



Australia India Water Security Initiative (AIWASI)

For Prelims- AIWASI

For Mains- India-Australia Relations, State of water in India

Why in News?

The Union Cabinet has approved a MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) between India and Australia on **Technical Cooperation for Australia -India water Security initiative (AIWASI)**.

What is AIWASI?

- AIWASI is a project Under **South Asia Water Security Initiative (SAWASI)** of Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Australia.
- It aims to work towards the **Water Sensitive City vision** which is based on **holistic management** of the **integrated water cycle**.
- AIWASI will **strengthen** India's **water governance** and **undertake investments** that **provide**.
 - urban water services,
 - support to disadvantaged communities to access reliable, safe water and sanitation services.
- The project will undertake and deliver a **Water Sensitive Urban Design (WSUD) demonstration project**.
- This AIWASI project is also a '**living laboratory**' with **multiple educational, social and environmental benefits** like **water literacy** of students and the community, **creation of green spaces, improved air quality from blue-green infrastructure and rejuvenation of degraded water bodies and aquifers**.

What is water security?

- The definition of **water security** proposed by [UN-Water](#) – The capacity of a population to safeguard **sustainable access to adequate quantities of acceptable quality water for sustaining livelihoods**, human well-being, and socio-economic development, for ensuring **protection against water-borne pollution** and **water-related disasters**, and for **preserving ecosystems** in a climate of peace and political stability.

What are the challenges related to water security in India?

As per the Sustainable Development Goal report (2019)

- **1 in 4 health care facilities** lacks basic water services
- **3 in 10 people** lack access to safely managed drinking water services.
- **6 in 10 people** lack access to safely managed sanitation facilities.
- At least **892 million people** continue to practice open defecation.
- Mostly, **Women and girls** are responsible for water collection in **80% of households** without

- **access to water** on the premises.
- And if current trends of **over-exploitation** continue, India is set to become a **water-scarce** country in the not-too-distant future.
- A rapidly **increasing population** and **urbanization** have **driven up water demands** all across the country.
- While years of **pollution, inefficient methods of farming, decentralized water governance, groundwater exploitation** and **poor infrastructure** have **depleted the water supply**.
- The map shown below illustrates the **Baseline water stress** condition in India and it can be easily visualized that most part of the country is under the **over-exploited category**.
 - Baseline water stress measures total annual water withdrawals (municipal, industrial, and agricultural) expressed as a percent of the total annual available flow.

What are the Related Initiatives?

- [Creation of Jal shakti ministry](#)
- [National water mission](#)
- [Jal shakti abhiyan](#)
- [NITI Aayog's Composite Water Management Index](#)
- [Namami Gange](#)
- [Jal Jeevan Mission](#)

What could be the way forward?

- The MoU signed with Australia would help in **learning the best practices** to save water and use it in a **sustainable manner**, so that water security could be achieved.
- Need to **enhance** our **own capabilities** by building new **infrastructure** and **creating awareness among masses to conserve water**.
- Need **timely execution** of **government schemes and roadmaps**.
- More **collaboration** needed with countries which had already faced water scarcity in the past and how they overcome it.

[Source: PIB](#)