



International Solar Alliance (ISA)

Last Updated: July 2022

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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