborations
 - Accessibility to a wide, international network of peers, mentors, and industry experts
 - Support young scientists in establishing first partnerships with industry and potential investors
 - Maximize contact with top researchers from key institutions

Eligibility

- Be a Swiss citizen or foreigner with a permanent visa
- Have minimum a Master's degree in any area of scientific knowledge
- Proof of English proficiency
- Provide a Curriculum Vitae
- Be affiliated to a Swiss University, University of Applied Science, or research institute

The eligibility criteria indicated above are mandatory. After the selection of the 10 projects/startups, results will be published on the website: www.aitstartups.org

Evaluation and Selection

An internal panel, composed of startup, business, and industry experts from Switzerland and Brazil, and members from the Leading House for the Latin American Region will evaluate applications to select 10 startups according to the following criteria (equal weight):

1. Quality of overall idea, applied research, technology (product, service)
2. Market potential (competition, scalability, and application possibilities of research project, product, and/or service)
3. Feasibility of business plan (revenue and cost model)
4. Roadmap to success (next milestones)
5. Entrepreneurial personality and team (experience, skills, diversity)
6. Expected impact of the AIT program (motivation for the program)

After the careful evaluation of all applications, the selected candidates are required to pitch their scientific-based project (product and/or service) during the Jury Day. Each candidate will make a 5-minute PowerPoint presentation, followed by a 5-minute question and answer round.

Application

Applications can be done online through our website www.aitstartups.org

Once selected, the 10 participants commit themselves in writing to attending both the Brazil Camp and the Switzerland Camp.

The Leading House for the Latin American Region has the right to modify the terms of this call according to the circumstances related to any decision made by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) and/or Swissnex in Brazil.

Timeframe

Steps	Dates
Launch of Call and application process	May 12, 2025
Deadline for submission of applications	June 04, 2025
Invitations for selected startups for interviews	June 06, 2025
Online Interviews	June 19 & 20, 2025
Final result announcement	June 23, 2025
Online Kick-off Meeting	July 10, 2025
Training week - Brazil Camp	September 08 - 12, 2025
Training week - Switzerland Camp	March 16 – 20, 2026

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