

The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group – INSARAG

Version with comments and inputs from the Americas Regional Group
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VISION AND ROLE

OUR VISION is to save lives by promoting efficiency, enhanced quality, and coordination amongst national and international USAR teams on the basis of adherence to common guidelines and methodologies.

OUR ROLE is to prepare for, mobilize and coordinate effective and principled international USAR assistance in support of the affected countries in collapsed-structure emergencies and actively support capacity-building at the international, regional, ~~and~~-sub-regional and national level. We do this by

- Developing and promoting common standards for USAR assistance, coordination methodologies and tools as well mobilization and information exchange protocols between relevant stakeholders, and
- Promoting cooperation and experience sharing amongst and in partnership with member states, NGOs, national, regional and international partners.

Our work is recognized and supported by the United Nations General Assembly in resolution 57/150 of 16 December 2002 on the “*Strengthening the effectiveness of international urban search and rescue assistance*”, and recalled in several further resolutions. The INSARAG Hyogo Declaration on “*Recognition and Strengthening of International Urban Search and Rescue Operational Standards*” adopted in the first INSARAG global meeting gave us renewed impetus and guidance for our work ahead and put special emphasis on the need for national capacity building.

OUR VALUES AND OPERATIONAL NORMS

Adherence to common standards and methodology: Members of the INSARAG network commit to adhering to the INSARAG guidelines and methodology as globally accepted minimum standards and procedures, based upon expert knowledge and longtime experience. The INSARAG network continues to develop these standards and procedures through shared continued learning.

Inclusiveness: INSARAG brings together governments, governmental and non-governmental organizations and disaster response and preparedness professionals. We particularly encourage disaster-prone countries to join the network, as well as any country or organization with USAR response capacities.

Professionalism: INSARAG promotes responsible, ethical and professional standards amongst USAR teams and all stakeholders.

Respect for Diversity: INSARAG acknowledges and respects USAR team’s varied operational procedures, doctrines and techniques to achieve common objectives, while disseminating principles and minimum standards agreed upon through the INSARAG network.

Cultural Sensitivity: INSARAG promotes awareness and respect by international USAR teams of cultural differences. This is to ensure that international USAR teams can cooperate more effectively with national and other international actors.

Needs-driven: Mobilization and deployment of international USAR teams is only supported when the affected country’s capacities are overwhelmed by the impact of a collapsed structure emergency and they agree to accept international assistance. The types of international assistance is, further, based on the needs of the affected country and not driven by the availability of resources.

Coordination: INSARAG promotes internationally agreed coordination structures managed and advocated by OCHA and in particular promotes coordination of preparedness/capacity building activities as well as response efforts throughout the entire duration of an operation, in support of the host government.

INSARAG Strategic Plan 2014-2017
The Way Forward



GOAL 1: Promote and support the building of more effective national USAR capacities and national response preparedness

Objective

Global/ Regional Implementation Plans

Objective 1: Advocate for the use of the INSARAG operational and organizational guidelines for capacity building as reference for national capacity building

- ✓ Place this into the context of the INSARAG Guidelines revision and participate in the review process and in the drafting of the Capacity Building Handbook which will be part of Vol. II of the Guidelines
- ✓ Promote the elaboration of procedures for the national accreditation/certification of national USAR teams, with the aim of homogenizing standards and methodologies, with the INSARAG Guidelines as reference; elaborate guidelines for the national certification and a recommended roadmap/checklist
- ✓ Promote the adoption of the INSARAG methodology as part of the national training curriculum
- ✓ Develop a training programme on the INSARAG guidelines targeting the national level

Objective 2: Advocate for national ownership of capacity building efforts, and coordination of donor involvement, in line with national priorities

- ✓ Request more support from the Secretariat on the institutionalization of the process at national level
- ✓ Promote the active participation of relevant national institutions
- ✓ Encourage cooperation and donor support to be focused on national capacity building
- ✓ Identify one particular institution that will champion and drive the implementation of the INSARAG guidelines and the national USAR capacity building

Objective 3: Share experiences and lessons learnt amongst countries and organizations on establishment of USAR capacity

- ✓ Plan and organise workshops on experience exchange with the aim of creating common regional guidance
- ✓ Organise initiatives to promote communication and interaction at national level
- ✓ Use communication technologies to organise virtual workshops and dissemination of information
- ✓ Document and share case studies, and archive them to make them available over the years

- ✓ Organise regional and sub-regional meetings
- ✓ Promote bilateral experience exchange and mutual assistance programmes

Objective 4: Strengthen response preparedness of priority countries for potential international USAR response operations

- ✓ Carry out the INSARAG regional earthquake response simulation exercises in countries with actual seismic risks, taking into account the actual risk and the real response plans
- ✓ Promote greater participation of government stakeholders in INSARAG regional earthquake response exercises
- ✓ Promote the participation of political level in the INSARAG exercises as observers
- ✓ Urge countries to include the INSARAG guidelines in their national plans as operational guidance
- ✓ Organise table top and full-scale simulations
- ✓ Promote bilateral cooperation agreements
- ✓ Incorporate response preparedness into the design for medium and long term projects
- ✓ Emphasise the need to take into considerations the IDRL Guidelines for the domestic facilitation and regulation of international disaster relief and initial recovery assistance as part of the legal preparedness of each country.
- ✓ Reduce the entry requirements for incoming USAR teams arriving to an affected country

Objective 5: Strengthen the collaboration coordination with all relevant partners including governmental and non-governmental organizations, the International Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

- ✓ Incorporate the relevant partners at the national level, including with the help of the international representation whenever possible
- ✓ Create awareness on INSARAG at the national and local level through the creation of “USAR interest groups”, and include governmental and non-governmental partners

Objective 6 (NEW): promote the participation and incorporation of new countries and organizations into the INSARAG family

- ✓ Invite countries to designate focal points through the respective official channels (including through the Permanent missions in Geneva)
- ✓ Promote the participation of new countries and organisation through regional organisations such as CDEMA in the Caribbean
- ✓ Identify those countries that are still “missing”, and promote their participation in INSARAG through the

Secretariat

- ✓ Incorporate INSARAG as a topic on the agendas of other regional and international forums
 - ✓ Ensure the translation and availability of documents in the working languages of the region (Spanish, English, French and Portuguese)
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GOAL 2: Increase the efficiency of international USAR preparedness and response efforts to emergencies that overwhelm national capacities.

Objective

Global / Regional implementation plans

Objective 1: Ensure high quality USAR assistance is provided in a timely, efficient and coordinated manner to affected Governments

- ✓ Encourage government mandated international USAR teams to successfully undergo INSARAG External Classification
- ✓ Improve information sharing protocols with INSARAG focal points
- ✓ Improve the mechanisms and speed for receiving international USAR assistance by disaster prone countries.
- ✓ Strengthen the cooperation between INSARAG and OCHA, in its key role of INSARAG Secretariat and coordinator of international USAR response, through the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team

Objective 2: Ensure INSARAG's methodology is updated, fit for purpose and takes on board lessons learnt

- ✓ Participate actively in the revision of the INSARAG Guidelines 2013-2015

Objective 3: Ensure sustainability and cost-effectiveness of key INSARAG activities

- ✓ Promote a less resource intensive INSARAG External Re-classification (IER) process.
- ✓ Augment the number of classifiers

Objective 4: Maximize the full potential value USAR teams bring to the disaster cycle, i.e. invoking beyond the rubble.

- ✓ Educate receiving countries on what type of assistance they can expect from USAR teams beyond the search and rescue work (humanitarian assistance)
- ✓ Adapt the USAR fact sheet to include humanitarian assistance support capacities of each team
- ✓ Inform the cluster leads on the type of additional support that USAR teams can provide

Objective 5: Ensure that INSARAG's role is recognized and valued in the international humanitarian and risk reduction agenda, including in the post-HFA framework and within ISDR

- ✓ contribute to the post-HFA disaster risk reduction agenda setting to ensure recognition and value added of INSARAG
- ✓ Promote exchange and mutual knowledge between INSARAG and IFRC in particular; and incorporate the National red cross societies in the processes at national level