

Priorities:

In its annual meeting of 2019¹, The Regional Group defined the following priorities for 2020:

- Contribute to the definition of INSARAG global strategies and priorities
- Strengthen the IRNAP process
- Strengthen USAR coordination capacities in the region
- Strengthen partnerships with “sister” response networks and other partners to increase the efficiency of emergency preparedness and response

These priorities were presented by the Regional Chair to the INSARAG Steering Group in February 2020 and received full endorsement. Since then, all regions across the world have been affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, which has a dramatic impact in all aspects of life, at social and economic level, and has further aggravated the situation of vulnerable populations and those in need of humanitarian assistance.

The INSARAG network is adapting to the new reality. In the regional context of the Americas and the Caribbean, the Regional chairmanship group under the leadership of Colombia as Regional Chair is coordinating the required adaptations. On the one hand, all teams are encouraged inasmuch as possible to prepare for a potential response in a Covid-19 environment²; and on the other hand, alternative ways are being sought to implement activities of the regional work plan.

Below is the *adapted* road map for each of the objectives for the year 2020 in the region.

I. Contribute to the definition of INSARAG global strategies and priorities

Context and problem statement: The INSARAG network is in the process of defining a new global strategy for the period of 2020-25, which is expected to be adopted jointly with the “Warsaw declaration” at the 2020 INSARAG Global Meeting. The consultations continue on the strategic direction that the INSARAG community intends to give to the priority themes (coordination, flexible response, localisation, partnerships), jointly with the consultations on the draft version of the Warsaw declaration, and the region of the Americas has much to contribute in each of them.

Activities	Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation of the Regional Chairmanship Group in the Humanitarian Networks and Partnership Week, 3-7 February 2020, to represent the region, present the activities carried out and the priorities of the region, and defend the contributions and positions of the region agreed at the Buenos Aires meeting 	Completed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation workshop on the priority theme of “flexible response” <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Brazil offered to host this workshop as a global event. Initially planned for July 2020 	Tbc due to Covid-19 situation; potentially to be done remotely
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the INSARAG Global Meeting, 4-9 October 2020 in Warsaw, Poland and hold the Regional meeting within the framework of the global meeting 	The Secretariat is in contact with Poland to evaluate the situation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consultation on the draft Warsaw declaration 	Remotely
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translation of the INSARAG Guidelines 2020 to Spanish and Portuguese 	Colombia and Brazil
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Translation of the Operational Guidance Note on USAR Operations in the Covid-19 environment 	Done; USAR experts from Mexico and Colombia

¹ Regional Group meeting hosted by the Regional Chair, Argentina from 12-14 November 2019 in Buenos Aires.

² An operational guidance note on USAR operations in the Covid-19 environment was already, <http://www.insarag.org/45-en/global-structures/global-news/780-covid-19-usar-operational-guidance-note>

II. Strengthen the IRNAP process in the region and globally

Context and problem statement: The Americas region pioneered the development of the guidance currently found in the INSARAG Guidelines on national USAR team accreditation processes. In 2017, the INSARAG Steering Group adopted the INSARAG External Support and Recognition Process (IERSP or PAREI in Spanish) of USAR national accreditation processes. Since then, this process has triggered a high level of interest in all regions leading to the need for additional coordination and update of the guidance that is being provided, which is why the INSARAG Steering Group in 2020 endorsed the recommendation from the region to establish a specific Working Group on this topic. In the context of the update of the INSARAG 2020 Guidelines, the guidance was updated into a Technical Guidance note and the name updated to be called INSARAG Recognized National Accreditation Process (IRNAP).

Likewise, and in parallel, it is necessary to strengthen the capabilities of IRNAP implementation at the regional level of the Americas and expand membership in the regional roster of experts that are part of the Technical Support Group (TSG) and the technical recognition group (TRG), according to the newly proposed terminology.

Activities	Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation in the Working Group on national accreditation processes 	The Secretariat sent the invitation. Deadline to present candidates extended: 15 May.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop to design a course on the IRNAP for new members of the TSG/TRG 	Completed 21-24 April; through remote workshop
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call for expression of candidates and selection of new members of the regional roster of the TSG/TRG 	Expected for the second quarter
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course on the IRNAP for new members of the TSG/TRG <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Note: Bomberos de Chile through the agreement with the OBA offered to be host. 	Tbc due to Covid-19 situation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support countries in implementing IRNAP through the respective TSG/TRG 	Currently, only Panama has an ongoing support process.

III. Strengthen USAR coordination capacities in the region

Context and problem statement: Since the first publication of the UCC (USAR Coordination Cell) manual, four UCC regional courses have been carried out, two of them in English with the participation mainly of classified team personnel, and two of them in Spanish with the participation of staff from national emergency management agencies and national USAR teams. Although these courses contributed to the training of many individuals across the region, the countries of the region continue to express the need for actual or additional capacity to set up USAR coordination cells with their own capabilities, showing the need for additional training to be done at the national level.

The existing UCC course was designed primarily for an international USAR team audience. As part of strengthening national coordination capacities, the INSARAG Americas group identified the need to develop a national USAR coordination course module and train the group of instructors for this course. This will be done in consultation with the INSARAG Training working group and it will allow the region to count on a capacity for regional collaboration (instructors trained to deliver a course based on the INSARAG methodology) for the strengthening of national and local capacities in the establishment and management of a USAR coordination cell.

Activities	Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workshop to design of a national USAR coordination course module 	Planned to be held remotely from 12-15 May, dates tbc
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out a training of trainers on the national USAR coordination course module <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Peru offered to host the course 	Tbc due to Covid-19 situation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out a training of trainers on the USAR Information Management <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Note: The Information Management WG developed the material and offered to host remote training sessions. 	The first course will likely be done remotely.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out national USAR coordination courses <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ At least one course is planned in Peru as a preparation for the SIMEX 2021 	Tbc due to Covid-19 situation

IV. Strengthen partnerships with “sister” response networks and other partners to increase the efficiency of emergency preparedness and response

Context and problem statement: The INSARAG regional group in the Americas has close ties with the EMT Regional Group and will continue to strengthen this collaboration since several of the response scenarios, coordination mechanisms and capacity building efforts are similar, despite the specialties being clearly different. 2019 also resulted in the confirmation of a new partnership with the Organization of American Firefighters (OBA) which joined the Regional Group in the promotion and implementation of the INSARAG methodology with its partners and members and offered its support to activities of the Regional group.

One key activity in which all partners collaborate to enhance coordination and response protocols is the regional SIMEX. Although there is no regional SIMEX planned for 2020, it is expected to start with the preparation of SIMEX 2021 in Peru, which shall take place in the first part of the year 2021.

Activities	Status
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SIMEX 2021 preparatory workshop seen as a platform for emergency preparedness for national authorities jointly with the different response networks and partners 	Initially planned for September, dates tbc due to Covid-19 situation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidate and clarify the scope of the collaboration with the OBA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ through meetings at national level between the OBA member institutions and the respective INSARAG national focal points 	When these meetings take place, FPs are encouraged to inform the regional chairmanship and the Secretariat.