

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) - UPSC Notes

The International Atomic Energy Agency is an important United Nations agency working in the field of nuclear cooperation. International agencies are relevant for the UPSC exam, particularly, the [UPSC Prelims](#).

In this article, you can read all about the IAEA, its functions, mandate, relations with India, all of which are important for the international relations segment of the [UPSC syllabus](#).

International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)



The IAEA is the international centre for cooperation in the nuclear/atomic field. It is a UN agency. It works with its member countries and many partners to promote peaceful uses of nuclear technologies.

IAEA History and Origins

IAEA's origins can be traced back to an address of the former US President Dwight Eisenhower to the General Assembly of the [United Nations](#) in 1953.

- The address was known as '**Atoms for Peace**' and this was the organisation's first name when it was formally established in 1957.
- Headquartered in Vienna, Austria, the IAEA is a UN agency.
- The primary mandate of the organisation was and continues to be promoting safe, secure and peaceful nuclear technologies.
- Currently, it has 171 members. The latest member is Saint Lucia which joined the IAEA in 2019.
- India became a member in 1957 itself.
- By ensuring the peaceful usage of nuclear technologies, the IAEA contributes to peace and security in the world and also towards achieving the [Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#).
- The current Director General of the organisation is Rafael Mariano Grossi.
- The IAEA, along with its former Director General Mohamed ElBaradei, was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize in 2005.
- Although the IAEA is an independent international organisation, it reports annually to the UNGA.
- The IAEA has regional offices in Geneva, New York, Toronto and Tokyo; and research laboratories in Austria, Italy and Monaco.

IAEA Functions

The functions of the IAEA are discussed below.

- Promoting and assisting the research, development and practical applications of peaceful uses of nuclear technologies.
- Establishing and administering safety guards to ensure that such research/development, etc., by the IAEA is not used for military purposes.
- Applying, under the [Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty \(NPT\)](#) and other international treaties, mandatory comprehensive safeguards in non-nuclear weapon states (NNWS) parties to such treaties.

The IAEA's three chief areas of work are:

1. Safety and security
2. Science and technology
3. Safeguards and verification

IAEA Governance

The IAEA has two policymaking bodies. They are:

1. General Conference
2. Board of Governors

General Conference

- It consists of all the member countries of the IAEA.
- It meets in a regular annual session.
- The annual general conference usually takes place in September.

Board of Governors

- Here, there are 35 members.
- The board members for 2019-20 are:

Argentina	Australia	Azerbaijan	Belgium	Brazil
Canada	China	Ecuador	Egypt	Estonia
France	Germany	Ghana	Greece	Hungary
India	Italy	Japan	Kuwait	Mongolia
Morocco	Niger	Nigeria	Norway	Pakistan
Panama	Paraguay	Russia	Saudi Arabia	South Africa
Sweden	Thailand	UK	USA	Uruguay

- The Board generally meets five times a year.
- It examines and makes recommendations to the IAEA's General Conference on the organisation's programme, financial statements and budget.
- The Board considers membership applications, approves safeguards agreements and the publication of the safety standards of the IAEA.
- It also appoints the Director General of the IAEA, with the approval of the General Conference.

Secretariat

The IAEA also has a Secretariat which comprises the organisation's professional and general service staff. It is headed by the Director General.

UPSC Questions related to IAEA

Is India a member of IAEA?

India is a founding member of the IAEA.

Is the IAEA part of the United Nations?

The IAEA is an autonomous organisation within the United Nations system.

How is the IAEA funded?

The IAEA is funded by contributions from member states and donations from non-members.

Is IAEA a specialized agency of the UN?

No, it is considered to be a 'related organization' by the United Nations. It is not a specialised agency because of the political nature of the work done by it.