



Practical Guide for INSARAG policy and operational focal points

The purpose of this Guide is to complement the Terms of Reference of INSARAG policy and operational focal points as laid down in the INSARAG Guidelines in its Volume I: Policy, Annex A. The present document provides additional guidance, based on the actual experience and good practices of focal points on the way to implement their functions.

INSARAG Guidelines

First and foremost, the responsibilities of INSARAG Focal Points can be described as ...

...ensuring the **efficient information exchange and validation** at the appropriate levels ...

...in the **preparedness and response phases** ...

...on **USAR matters** ...,

Including...

- ✓ capacity building,
- ✓ trainings,
- ✓ policy matters,
- ✓ emergency alerts,
- ✓ requests or acceptance of assistance,
- ✓ Mobilization and provision of international assistance.

The INSARAG Guidelines categorize the responsibilities in two levels:

1. **Policy level:** Ensure the promotion of INSARAG Guidelines and methodology within the country and contribute to the continued policy development.
2. **Operational level:** Coordinate the internal information exchange of their own country/organisation with INSARAG during emergencies and strengthen the preparedness both for national and international response.

At the global, regional and national level, the work of INSARAG is recognized and supported by the United Nations General Assembly resolution 57/150 (2002) on “Strengthening the effectiveness and coordination of international urban search and rescue assistance”.

Summary of responsibilities

For the sake of summarizing, this Guide proposes to divide the responsibilities of the focal points in two main areas: **preparedness** and **response**, in addition to presenting them in line with the objectives that are being pursued.

1. Objectives in preparedness:

- a. Promote and facilitate the implementation of the INSARAG Guidelines and methodology at the country level, with the national disaster/emergency management system and national USAR teams
- b. Prepare its international USAR teams in line with the INSARAG Guidelines and methodology
- c. Familiarize with and contribute to the continued development of policies and the methodology

2. Objectives in response:

- a. Lead the implementation of INSARAG Guidelines and methodology at country level, as national disaster/emergency management system and with the national USAR teams
- b. Ensure the implementation of the INSARAG Guidelines by its USAR teams in an international response

In addition to this, and as general consideration, focal points consider of utmost important to contemplate the **costs of participation and involvement** in support of the INSARAG activities and work plan at national, regional and global level and **incorporate them in the annual budgetary planning process** at national level.

1. First objective in preparedness

You are focal points of a country with a strong seismic risk, with some national USAR teams:

What are the actions that you as focal points carry out in your country to implement the INSARAG Guidelines and methodology for the national response?

Promote and facilitate the implementation of the INSARAG Guidelines and methodology at the country level, with the national disaster/emergency management system and national USAR teams

Actions to take:

1. Adopt and, if required, adapt the INSARAG methodology and standards to my country with the aim of having clear standards and methodology for USAR response a national level
2. Promote the design and creation of a national USAR team accreditation process, based on the prior point
3. Create and maintain an updated directory of national USAR teams
4. Clarify the activation and coordination procedures and protocols for national USAR teams
5. Carry out training through seminars, workshops or virtual courses at local, national and regional level.
6. Promote the holding of simulations and drills/ field exercises
7. Publish the INSARAG Guidelines on the website of the national emergency structures, and get familiarised with the use of the Virtual OSOCC (<https://vosocc.unocha.org>).
8. Ensure your participation in the INSARAG regional activities and the exchange of experiences
9. Disseminate and raise awareness on the INSARAG guidelines with staff from the Foreign Ministry and other actors, especially decision makers

2. Second objective in preparedness

You are focal points of a country with teams that have responded internationally, but that are not (yet) INSARAG classified:

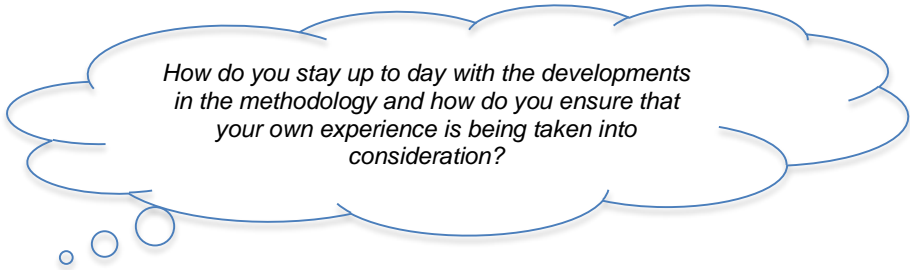
How do you as focal points ensure that the USAR teams deployed outside your country correctly implement the INSARAG Guidelines?

Prepare its international USAR teams in line with the INSARAG Guidelines and methodology

Actions to take:

1. Identify those national USAR teams with potential capacity for an international deployment, based on the national USAR directory and the assessment of national USAR teams' capacities
2. Define which of the teams should obtain the national support and prepare it/them for the INSARAG External Classification (IEC)
3. Ensure the awareness on the Guidelines with Foreign Ministries and relevant political authorities so that the decision makers are aware of the protocols and standards to follow in the event of an emergency in another country which may require regional/international support (ex. Not to offer or deploy teams that do not have the sufficient capacities or that are not self-sufficient)
4. Have a standard curriculum for national USAR teams and carry out trainings for the teams on the INSARAG methodology
5. Promote the INSARAG methodology through the participation of USAR team members in the INSARAG regional exercises – SIMEX, and other trainings such as OSOCC or USAR coordination, or offer your installations to organize/host regional training events
6. Carry out regular surveys on the actual learning of the Guidelines to refresh teams' knowledge through exams and self-evaluations
7. Develop coherent national activation and coordination procedures of the teams, that are also in line with the INSARAG Guidelines

3. Third objective in preparedness



How do you stay up to day with the developments in the methodology and how do you ensure that your own experience is being taken into consideration?

Familiarize with and contribute to the continued development of policies and the methodology

Actions to take:

1. Participate in global/regional forums and meetings called for by the INSARAG Secretariat/OCHA, and propose national experts to be part of the working groups
2. Maintain communication and exchange knowledge through available technological means, e.g. through webex video/teleconferences, WhatsApp groups, INSARAG website, Virtual OSOCC
3. Analyse and propose discussions on the lessons learnt in events and response operations carried out at national level and share them with the INSARAG Regional Group and the Secretariat for its dissemination with the INSARAG network
4. Ensure that national USAR teams submit the post-mission reports to the affected country and the INSARAG Secretariat within the deadline established at country level
5. Share the reports of the INSARAG Regional Groups and the Steering Group with all national stakeholders and USAR teams. Additionally, request feedback on the themes discussed.
6. Review the documentation elaborated by the working groups, the regional Chairmanship group and the INSARAG Secretariat with the aim of providing inputs and comments, which will allow improving the final product.

1. First objective in response

A 7.9 earthquake just occurred in your country with serious impact in infrastructure and several persons killed and reported to be trapped:
What are the key actions that you as INSARAG focal points carry out?

Lead the implementation of INSARAG Guidelines and methodology as national disaster/emergency management system and with the national USAR teams

Actions to take:

1. Ensure immediate communication between the Operational and Policy Focal Points in order to have a common understanding of the situation and agree on actions, as well as get in contact with the decision makers of the national emergency management system
2. Follow the national protocol for the alert, activation, and coordination of national USAR teams, including the establishment of a national USAR coordination cell, should this be required
3. Prepare a briefing to the LEMA on the possible need and potential support from international USAR teams as well as the UNDAC team as international capacity to support coordination; remind on the UNGA resolution 57/150
4. Analyse the need for a request for international assistance based on the assessments carried out
5. Regularly provide information updates on the Virtual OSOCC on the situation and the request/acceptance or not of international assistance – and communicate with the INSARAG Secretariat/OCHA (Note: the INSARAG Secretariat can assist in posting information on the Virtual OSOCC)
6. In case of arrival of international teams, activate the Reception and Departure Centre (RDC) and request support from the UNDAC team and the arriving international USAR teams to manage the RDC and the USAR coordination cell

INSARAG
Secretariat/OCHA
emergency
number:
+41 22 917 1600

2. Second objective in response

A 7.9 earthquake just occurred in a country of your region with serious impact in infrastructure and several persons killed and reported to be trapped, you consider sending your USAR team:
What are the key actions that you as INSARAG focal points carry out, including during the deployment of the team?

Ensure the implementation of the INSARAG Guidelines by its USAR teams in an international response

Actions to take:

1. Verify if the affected country requested or accepted assistance from international teams and, should this be the case, verify if my team(s) corresponds to the requested criteria, e.g. in terms of capacity (medium, heavy)
2. Pre-activate the identified team and take the deployment decision only upon request/acceptance of the affected country and based on needs
3. Monitor the situation on the Virtual OSOCC (<https://vosocc.unocha.org>) and the media and report the status of your team on the Virtual OSOCC under “relief teams”
4. If it was decided to deploy your USAR team, establish contact with the INSARAG Secretariat and the focal point of the affected country
5. Verify the cargo manifest, the team capacity and structure, establish a back-up and remote support plan, including communication procedures with the team through reports and other means, verify the security plan and other support arrangements
6. Remind the team of the key coordination points: national authorities of the affected country, RDC, OSOCC, USAR coordination cell
7. Maintain permanent communication with the team leader

My own checklist

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____
11. _____
12. _____
13. _____
14. _____
15. _____
16. _____
17. _____
18. _____
19. _____
20. _____



This Guide is the result of the work carried out with all INSARAG policy and operational focal points who participated in the 2016 annual INSARAG Americas Regional Group meeting in Bogotá, Colombia, from 16-17 November 2016.
