

## Australia Group

Established in 1985 (after the use of chemical weapons by Iraq in 1984), the Australia Group (AG) is an informal group of countries (now joined by the European Commission) to help member countries identify those exports which need to be controlled, making sure that they do not contribute to the spread of chemical and biological weapons.

Coordination of national export control measures assists Australia Group participants to fulfil their obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention and the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention to the fullest extent possible.

The group, initially consisting of 15 members, held its first meeting in Brussels, Belgium, in June 1985. With the incorporation of India 2018, it now has 43 members, including all [Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development \(OECD\)](#) members, the European Commission, all 28 member states of the European Union, Ukraine, and Argentina. The name comes from Australia's initiative to create the group. Australia manages the secretariat.

Given below is a list of Australia Group Participants:

Australia Group (AG) Members			
Argentina (1993)	Lithuania (2004)	Luxembourg (1985)	Austria (1989)
Australia (1985)	Malta (2004)	Belgium (1985)	Mexico (2013)
Bulgaria (2001)	Netherlands (1985)	Canada (1985)	New Zealand (1985)
Croatia (2007)	Norway (1986)	Czech Republic (1994)	Poland (1994)
Denmark (1985)	Portugal (1985)	Estonia (2004)	Republic of Cyprus (2000)
European Union (1985)	Republic of Korea (1996)	Finland (1991)	Republic of Turkey (2000)
France (1985)	Romania (1995)	Germany (1985)	Slovak Republic (1994)
Greece (1985)	Slovenia (2004)	Hungary (1993)	Spain (1985)
Iceland (1993)	Sweden (1991)	India (2018)	Switzerland (1987)
Ireland (1985)	Ukraine (2005)	Italy (1985)	United Kingdom (1985)
Japan (1985)	United States (1985)	Latvia (2004)	

[IAS exam](#) aspirants can prepare for the other International groupings that are committed to the exchange of information and technology related to nuclear weapons, dual-use technology, biological weapons, and chemical weapons at the articles linked below:

<a href="#">Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty (CTBT)</a>	<a href="#">Missile Technology Control Regime</a>
<a href="#">Wassenaar Arrangement</a>	<a href="#">Nuclear Suppliers Group</a>

## Objectives of Australia Group

Chemical and Biological Weapons can have massive destructive effects and were initially used during the First World War, where soldiers were exposed to poisonous gases, creating thousands of casualties. Given below are the objectives of the Australia Group:

1. The participants of the group have to ensure that licensing measures are taken for the export of certain chemicals, biological agents, dual-use chemical and biological manufacturing and equipment.
2. The Group harmonizes the participating country's national export licensing measures.
3. The Australia Group meetings are conducted to explore the scope of existing effectiveness regarding the export of chemical and biological weapons and equipment.
4. The Group and its participants encourage other countries to ensure that the industries in their countries do not support the spread of chemical and biological weapons.

India entered the Austria Group in the year 2018 with an aim to strengthen the security of the world by preventing the transfer and export of biological and chemical weapons.

## Australia Group and India

In January 2018, India was admitted as a member of the Australia Group and the Ministry of External Affairs extended their gratitude for the same and ensured that this membership would help the world a more secure place to live in.

India is now a member of the three of the Non-Proliferation Regimes. It is a member country of the Australia Group, Wassenaar Arrangement, and Missile Technology Control Regime. The Nuclear Securities Group and Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty are yet to be signed by India.

Gaining participation in the Australia Group will help India ascertain their membership in the Nuclear Suppliers Group which India has been aiming to join for the past many years. This is because it would give more credibility to India as a country and enable them to attain a better economic status. India also has a flourishing Biotechnology industry and membership with Australia Group will help them in establishing a better future in this field. India's association with the Group will prove to be a boon for the country.

## UPSC Questions related to Australia Group

### Is India a member of Australia Group?

India is a member of Australia Group. It became a member in 2018 (January.)

### When was Australia Group established?

Australia Group was established in 1985.

### How many members are there in the Australia Group?

As of March 2021, there are 43 members in the Australia Group.

