



## International Solar Alliance (ISA)

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**For Prelims:** International Solar Alliance, Key Responsibility, Objective, Vision, Mission etc.

**For Mains:** Significance of the ISA in mitigation of global warming and climate change.

### What is the International Solar Alliance (ISA)?

- **About:**
  - The [International Solar Alliance \(ISA\)](#) is an **action-oriented, member-driven, collaborative platform** for increased deployment of [solar energy technologies](#).
    - Its basic motive is to facilitate **energy access, ensure energy security, and drive energy transition** in its member countries.
  - The ISA was conceived as a joint effort by **India and France** to mobilize efforts against [climate change](#) through deployment of **solar energy solutions**.
- **Vision:**
  - Let us together make the sun brighter.
- **Mission:**
  - Every home, no matter how far away, will have a light at home.
- **Headquarters:**
  - The Headquarters is in India with its Interim Secretariat being set up in **Gurugram**.
- **Member Nations:**
  - A total of 106 countries have signed the ISA Framework Agreement.
  - Out of 106 nations, 86 have signed and ratified the ISA Framework Agreement.
  - All member states of the [United Nations](#) are eligible to join the ISA.
- **Observer Status to International Solar Alliance:**
  - The [United Nations General Assembly \(UNGA\)](#) has granted **Observer Status** to the **International Solar Alliance (ISA)**.
  - It will help provide for regular and **well-defined cooperation** between the **Alliance and the United Nations** that would benefit **global energy growth** and development.
- **Director General of ISA:**
  - **About:**
    - The **International Solar Alliance** is headed by the **Director General**.
    - The **Director General** leads the operations and carries out the functions of the **ISA Secretariat**.
    - He is responsible to the **ISA Assembly**.
  - **Tenure:**
    - The **Director General** has a term of **four years** and is **eligible for re-election**.

### What are the Objectives of ISA?

- The **ISA** seeks to develop and deploy **cost-effective** and **transformational solar energy solutions**.

- To help member countries develop **low-carbon growth** trajectories, with particular focus on delivering impact in countries categorized as **Least Developed Countries (LDCs)** and the **Small Island Developing States (SIDS)**.

## What are the 4-Priority Areas of the Program?

- These priority areas are basically intended to create a favorable environment for solar energy investments to take root in the country.
  - Analytics & Advocacy
  - Capacity Building
  - Programmatic Support
  - Readiness and enabling activities

## What are the Key Responsibilities of Assembly?

- The **Assembly of the ISA** is the **apex decision-making body** which comprises representatives from each Member Nations.
- The assembly deliberates matters of substances such as:
  - The selection of the **Director General**.
  - Achievement of **ISA objectives**.
  - **ISA** functioning.
  - **Approval of operating budget**.
  - Assessment of implementation of the Programmes.
  - Determines the **course of coordinated actions**.

## What are the Key Responsibilities of the Secretariat?

- Assist the **National Focal Points** in preparing the **programmes proposals and recommendations** submitted to the **assembly**.
- Provide guidance and support to members in the implementation of each programme, including for the raising of funds.
- Act **on behalf of the Assembly**, or **on behalf of a group of Members** participating in a particular programme, when so requested by them and in particular establish contacts with relevant stakeholders.
- Set and operate all means of **communication, instruments and cross-cutting activities** required for the functioning of the ISA and its Programmes, as approved by the Assembly.

## What are the Important projects of the ISA?

- **One Sun One World One Grid (OSOWOG):**
  - **About:**
    - The **OSOWOG** focuses on a framework for facilitating **global cooperation, building a global ecosystem** of interconnected **renewable energy resources (mainly solar energy)** that can be seamlessly shared.
    - The vision behind the **OSOWOG** is **'The Sun Never Sets'** and is a constant at some geographical location, globally, at any given point of time.
    - This is by far one of the most ambitious schemes undertaken by any country and is of global significance in terms of sharing economic benefits.
    - It has been taken up under the **technical assistance program** of the **World Bank**.
- **ISA Solar Technology and Application Resource Centre (ISTAR C):**
  - **About:**
    - To build a network of technical training, entrepreneurship, and research and innovation centres in order to exchange best practices and promote knowledge dissemination and capacity-building.
    - To develop and disseminate a range of training materials for all types of audiences and aim at the **setting up of harmonized training programmes** using a network of training facilities that would be recognized across the ISA Member

countries.

- To work on standardization of solar applications at the regional or sub-regional level and provide testing and technical certification capabilities to key STAR-centres.
- To enable **collaborative research and development** among the ISA Member countries.

▪ **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Scheme:**

◦ **About:**

- The Government of India has been supporting the **ISA** by providing training to master trainers in the field of solar energy through the **Indian Technical and Economic Cooperation (ITEC) Scheme**.
- The duration of the training is 21 days and all costs are borne by the **Government of India**.
- In 2018-2019, 133 candidates from 25 countries were trained at the **National Institute of Solar Energy**, Gurugram, with the support of the ITEC programme.

## What are the Important Solar Energy Initiatives of India?

▪ **National Solar Mission :**

- It is part of **the National Action Plan on Climate Change**
- To establish India as a **global leader in solar energy**, by creating the policy conditions for its diffusion across the country as quickly as possible.

▪ **INDC's target:**

- It targets installing **100 GW grid-connected solar power plants** by the **year 2022**.
- This is in line with [India's Intended Nationally Determined Contributions \(INDCs\)](#) target to achieve about **40%** cumulative electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based energy resources and to **reduce the emission intensity of its GDP by 33 to 35% from 2005 level by 2030**.

▪ **Other Government Schemes:**

- [Solar Park Scheme](#)
- [Canal bank & Canal top Scheme](#)
- [Bundling Scheme](#)
- [Grid Connected Solar Rooftop Scheme](#)

▪ **First Green Hydrogen Mobility project:**

- **National Thermal Power Corporation Limited (NTPC) Renewable Energy Ltd (REL)** signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Union Territory of Ladakh to set up the country's **first Green Hydrogen Mobility project**.
  - Green hydrogen is produced by electrolysis of water using renewable energy (like Solar, Wind) and has a lower carbon footprint.

## What are the challenges associated with the International solar Alliance?

- There is no obvious economic plan for reaching solar power grid parity.
- Access to energy technology and required funding are the major impediments to achieving the goal of energy security.
- Meeting conflicting interests of domestic and foreign competitors.
- There may be debates about business strategies such as from where to obtain components and required machinery for manufacturing of the solar panels and other required accessories.

## What can be the Way Forward?

- International Solar Alliance should move with a consolidated and proactive economic policy.
- Its approach should be innovative, and research & development should be promoted.
- It should have an effective system to resolve the member nations' disputes and conflicts.

## UPSC Civil Services Examination, Previous Year Questions

Q. Consider the following statements: (2016)

1. The International Solar Alliance was launched at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in 2015.
2. The Alliance includes all the member countries of the United Nations.

**Which of the statements given above is/are correct?**

- (a) 1 only
- (b) 2 only
- (c) Both 1 and 2
- (d) Neither 1 nor 2

**Ans: (a)**

**Exp:**

- India and France launched the International Solar Alliance (ISA) to boost solar energy in developing countries.
- It was launched at the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris in November 2015 by the Indian Prime Minister and French President. Its secretariat is located in Gurugram, India.  
**Hence, statement 1 is correct.**
- At initial stage ISA was opened to membership of countries lying fully or partly between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn (torrid zone).
- In 2018, the membership of ISA was opened for all the UN members. However, all the member countries of the UN are not its members. **Hence, statement 2 is not correct.**
- Currently, 80 countries have signed and ratified the ISA Framework Agreement while 98 countries have signed the ISA Framework Agreement.
- **Therefore, option (a) is the correct answer.**

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