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INSARAG First Responder Training Programme

The INSARAG First Responder Training Programme was developed by the INSARAG Training Working Group with the support of the INSARAG Secretariat and in close collaboration with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). This package is intended to help all countries and response organizations to develop a local rescue capacity and save lives.

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Introduction

The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) is an inter- governmental network of disaster managers, government officials, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and experienced rescue practitioners. It operates under the umbrella of the UN, having its Secretariat based with the Emergency Services Branch of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

Within the realm of its mandate, UN General Assembly Resolution 57/150 "*Strengthening the Effectiveness and Coordination of International USAR Assistance*", INSARAG contributes to the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR) through its capacity building initiatives. A key part of these initiatives is to promote and strengthen national USAR capacities and activities thereby improving search and rescue preparedness in disaster-prone countries, including the development of a community-based first response capability.

The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is the world's largest humanitarian organization, providing assistance without discrimination as to nationality, race, religious beliefs, class or political opinions and a founding member of the INSARAG network. The IFRC is one of the world's leading first aid providers. First aid is a humanitarian act that should be accessible to all. With first aid skills volunteers and communities are empowered to save lives without discrimination.

This package is developed by experienced practitioners from both INSARAG and the IFRC and intended to help all countries and response organizations to develop a local rescue capacity and save lives immediately following a sudden onset disaster.

Capacity Building

Capacity building is the process of identifying and supporting existing search and rescue resources or developing new capability through the creation of systems and processes, recruitment of suitable staff, the procurement of equipment, training of personnel and its integration into the existing legal framework for emergency management sufficient to support and sustain the capability.

The principles of capacity building that support the objectives of UN General Assembly Resolution 57/150 and the INSARAG Hyogo Declaration of 2010, include:

- Encouraging capacity building at all levels that is customised to meet the needs of the host community and determining those needs through a risk/vulnerability analysis.
- Ensuring that capacity building covers all five components of a search and rescue capability (search, rescue, medical, management and logistics).

The INSARAG First Responder Training Programme was developed with these principles and forms part of the INSARAG and the IFRC capacity building guidance and support material.

The full INSARAG capacity building guidance is set out in the INSARAG Guidelines, Volume II: Preparedness and Response, Manual A: Capacity Building.

Target Audience

A key target for INSARAG within the objectives of UN GA Resolution 57/150 is the building of local rescue capacity for use in the immediate response that follows a sudden onset disaster. This focus is primarily based upon the recognition that people within the local community; typically neighbours, friends or family, undertake the vast majority of all rescues following a disaster of this type. It is also recognised that local emergency personnel, staff of local government organisations or volunteers within response charities or NGO's, tend to lead the community in the immediate rescue phase.

Therefore, local capacity building involves the training and development of existing local emergency services and community responders, as well as providing basic skills training to the average citizen who may volunteer to join a group established specifically for the purpose of first response.

These people, collectively termed 'First Responders', meet the needs of the affected population at the onset of the incident by:

- Assessing the nature and scale of the incident
- Providing search and rescue in the initial stages of the incident or emergency
- Providing information to domestic decision-makers about the event
- Requesting the appropriate resources required to successfully complete the rescue phase
- Providing leadership and direction to the local community at the time of the disaster

A typical First Responder will be a local police officer, paramedic or a fire fighter, local government worker or a member of volunteer organisation and it is at these individuals and their sponsoring organisations that the First Responder Training Programme is aimed.

The INSARAG First Responder Programme

The INSARAG First Responder Training Programme was developed by the INSARAG Training Working Group under the guidance of the INSARAG USAR Team Leaders, with the support of the INSARAG Secretariat and in close cooperation with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC).

The Programme is available to all countries, National Societies and response organisations and aims to provide both guidance and training material that will assist in the development of a local, community-based first response rescue capacity.

Experience has shown that developing the capacity of the local community to self-assist is most effective in areas where no organised search and rescue structure exists, as well as in areas where any specialist emergency response may be delayed. Therefore, governments and sponsors should consider undertaking appropriate risk versus benefit analysis and giving priority to the geographic areas most vulnerable to risk, most isolated from national assistance and, therefore, most likely to benefit from the First Responder Training Programme.

Whilst the main focus of the information and advice contained with the First Responder programme is on the collapsed structure environment it is recognised that an 'all-hazards' approach is vital in developing an effective local rescue capability. Therefore governments, sponsors and response organisations may wish to include other modules focused on flood,

typhoon or tsunami response in any local capacity building programme. Experience of previous disasters has shown that it is likely that any search and rescue operation following a disaster or major emergency will take place in an urban environment, therefore the information contained within the INSARAG First Responder programme will be relevant to any capacity building project.

Programme Structure

The First Responders Training Programme is a series of basic and functional capacity building measures that are designed to assist an authority or organisation to implement an efficient and cost-effective First Responder capacity. The Programme has four component parts targeted both at individuals and their sponsoring organisations. These are as follows:

1. First Responders Training Course
2. Guidance Notes
3. On-Line Support
4. Train-the-Trainers Module

First Responders Training Course

The training course provides participants with an overview of an organised approach to disaster response with education provided primarily in the fields of rapid assessment, surface rescue, and initial medical care. The high-level learning outcomes of the training course are as follows:

- Create an awareness of the generic hazards and risks within a structural collapse environment.
- Enable participants to conduct a survey of the impacted area.
- Enable participants to perform simple search and rescue techniques and render basic first-aid measures.
- Link community-based response to organised local emergency services.
- Provide an understanding of regional, national and international rescue support systems.
- Enable participants to organise volunteer rescuers on-site.

To achieve these learning outcomes the training course is organised in seven modules, namely:

- Module 1: Introduction to the First Responder Programme
- Module 2: The Rescue Environment
- Module 3: Scene Management
- Module 4: Search Module
- Module 5: Rescue Module
- Module 6: Basic Medical Module – (with IFRC Input)
- Module 7: Consolidation Exercise

A First Responders Training Course programme, detailed learning outcomes and more information on the content of each of the seven modules within the training course can be requested from the INSARAG Secretariat.

Guidance Notes

The guidance notes provide guidance and advice to organisations considering organising and running the First Responders Training Programme.

Additional guidance notes focus on building an equipment cache that would allow first responders easy access to equipment and other resources in the event of an emergency or disaster or when required for on-going training. The cache is modular and can be adapted to the likely nature of the emergency, the needs of the first responders and the organisation's ability to manage and maintain the equipment provided.

On-Line Support

Access to the INSARAG web page facilitates first response organisations to connect with other response organisations, download information and updated material, and to interact with other members of the INSARAG global community. Initially linking through the INSARAG website at www.insarag.org, those tasked with first response mandates can access documents and presentations as well as contacting experts or classified rescue teams either bilaterally or via the INSARAG Secretariat to obtain specific advice and information.

Training-of-Trainers Module

This is an additional training module, expanding on the guidance provided in the Technical Guidance Notes about course delivery and focused on the training and development needs of the First Responder Programme. It is designed for organisations wishing to deliver the First Responder Programme and can be adapted to the requirements of a specific country or organisation. Participants on the Training-of-Trainers module will learn how to deliver the INSARAG First Responder Course in their own country or region. It will be available through inquiry direct to the INSARAG Secretariat via the email address insarag@un.org.

Delivery of the Training Programme

The INSARAG First Responder Programme is intended to promote and enhance local capacity building projects across the globe. As such, it is offered freely to governments, National Societies and other local and international organisations to enable them to incorporate it into their training and development programme.

There are two main components of the Training Programme, a series of Lesson Plans and the corresponding Presentations. Additionally, Guidance Notes advise organisations on the running and operation of the Training Course and the development of the Equipment Cache.

First Responder is a flexible tool, the intent of INSARAG and the IFRC is for organisations having ownership of national or regional disaster development programmes to review the content first and select the operational guidance they see as most appropriate for inclusion in their capacity building project. This decision will be based on their assessment of risk and vulnerability but also on a realistic assessment of the capacity of the people and organisations receiving the training. Some organisations may find the all the operational guidance suitable; others may wish to incorporate specific modules into a wider all-hazards approach to local capacity development.

It may be appropriate that some content will be omitted or that additional content focused on other forms of disaster, floods or hurricanes for example, may be included in the final development of an effective first response capability.

Once the scope and nature of the operational guidance has been decided, delivery of the Training Course is at the local level, is mainly practical and can be achieved by organisations already participating in national or regional emergency response such as fire departments, police forces, volunteer groups or civil defence forces. Alternatively, government bodies or sponsors may consider technical experts, commercial companies or contractors as suitable for the delivery of the Training Course. Whichever option is selected, organisations delivering the course must have or be able to identify suitable locations for the training to take place.

Government bodies wishing to incorporate the First Responder Programme into existing projects or organisations should contact the [INSARAG Secretariat \(insarag@un.org\)](mailto:insarag@un.org) and/or the [IFRC \(firstaid@ifrc.org\)](mailto:firstaid@ifrc.org) in the first instance. Both organisations can facilitate contact with national experts, National Societies or organisations such as INSARAG Classified USAR Teams, often located in the same geographic region, which may be able to offer advice or support.

More detail is provided in the accompanying Guidance Notes and further information can be obtained from contacting the INSARAG Secretariat or IFRC officials.

Implementation

UN GA 57/150 of 16 December 2002 and the INSARAG Hyogo Declaration of 2010 clearly highlight the importance of a prepared community and capacity building at ‘all levels’. UN OCHA-INSARAG and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) have endorsed the First Responder Training Programme as a first step towards a community being trained to respond in the immediate aftermath of a sudden onset disaster.

This structure and content of the Programme, while flexible in content and methodology, should not be reduced in quality. Organisations that are considering the delivery of First Responder courses must be aware that the benefits provided by using this tool will be reduced should the quality of the training delivery not be of a standard envisioned by INSARAG and the IFRC.

Assurance of quality in training is an inherent responsibility of all organisations planning to deliver First Responder courses.

Therefore it is strongly recommended that organisations that are considering the use of the First Responder Programme in their own training and development projects adhere to the minimum standards of training delivery prescribed in the Guidance Notes and consult with their national focal points and regional INSARAG regional group network.

For more information about the INSARAG First Responder Training Programme contact:
insarag@un.org or firstaid@ifrc.org