

USAR Capacity Building

1. Background

The INSARAG network is strongly encouraged to assist disaster prone countries in developing and strengthening the capacity of their national USAR teams. In the Hyogo Declaration signed by all INSARAG parties in 2010 it says:

"Therefore urges and highly recommends that building national, local and community capacity is critical for effective response to earthquakes, collapsed structure and other related emergencies in a rapidly urbanizing world, and welcomes the work undertaken by the INSARAG network to develop recommendations for operational and organisational guidelines for capacity building of national USAR teams, and encourage Member States to support such efforts." (INSARAG Hyogo Declaration paragraph no. 5, September 2010)

According to the INSARAG Guidelines (Volume 2), Capacity building should cover all five components of USAR capability; that is, Management, Search, Rescue, Medical and Logistics. The INSARAG has committed itself to capacity development projects in countries that would likely benefit from local USAR capacity. Using the wealth of USAR experience resident in the INSARAG, the group has developed documents and courses available to countries wanting to develop local USAR capacity.

The figure below shows the level of First Responders, including Civil Defense, Local Emergency Services and Community Responders that benefit from Capacity Building initiatives:



2. Analysis

The Revised INSARAG Guidelines provides some guidance to more experienced IEC teams on how to conduct capacity building activities in developing countries, starting with the formation of Community First Responders.

The INSARAG network provides a platform for UN Member States and USAR teams to express their interest and explore possibilities for external support from the network.

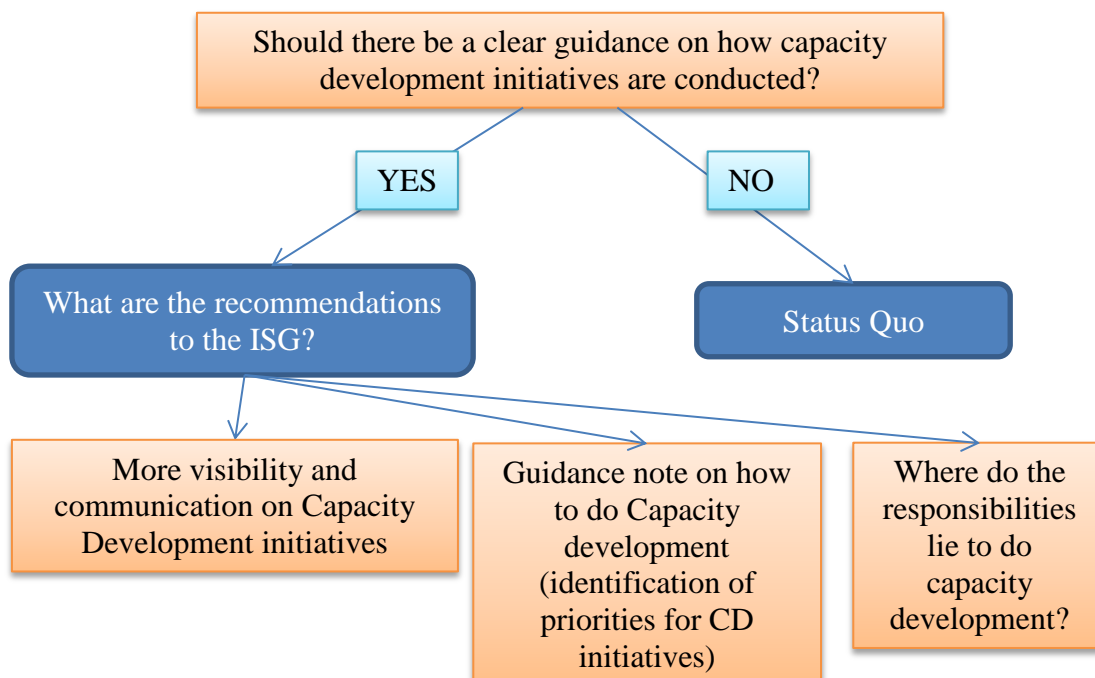
More advanced IEC teams in the INSARAG family have large experience in strengthening USAR capacities in a large number of countries, in Asia, Pacific and to some extent Africa. However, these initiatives ranging from training and assessment missions to INSARAG earthquake excises are not part of a coordinated framework. They are rather the results of ad hoc requests either from the beneficiary country itself or they are closely linked to the INSARAG donor’s strategy.

A challenge is to have an institutional framework that could be the basis for a more sustained capacity building definition. Questions to be discussed are:

- “Where the responsibility for capacity building lies”? “Should be the responsibilities of the INSARAG Secretariat? The Regional Focal Points? Or a working group”?
- Should be the focus more on disaster prone countries and identify gaps in capacity building for these countries in line with the INSARAG strategy/identify priorities for intervention?
- “How to take it forward”?
- Developing USAR capacities is a long term commitment for any nation or organisation. When a disaster prone country lacks sufficient internal resources to develop these capacities, how can they attract sufficient financial and technical resources to support a long-term commitment?

3. Possible Discussion Points

During the INSARAG Steering Group meeting, participants will consider the importance of developing a clear guidance on what it means to “do capacity building” while at the same time identify possible avenues of work for standardize the different capacity building initiatives in a more coordinated and structured framework. Every country has its own sets of institutional, economic and cultural preconditions among other. The development process thus needs to adapt to these. Taking this into account, participants will consider the following:



4. Way forward

This issue has been raised at the INSARAG Steering Group (ISG) Meeting 2016 in Geneva for consideration and should continue to be discussed in the regional and team leaders' meeting in 2016. Key points discussed include:

1. Ensure the primary responsibility and ownership of capacity building lies with the country
2. Initiatives should be supported at the global and regional level, as well as by donor countries and private sector actors to secure financing – It is a shared responsibility
3. Each region will be responsible for developing(and customising) its own regional framework for capacity building.
4. Increase communication and transparency on capacity building initiatives with better use of the resources available, such as the INSARAG website.