

CONCEPT PAPER FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A TECHNICAL REFERENCE LIBRARY FOR INSARAG

BACKGROUND

The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) was established to facilitate coordination between the international USAR teams in earthquake response as well as to work towards establishing minimum international standards for USAR teams. As part of the efforts to continually engage the large INSARAG community, the INSARAG Steering Group (ISG) meeting is held annually to provide updates and to deliberate on critical decisions involving the entire community.

2. At the ISG 2016 meeting, a key decision made in regard to the INSARAG Guidelines was to establish a Transitional Guidelines Review Group (GRG). One of the terms of reference (TOR) of the Transitional GRG was to recommend a way forward in developing a library of INSARAG Best Practices or Guidance Notes. This was again reiterated at the ISG 2018 when the GRG 2020 was formed and one of its TOR was to consider a technical reference resource platform.

PRINCIPAL CONSIDERATIONS

3. The principal considerations taken into account in the development of the concept of the technical reference library include the following:

- a. The technical reference library could leverage on an existing platform that is utilised by the INSARAG community (such as the virtual OSOCC or INSARAG website);
- b. There should be clear definitions of the roles and access rights of the various stakeholders (i.e. owners, moderators, users);
- c. Apart from the primary purpose of serving as a knowledge repository, there could be other features of the platform, such as a discussion forum for exchange of information;

- d. Materials in the technical reference library should be reviewed periodically to ensure relevance and currency; and
- e. The ideas and suggestions gathered during the Team Leaders (TL) Meeting 2018 in Romania should be taken into consideration.

CONCEPT OF THE TECHNICAL REFERENCE LIBRARY

Platform to be Used

4. Based on the inputs provided by the Team Leaders (TLs), two of the existing platforms were considered for the technical reference library: (i) Virtual OSOCC and (ii) INSARAG website. The general consensus among the TLs and members of the GRG was to have the technical reference library as a portal that could be accessed from the platform. However, users would be required to input their login details.

5. The GRG proposes for the technical reference library to be sited within the INSARAG website as the website is currently used by the INSARAG community to search for INSARAG information and technical guidance notes.

Owner and Manager of the Library

6. It is also imperative to determine the owner of the technical reference library (i.e. the party that funds and develops the library); as well as the manager, (i.e. the people who oversee and/or review the content of the library). GRG has considered several options such as the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), INSARAG Working Groups (WGs) or even the establishing of a new Technical Reference Library WG.

7. The GRG proposes for the technical reference library to be both owned and managed by UN OCHA. This Office is to be supported by the proposed framework below.

Purpose of the Library

8. The main objective of the technical reference library is to serve as a knowledge repository for the consolidation of best practices, technical guidance notes and any other relevant material. During the TL Meeting, some of the participants suggested for the portal to incorporate other features; such as an online discussion forum or social media to allow the members to exchange information and ideas. The interactive feature would however, require moderators to monitor the discussions and manage the comments and replies.

9. The GRG is supportive of incorporating other features such as the discussion forum or social media and proposes for a new Technical Reference Library WG comprising members from other INSARAG WGs. The GRG is also keen to incorporate a social validation or peer review feature where users could “like” or “share” materials which they deem to be beneficial. There could also be widgets listing the materials by their popularity on the portal for easy reference.

Access Control to the Library

10. During the TL Meeting, there were suggestions to not have a formal approval process by the library owner and/or manager when materials are uploaded into the library. Participants suggested having a self-evaluation framework where materials uploaded into the library has to be pre-evaluated by the National Focal Point and permission granted for sharing with the wider INSARAG community.

11. The GRG proposes for the viewing rights to be given to all the users while contributing rights (i.e. to upload material into the library) should be limited to users from the INSARAG-classified teams and teams that are undergoing INSARAG classifications, or their respective National Focal Points.

CONCLUSION

12. In summary, the proposed concept of the technical reference library is shown in the table below:

What Platform?	INSARAG webpage (insarag.org)
Who is the Owner / Manager?	UN OCHA to both own and manage the library. Assisted by Technical Reference Working Group
What Function does it Serve?	Knowledge repository and discussion forum
Who can Contribute / View?	<u>Contribute</u> – all INSARAG-classified teams and teams undergoing INSARAG classifications; or their respective National Focal Points. All contributions be cleared by the respective Focal Point. <u>View</u> – wider INSARAG community