



**INSARAG EXTERNAL CLASSIFICATION / RECLASSIFICATION
(IEC/R) HANDBOOK**

2012 EDITION

The purpose of this Handbook is to ensure a team intending to undergo an IEC/R is familiar with the planning, preparation and delivery requirements. USAR teams and its Mentors are strongly encouraged to familiarise themselves with the contents of this Handbook. IEC/R Classifiers are also encouraged to use this handbook as a reference source.

An IEC/R is a demanding process that is not to be underestimated. It requires the total executive and operational commitment of the sponsoring agency, the USAR team, its Mentor as well as several other stakeholders to ensure success.

Any questions with regards to the content of this Handbook should be directed to the INSARAG Secretariat and your appointed Mentor (as appropriate).

Foreword by Toni Frisch, Chairman of INSARAG

INSARAG External Classification (IEC) - *“Guarantee of Effective and Professional International Assistance”*

More than 28 countries and organisations have successfully undergone the INSARAG External Classification (IEC) since it started in 2005, while many others have shown keen interest or are preparing their Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams for upcoming IECs. This process has since facilitated capacity building and ensured minimum standards and matching capabilities to needs and priorities. IEC teams are well recognized by the INSARAG tab they wear, and have most recently proven to be a professional value adding resource to earthquake affected countries such as Indonesia and Haiti, in the immediate aftermath.

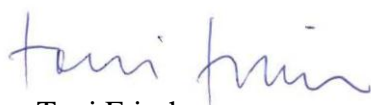
To this very day it remains a truly unique process that establishes verifiable operational standards and a humanitarian example of how independent peer review can be a great added value in response preparedness and at the times of response. Both classifiers and the team undergoing IEC learn from one another, and this interaction is indeed highly valuable, as in an earthquake, they will be the same people working together closely, to help save lives.

In a world in which disaster response is becoming more complex, INSARAG has provided a commendable model to the rest of the humanitarian community demonstrating how the IEC continues to provide a global level strategic approach to ensure that there are well qualified and professional teams all around the world in every region and specifically close enough to potential disaster prone areas, ready to respond at a moment's notice and operating on globally accepted standards.

Affected countries will now be able to know what type of assistance they can expect to receive and INSARAG classified USAR teams working alongside each other will be able to know the capacities each can offer – a professional response meeting the standards set in the INSARAG Guidelines, a team that speaks a common global USAR language, a team that will make a REAL difference in the life saving phase of a disaster.

The INSARAG External Classification/Reclassification (IEC/R) Handbook is prepared based on the experiences and feedback from experienced IEC/R classifiers and classified teams, and aims to be a valuable guide to USAR teams globally as it carefully outlines requirements and expectations from Governments, USAR teams, NGOs, IEC mentors and IEC classifiers. It further remains a living document and will be updated accordingly to the operating environment.

Ambassador Toni Frisch



Toni Frisch
INSARAG Chairman
1 May 2012

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List of Abbreviations

BoO	Base of Operations
CAP	Corrective Action Plan
EXCON	Exercise Control
FCSS	Field Coordination Support Section
FIELDEX	Field Exercise
GA	General Assembly
IEC	INSARAG External Classification
IER	INSARAG External Reclassification
INSARAG	International Search and Rescue Advisory Group
ISG	INSARAG Steering Group
LEMA	Local Emergency Management Authority
LO	Liaison Officer
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OSOCC	On-Site Operations Coordination Centre
POA	Point of Assembly
POD	Point of Departure
POE	Portfolio of Evidence
RDC	Reception Departure Centre
SAR	Search and Rescue
SOP	Standard Operating Procedures
TOR	Terms of Reference
TORPS	Terms of Reference/Person Specification
UN	United Nations
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination
USAR	Urban Search and Rescue
VO	Virtual OSOCC

1. IEC Overview

1.1 Introduction

The United Nations (UN) General Assembly (GA) Resolution 57/150 of 16 December 2002 on “Strengthening the Effectiveness and Coordination of International USAR Assistance” endorses the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) Guidelines as the principal reference for the coordination of international USAR response. The INSARAG Guidelines, developed and implemented by Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) responders from around the world, serve to guide international USAR teams and disaster-affected countries during international USAR response operations.

The INSARAG community acknowledges the importance of providing rapid professional USAR support during disasters which result in victims entrapped in collapsed structures. In an effort to achieve this objective, the INSARAG community has developed two voluntary, independent, peer review processes, the INSARAG External Classification (IEC) and INSARAG External Reclassification (IER).

Together the IEC and IER processes form the INSARAG Classification System which has been unanimously endorsed by the INSARAG Steering Group (ISG).

1.2 Background

Prior to the introduction of the INSARAG Classification System, USAR teams completed a self-classification as a Light, Medium or Heavy USAR team. This self-classification was then submitted to the INSARAG Secretariat and recorded in the Directory of International SAR Teams.

During the 2005 USAR Team Leader Meeting it was proposed and unanimously agreed that in addition to the self-classification, an international representative team of USAR experts should conduct an independent classification of a USAR team’s response capability and technical capacity.

The IEC concept was unanimously endorsed by the three INSARAG Regional Groups. It was then submitted to the INSARAG Steering Committee (renamed the INSARAG Steering Group [ISG] in 2009) for consideration. The ISG unanimously endorsed the IEC concept with the inaugural IEC being conducted in November 2005.

The IEC has proved successful and there continues to be increasing demand by USAR teams to undergo the process. The list of successfully classified teams, as well as the schedule of upcoming IEC/Rs, is available from the INSARAG Secretariat as well as being posted on the Virtual OSOCC (VO).

1.3 USAR Team Capacities

USAR teams establishing USAR capacity are required to refer to the INSARAG Guidelines (*Chapter G Establishing USAR Capacity*) for guidance. Chapter G provides information on the key elements required and the resource composition of a Medium and Heavy USAR team. The minimum number of personnel required for a medium team is 38 while the minimum number of personnel required for a heavy team is 55.

INSARAG USAR teams are required to consist of five key components (Table 1). The INSARAG Guidelines refers to three levels of capacity i.e. Light, Medium and Heavy. Since this document refers to the classification of international USAR teams, only the definitions for Medium and Heavy Teams are included below. For details on Light USAR teams, refer to INSARAG Guidelines.

Table 1

Component	Role	Function
Management	Team Leader	Command
	Deputy Team Leader/Operations Officer	Coordination/Operational Control
	Planning Officer	Planning
	Liaison Officer/Deputy Liaison Officer	Liaison/Media/Reporting/RDC/OSOCC/USAR Operations Cell
	Structural Engineer	Structural Assessment/Analysis
	Safety Officer	Safety/Security
Search	Technical Search Specialist	Technical Search
	Search Dog Handler	Dog Search
	HAZMAT (Hazardous Materials)	HAZMAT Assessment
Rescue	Rescue Team Officer	Breaking/breaching/cutting/ shoring/tactical rope
	Rescuer	Breaking/breaching/cutting/ shoring/tactical rope
	Heavy Rigging Specialist	Lifting/Moving
Medical	Medical Team Manager (Medical Doctor)	Team Care (Personnel/search dogs)
	Paramedic/Nurse	Patient Care
Logistics	Logistics Team Manager	Base of Operations Management
	Logistics Specialist	Food and water supply/base camp operations/transport capacity/fuel supply
	Communications Specialist	Communications

Adapted from INSARAG Guidelines *Chapter G on “Establishing USAR Capacity”*

1.3.1 Medium USAR Teams (source: INSARAG Guidelines Chapter G on “Establishing USAR Capacity”)

A Medium USAR team comprises the five components required by the INSARAG Guidelines i.e.: Management, Logistics, Search, Rescue and Medical. Medium USAR teams have the ability to conduct technical search and rescue operations in collapsed or

failed structures of heavy wood and/or reinforced masonry construction, including structures reinforced with structural steel. They also must conduct rigging and lifting operations. The main differences between a Medium Team and a Heavy Team include the following:

- A Medium USAR team is required to have the capacity to work only at a single work-site;
- A Medium USAR team is required to have the capability of either search dogs or technical search; and
- A Medium USAR team must be adequately staffed to allow for 24 hour operations at 1 site (not necessarily at the same site; the sites may change) for up to 7 days.

1.3.2 Heavy USAR Teams (source: INSARAG Guidelines Chapter G on “Establishing USAR Capacity”)

A Heavy USAR team comprises the five components required by the INSARAG Guidelines i.e.: Management, Logistics, Search, Rescue and Medical. Heavy USAR teams have the operational capability for complex technical search and rescue operations in collapsed or failed structures, particularly those involving structures reinforced and/or built with structural steel. The main differences between a Heavy Team and a Medium Team are as follows:

- A Heavy USAR team is required to have the equipment and manpower to work at a Heavy technical capability at two separate work-sites simultaneously. **A separate work-site is defined as:** any area of work that requires a USAR team to re-assign staff and equipment to a different location all of which will require separate logistical support. Generally an assignment of this sort would last greater than 24hrs.
- A Heavy USAR team is required to have both a search dog and technical search capability;
- A Heavy USAR team is required to have the technical capability to cut structural steel typically used for construction and reinforcement in multi-storey structures;
- A Heavy USAR team must be able to conduct heavy rigging and lifting operations; and
- A Heavy USAR team must be adequately staffed and logistically sufficient to allow for 24 hour operations at 2 independent sites (not necessarily at the same two sites; the sites may change) for up to 10 days.

Refer to INSARAG Guidelines Chapter G7 and G8, for examples of organisational structure of Medium and Heavy Teams.

1.3.3 Who can apply for an IEC?

USAR teams **with a mandate from its sponsoring agency to deploy internationally are eligible** to apply for an IEC. For those teams aiming to develop USAR capacity but do not have a mandate to deploy internationally, refer to the INSARAG Guidelines, **Chapter G, Establishing a National Urban Search and Rescue Capacity.**

1.4 IEC Purpose

The primary purpose of the IEC is to provide the government of the affected country with a database of independently verified INSARAG Medium or Heavy USAR teams that will:

- Mobilise rapidly;
- Be self-sufficient;
- Work professionally and safely;
- Coordinate its activities based on the priorities established by the Local Emergency Management Authority (LEMA);
- Assist the UN with Reception Departure Centre (RDC) and On Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC);
- Coordinate its efforts with other international rescue responders;
- Not become a burden to the affected country;
- Make a real difference in life saving operations;
- Adopt internationally accepted coordination mechanisms established on site.

1.5 IEC Objectives

INSARAG classified USAR teams are required to:

- Operate according to the methodology prescribed by the INSARAG Guidelines;
- Be able to rapidly deploy within the shortest possible timeframe following a disaster to maximise their positive impact on the affected community;
- Understand and comply with the roles and responsibilities regarding the set-up, operation and staffing of a RDC and/or OSOCC;
- Understand the roles and responsibilities regarding the Local Emergency Management Authority (LEMA) and be able to integrate effectively with response efforts resulting in a coordinated and integrated rescue effort.

1.6 IEC Assessment

The IEC assesses and classifies two key components of international USAR operations i.e., response capability and technical capacity.

1.6.1 Response Capability

The Response Capability assessment, including the decision making role of the sponsoring agency or Government, will assess a USAR team's ability to monitor for sudden onset disasters, receive notification of a breaking emergency, mobilise its resources and respond internationally in a timely manner. It will also assess a team's ability to establish a RDC if it is the first arriving international USAR team to assist LEMA to receive international assistance.

USAR teams are also required to assist the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team to coordinate rescue efforts with LEMA and other international USAR teams by establishing a provisional OSOCC. This is required when it is the first arriving team and also arrives ahead of the UNDAC team. In circumstances where it is not the first arriving team and the OSOCC has already been established, the

USAR team is still required to assist the USAR Operations Cell of the OSOCC by providing USAR liaison officers.

The importance of the RDC and OSOCC support functions cannot be overstated. To place emphasis on this issue, the ISG strongly advocates the inclusion of trained UNDAC members as part of the USAR team, whenever possible.

USAR teams need to be able to be entirely self-sufficient for the duration of deployment without becoming a burden on the affected country or other international response organisations. It is however acknowledged that teams will require assistance with fuel, timber, and a secure location to establish its BoO. Most teams will also require transport upon arrival in the affected country. The costs for these items and assistance are to be borne by the USAR team.

During an IEC there is little to no difference in the assessment of the Response Capability of a Medium or a Heavy USAR team as this component is equally applicable to both levels of classification.

1.6.2 Technical Capacity

During this phase the team's technical capacity will be assessed as to how it performs USAR operations. This assessment will differ depending on whether a team is attempting a Medium or a Heavy classification.

USAR teams are required to demonstrate proficiency using its full USAR capacity (skills and equipment) during a constantly evolving realistic structural collapse exercise designed in a manner that challenges the USAR team's ability to operate effectively in simulated "real-life" mission and timeline required for the desired level of classification.

For both the Response Capability and Technical Capacity components, the IEC Classifiers make use of the **IEC/R Checklist (Annex A)** to conduct the assessment.

1.7 IEC Cost

All the costs associated with the planning, preparation (including that of the IEC Mentor and other strategic partners) and running of the IEC, with the exception of the IEC team itself, is borne by the host country.

The cost of the classifiers is covered by their respective sponsoring organisation, while the cost of the INSARAG Secretariat representative is covered by the INSARAG Secretariat.

The IEC host will determine whether observers will be invited to observe the IEC. The expenses and services covered by the IEC host (if any) will be explained in the announcements leading up to the event. The host should explain to observers what will be able to be observed during the exercise and that observers are expected to attend the IEC with their mentor.

1.8 Directory of International SAR Teams

Upon successful completion of an IEC, the team will be recorded in the **Directory of International SAR Teams (Annex B)** at the level of classification achieved. This directory is managed by the INSARAG Secretariat.

1.9 How to Contact the INSARAG Secretariat

The function of the INSARAG Secretariat is provided by the Field Coordination Support Section (FCSS) of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The INSARAG Secretariat can be contacted at:

Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
Field Coordination Support Section
Palais des Nations
CH 112 Geneva 10, Switzerland

Telephone: +41(0)22 917 1234 (Office Hours)

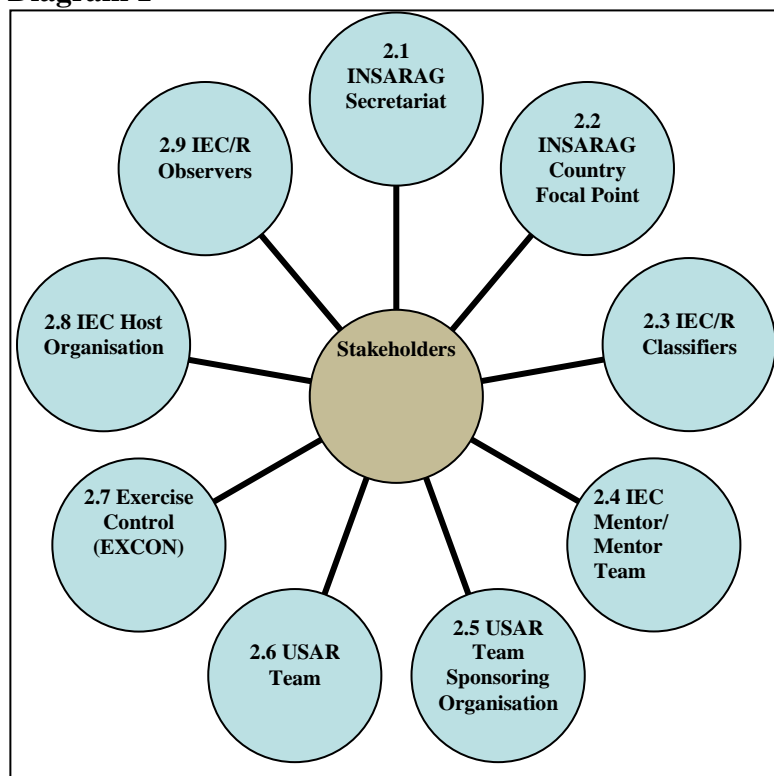
Facsimile: +41(0)22 917 0023

Email: insarag@un.org

2. IEC/R Stakeholders

There are several stakeholders, all of which are integral to a USAR team being able to successfully undergo an IEC/R (Diagram 1).

Diagram 1



2.1 INSARAG Secretariat

A representative from the INSARAG Secretariat serves as an objective facilitator during an IEC/R. The INSARAG Secretariat representative will either be an employee of FCSS or an individual endorsed by the Chief of FCSS as a representative of the INSARAG Secretariat.

Up to 2 years before the intended IEC, the INSARAG Secretariat would have already engaged with the team and the mentor on a rigorous monitoring system, to ensure all milestones are met in a timely manner. The monitoring system will comprise of 3 phase; Application and Mentor Assignment, Review, and Finalisation. This will be referenced by all stakeholders i.e. USAR team, mentor, IEC team and closely monitored by the INSARAG Secretariat.

The primary responsibilities of the INSARAG Secretariat representative during an IEC/R are as follows:

- Ensure that the classification is based on the minimum requirements as determined by the INSARAG Guidelines;
- Ensure that the IEC/R is carried out in accordance with the IEC/R Checklist;
- Ensure the classifiers do not attempt to use the IEC/R as an opportunity to promote their home country's methodologies as the only way of operation;
- Perform the role of mediator/ arbitrator between the classifiers and the USAR team or its sponsoring organisation should the need arise.

The details on the Terms of Reference / Person Specifications (TORPS) are recorded in **INSARAG Secretariat Representative, (Annex C.1)**.

2.2 INSARAG Country Focal Point

The INSARAG Country Focal Point serves as the primary point of contact for the INSARAG Secretariat in a particular country and is usually a senior officer in the government ministry responsible for the management of international response.

The INSARAG Country Focal Point acts as single point of contact for its international responders and government for the INSARAG Secretariat. Accordingly, the INSARAG Country Focal Point is required to approve any request from a USAR team, whether it be a government or non-government organisation (NGO) team, to undergo an IEC/R.

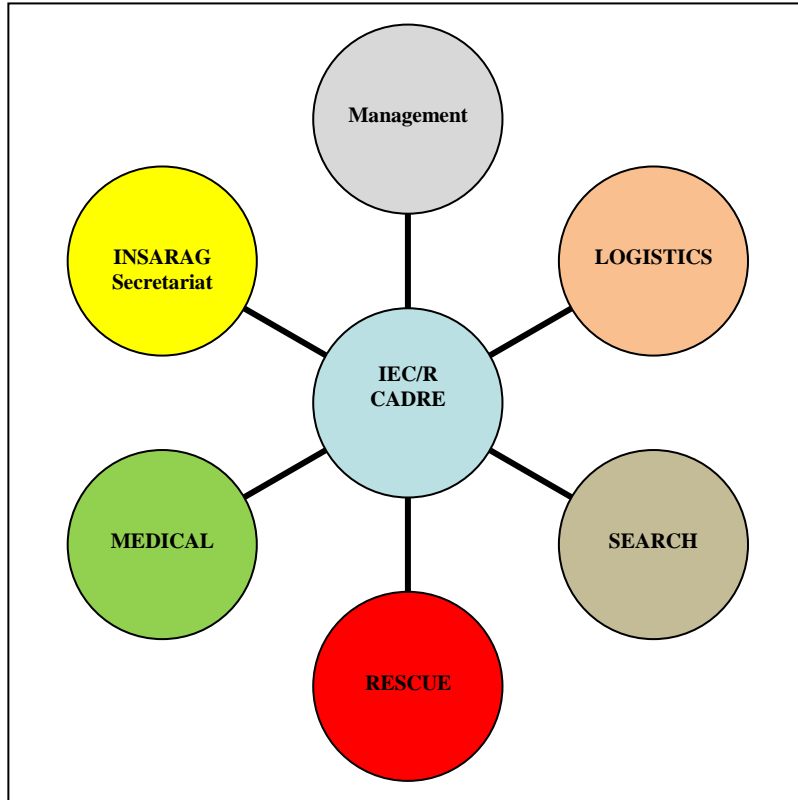
For further details regarding the INSARAG Country Focal Point, see the INSARAG Guidelines, Section B3.7.

2.3 IEC/R Classifiers

The INSARAG Secretariat maintains a database of suitable IEC/R classifiers that are supported by their sponsoring organisation. The INSARAG Secretariat utilises this pool of classifiers to select the team for a specific IEC/R.

The team of classifiers are made up of USAR experts selected by the INSARAG Secretariat and offered by IEC teams from the INSARAG regions. The IEC/R team members provide the required technical expertise to evaluate the various components of a USAR team (Diagram 2). In limited instances, one team member may provide technical expertise in more than one function.

Diagram 2



The minimum numbers of classifiers required for an IEC are as follows:

- Medium Classification – 6 classifiers:
 - Team leader x 1;
 - Logistics x 1;
 - Search x 1;
 - Rescue x 2;
 - Medical x 1

The INSARAG Secretariat is encouraged, where possible to include a Deputy Team Leader to be mentored as a future Team Leader.

- Heavy Classification – 8 classifiers:
 - Team leader x 1;
 - Logistics x 1;
 - Search x 1;
 - Rescue x 4;
 - Medical x 1

The INSARAG Secretariat is encouraged, where possible to include a Deputy Team Leader to be mentored as a future Team Leader.

The number of classifiers for an IER will vary depending upon the level of assessment required. See Section 10 for more details on the IER process.

The mandate of the IEC/R cadre is to ensure the USAR team undergoing the classification is measured in an objective and non-biased manner. Furthermore, they are required to ensure that a USAR team satisfactorily demonstrates all of the competencies and skills required by the IEC/R Checklist for the level of classification being sought.

The IEC/R classifiers are acknowledged as representatives of the INSARAG community and, as such, must uphold the principles and standards established by INSARAG. Therefore, when participating in an IEC/R, the individual classifiers represent the INSARAG community and not their particular home organisation. Therefore, they need to remain objective and conduct the classification according to the minimum standards required by the INSARAG Guidelines. It is important that classifiers do not attempt to promote or enforce their home country's particular methodology.

The ISG acknowledges and respects that USAR teams operate using different Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), doctrines and techniques to achieve common objectives. Therefore the IEC/R classifiers are not expected to provide comment regarding technical standards beyond those listed in the INSARAG Guidelines.



The classification process does provide the USAR team with unique access to international experts. These peers are able to impart valuable advice and guidance, and at the same time learn from one another and strengthen relationships.

The classifiers are however required to ensure that USAR operations are conducted safely and therefore cannot disregard or overlook a violation of generally accepted safe practices. Therefore, if a concern regarding safety arises, the classifiers will, in consultation with the host country liaison officer, intervene and if deemed necessary, stop the particular activity in question until it can be continued in a safe manner.

2.3.1 Selection of Classifiers

The ISG has endorsed the discipline specific TORPS for IEC/R classifiers (**Annex C.4-C.8**) which is available from the INSARAG Secretariat, the INSARAG web site (<http://www.insarag.org>) or the VO. USAR experts from INSARAG USAR teams who are interested in becoming classifiers are required to meet the eligibility criteria outlined in these TORPS.

Candidates who meet the criteria are required to obtain approval from their respective sponsoring organisations in order to make themselves available to the INSARAG Secretariat as classifiers. This pre-approval is important as all the costs associated with the IEC/R classifiers are the responsibility of their sponsoring organisation. The sponsoring organisation will usually stipulate how many times one of its classifiers can be called upon within a given financial period.

Once approval from the sponsoring organisation has been received, the candidate is required to complete and submit the **IEC/R Classifier Application Form (Annex D)**, available from the INSARAG Secretariat or the VO.

The INSARAG Secretariat will then review the application. If successful, the candidate will be notified in writing and entered into the IEC/R classifier data base which is managed by the INSARAG Secretariat. The selection of classifiers is based on, among others, the following:

- Annual commitment and availability (minimum of one IEC/R per annum). The INSARAG Country Focal Point will be required to commit to supporting the availability of their classifiers and this will be reported at the annual ISG meeting;
- Confirmed financial support from sponsoring organisation for annual participation in the classification process;
- Successful fulfilment of the TORPS requirements;
- Participation in relevant IEC/R training activities.

2.3.2 Classifier Responsibilities

Classifier sponsors and the individual classifiers must be aware that in order to remain active as a classifier, they are required to make themselves available for a minimum of one IEC/R per year.

2.3.2.1 IEC/R Team Leader

The details on the Terms of Reference / Person Specifications (TORPS) are recorded in **IEC Team Leader, (Annex C.2)**. The IEC/R Team Leader has, among others, the following key responsibilities:

- Pre-IEC/R:
 - Liaise with host country IEC/R Focal Point;
 - Liaise with the IEC/R Mentor;
 - Liaise with INSARAG Secretariat, including regular updates on the USAR team's state of readiness to successfully complete the IEC/R at the desired classification level;
 - Liaise with selected IEC/R classifiers;
 - Task allocation of IEC/R classifiers;
 - Facilitate the review of the Portfolio of Evidence (POE) by the IEC/R classifiers;
 - Coordination of the POE review and/or discussion of any matters arising during the review with the USAR team IEC/R Focal Point and the IEC/R Mentor;
 - Inform the INSARAG Secretariat that the IEC/R classifiers have provided approval to proceed with the IEC/R once all relevant matters pertaining to the POE have been satisfactorily resolved;
 - Following endorsement from the INSARAG Secretariat, inform the host country IEC/R Focal Point that the IEC/R Classification has been approved as scheduled;

- Coordinate the arrival of the IEC/R classifiers in the host country to ensure all members arrive in good time for the commencement of the IEC/R.
- During the IEC/R exercise:
 - Lead the IEC/R team during all formal meetings and events;
 - Liaise and coordinate activities with the INSARAG Secretariat representative;
 - Ensure all IEC/R classifiers are familiar with their assigned tasks;
 - Conduct an IEC/R classifiers briefing prior to the start of the IEC;
 - Ensure the IEC/R classifiers remain objective and adhere to the minimum standards required by the INSARAG Guidelines;
 - Ensure the IEC/R classifiers are familiar with the application of the IEC/R Checklists during the IEC/R;
 - Develop a work schedule to ensure that the IEC/R classifiers observe the key areas of operation they have been assigned;
 - Conduct a walk-through of the exercise site and review the simulation exercise scenarios to ensure the scenarios will enable the IEC/R classifiers to observe all the technical aspects required by the IEC/R Checklist;
 - Coordinate and facilitate any meetings or discussions that may be required during the IEC/R;
 - Coordinate a daily IEC/R classifiers debrief;
 - Coordinate the completion of the IEC/R Report, the draft of which is to be submitted no later than one week after the IEC, with recommendations to the INSARAG Secretariat.

Should a team at the end of the IEC/R fail to fully meet the IEC/R Checklist requirements, the IEC/R Team Leader will, after close consultations with the INSARAG Secretariat, recommend an unbiased, and well justified unanimous decision that the team in question is “not yet” ready.

The final IEC/R Report with the full results and advisory notes will be sent to the INSARAG Country Focal Point and the USAR team by the INSARAG Secretariat within 30 days of the IEC/R.

2.3.2.2 IEC/R Classifiers

The IEC/R classifiers have, among others, the following key responsibilities:

- Pre-IEC/R:
 - Liaise with IEC/R Team Leader;
 - Review the POE with specific reference to those sections that fall within their specific technical expertise and task allocation;
 - Raise any issues of uncertainty or concern regarding the POE through the IEC/R Team Leader;
 - Ensure timely arrival in the host country.

- During the IEC/R exercise:
 - Ensure familiarity with individual tasking as per the IEC/R Team Leader;
 - Participate in the IEC/R classifiers briefing;
 - Remain objective and adhere to the minimum standards required by the INSARAG Guidelines;
 - Ensure familiarity with the application of the IEC/R Checklist during the classification;
 - Adhere to the work schedule during the IEC/R simulation exercise;
 - Participate in the review of the exercise simulation to ensure the scenarios will enable the classifiers to observe all the technical aspects required by the IEC/R Checklist;
 - Participate in the daily IEC/R classifiers debrief;
 - Contribute to the completion of the IEC/R Report.

Specific areas that IEC/R classifiers should be looking out for will be covered in the later part of this handbook on the reclassification process (Section 10).

2.4 IEC/R Mentor/Mentoring Team

To lessen the potential of a USAR team being unsuccessful in its attempt to gain classification, the ISG unanimously endorsed that it is compulsory for USAR teams wanting to undergo an IEC to engage an IEC Mentor or Mentoring Team.

IEC Mentors must be aware of the significant responsibility, both to the USAR team and the INSARAG Secretariat, they assume when taking on the role of IEC/R Mentor. Acting as a mentor is a major undertaking that requires a significant commitment, investment of time, and in some cases, resources. Prospective mentors are encouraged to carefully consider their ability to make the required commitment before entering into a mentoring role. The mentors have the responsibility of recommending to the INSARAG Secretariat whether the IEC exercise should go ahead as planned or whether it should be postponed.

The details on the Terms of Reference / Person Specifications (TORPS) are recorded in **Mentor, (Annex C.3)**. Individuals interested in becoming mentors are required to complete the **IEC/R Mentor Application Form (Annex E)** and submit this to the INSARAG Secretariat for consideration.

There are essentially two routes available to a USAR team regarding the engagement of an IEC Mentor i.e., Bilateral USAR Team Support and/or a Professional Consultant.

2.4.1 Bilateral USAR Team Support

This occurs when the USAR team engages the assistance of another USAR team. It is however a prerequisite that the USAR team providing the mentoring has successfully undergone an IEC at the same level of classification being sought by the team undergoing the IEC.

The nature of this engagement, e.g., costs and time allocation will be determined and mutually agreed by the respective organisations.

2.4.2 Professional Consultant

This occurs when the USAR team engages the assistance of a professional consultant. The INSARAG Secretariat is able to suggest suitable mentors that, based on past experience, are able to assist a USAR team as a mentor. The INSARAG Secretariat will, at the request of the country preparing for an IEC, make suggestions for consideration.

The nature of this engagement, e.g., costs and time allocation, will be determined and mutually agreed between the USAR team and the consultant.

A USAR Team may elect to use a combination of both the bi-lateral USAR team as well as the consultant mechanisms.

2.4.3 Mentor Responsibilities

The mentor becomes the project officer/coordinator for the IEC/R and is responsible for assessing the preparedness (administratively) and readiness (tactically) of the USAR team.

The mentor takes on a significant responsibility when providing these services. The commitment required should not be underestimated as it may be significant, depending on the degree of readiness of the USAR team in question.

The mentor has, among others, the following key responsibilities:

- Prior to the IEC/R exercise:
 - Maintain a complete competency regarding the capacity and capability required to establish a USAR team.
 - To have significant USAR experience, both administrative and technical.
 - Conduct a detailed assessment of the USAR team's state of readiness, map this against the requirements of the IEC/R and identify any gaps that require corrective action;
 - Based on the findings of the above, in conjunction with the USAR team management, map out a strategy that will enable the USAR team to address any gaps identified within the required timeline;
 - Work with the USAR team, as required, to implement the preparation strategy;
 - Provide technical guidance on SOP, resourcing, administration, equipment requirements and operational techniques as required;
 - Provide a link to the INSARAG Secretariat and ensure it is regularly kept up to date regarding the progress and status of the team;
 - If it appears that the team is likely to be unsuccessful in its bid, the mentor has the responsibility to notify the USAR team management, its sponsoring organisation and the INSARAG Secretariat as soon as possible and recommend an appropriate course of action (i.e. postponement of the IEC/R);
 - Liaise with the IEC Team Leader as required;
 - Liaise with the USAR team's sponsoring organisation as required;

- Liaise with the head of the IEC Exercise Control (EXCON) team;
- Provide guidance on the compilation of the Abbreviated POE and Comprehensive POE;
- Complete the Mentors Assessment Report;
- Review the POE prior to it being submitted to the INSARAG Secretariat to ensure it meets all requirements. If there are any shortfalls in the POE, work with the USAR team to address any issues identified;
- Provide guidance on the design of the IEC simulation exercise to ensure it is designed in such a manner that is constantly evolving over a minimum of a 36 hour period and that the scenarios are realistic and simulate as far as possible “real-life” circumstances that enable the classifiers to observe all of the requirements of the IEC/R Checklist. See **Section 4.2 IEC Exercise**.
- Participate in regular teleconferences with the INSARAG Secretariat, IEC/R Team Leader and classifiers as may be required and provide relevant feedback on the team’s progress.
- During the IEC/R Exercise:
 - Be present during the IEC/R to provide any clarity on input provided by the mentor as may be required.
- After the IEC/R exercise:
 - At the conclusion of the IEC, assist in reviewing the IEC/R Report and provide advice on the implementation of its recommendations.

It must be noted that it may not be easy to identify a mentor that possesses the expertise to be able to provide adequate in-depth advice on all the 5 major components of USAR; particularly with regard to the medical preparation. It is therefore recommended that every classifying team consider the comments and advice from the mentor and if needed, engage with another IEC team, and engage suitable experts in the relevant components to assist during the preparatory phase leading up to the IEC/R.

2.5 USAR Team Sponsoring Organisation

The USAR team sponsoring organisation is responsible for ensuring that the team nominated meets the minimum response standard of INSARAG and has the capacity for international deployment.

This is a vitally important part of ensuring a USAR team is ready to undergo an IEC/R. Some of the key issues the sponsoring organisation is responsible for are as follows:

- If the USAR team is comprised of multiple organisations, it ensures inter-organisational agreements are in place;
- Ensures there is access to the required funding source for international deployment;
- Ensures there are agreements in place with aviation transport providers e.g., civil or military, that will enable the team to depart rapidly;
- Ensures all required insurance policies for team members, including evacuation insurance, are in place unless it has the facilities, capabilities or agreements that would expeditiously evacuate a USAR member when required;
- Facilitates access to in-country support for the team in the affected country e.g., embassies or consulates;
- Provides relevant and regular updates to family members while the team is on mission.

2.6 USAR Team

2.6.1 Government USAR Team

Government USAR teams are made up entirely of government organisations. In teams that have representation from multiple organisations, one specific organisation is usually designated as the lead organisation. These teams make up a country's national or regional USAR response capability.

A government USAR team requires approval of the INSARAG Country Focal Point to undergo an IEC/R.

2.6.2 Non-Government Organisation USAR Team

Non-government organisation (NGO) USAR teams are made up of non-government organisations. NGO USAR teams have the ability to respond autonomously and do not require the approval of its government to deploy. An NGO USAR team however, needs to be endorsed by the INSARAG Country Focal Point if that team is planning for an IEC/R.

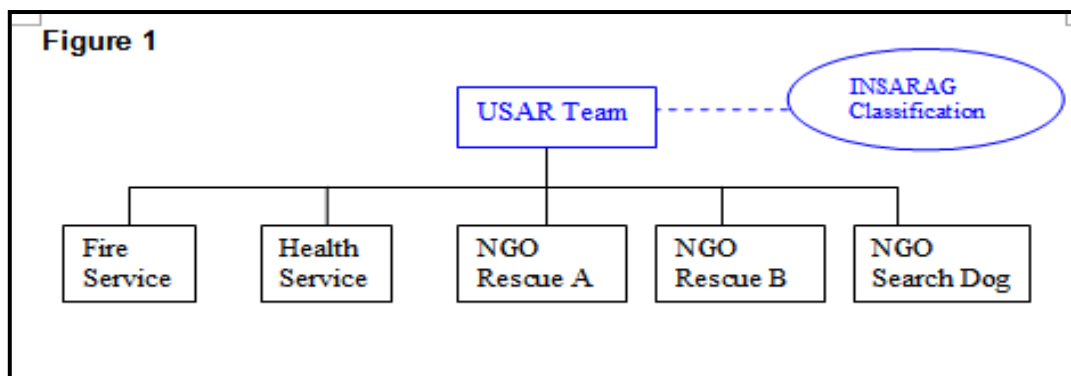
2.6.3 Combined Government / NGO USAR Teams

These are USAR Teams that comprise a combination of both government (single or multiple organisations) and NGO organisations.

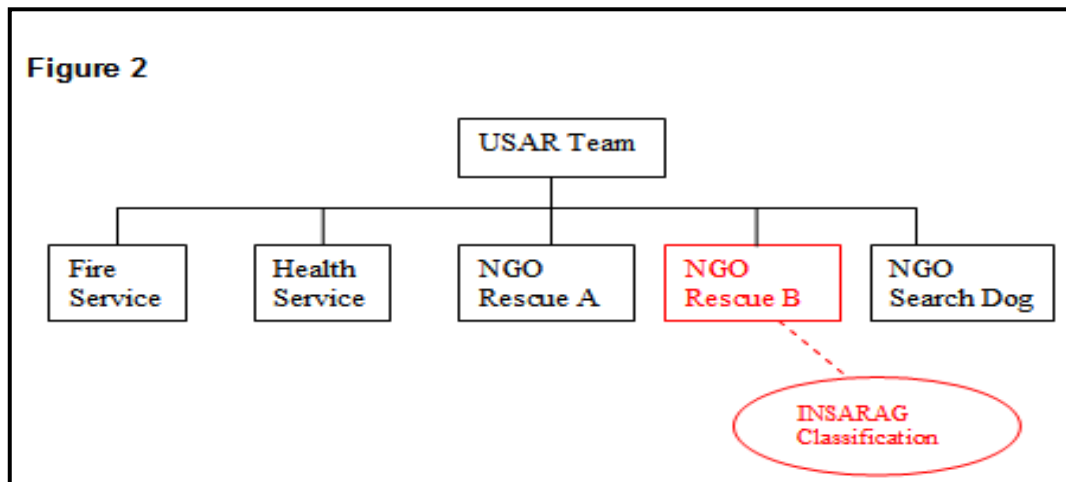
A combined government / NGO USAR team requires approval of the INSARAG Country Focal Point to undergo an IEC or IER.

2.6.4 IEC of USAR Teams Composed of Multiple Organisations

The IEC classification awarded is only applicable to the USAR team, including all its component organisations, being classified. If the USAR team is composed of several independent organisations (e.g.; government organisations and NGOs that respond together as a combined team) then the classification awarded is applicable to that combination of organisations only (Figure 1). If any single component of the classified team does not respond with the rest of the team, the IEC classification becomes null and void.



If any one of the component organisations of a combined team intends to respond independently and would like an IEC classification for when it does respond independently, it needs to be classified as a completely separate entity (Figure 2).



An IEC classification cannot be transferred. Any independent organisation that obtained classification as part of a composite team and subsequently leaves that composite team is not permitted to promote itself as having obtained an IEC classification.

2.7 Exercise Control

The Exercise Control (EXCON) plays an important role in ensuring the USAR team is successful in its IEC bid. The EXCON is provided by the host country, usually from within the same organisation that houses the USAR team. The EXCON team members must be dedicated to the EXCON function and cannot be assigned additional roles of responsibility during the IEC/R Exercise.

The EXCON is responsible for designing the simulation exercise to ensure it is constantly evolving over a minimum of a continuous 36 hour period and that the scenarios will enable the classifiers to observe all of the technical and medical requirements of the IEC/R Checklist. This simulation exercise needs to incorporate all aspects of an international disaster response from the breaking alert through to demobilisation.

It is important that the scenarios reflect, as close as possible, the “real life” situation a team is likely to encounter and are developed in such a way that will challenge the team’s technical and medical expertise, skills and equipment to a level that is commensurate with the level of classification being sought. It is important to keep in mind that the exercise is not a skill-set demonstration; meaning that static displays e.g.; steel cutting; concrete breaking; shoring; heavy lifting are not acceptable.

The EXCON is to prevent the USAR team from becoming aware of the details of the scenario and the specific evolutions in the build-up to the IEC/R in an effort to retain an element of realism and surprise, as would be the case in a real situation.

The head of the EXCON is required to liaise with the IEC/R Mentor to ensure all of the IEC/R requirements will be met and that the exercise follows the prescribed timeline. See **Section 4.2 IEC Exercise**.

The EXCON is responsible to ensure sufficient rescue tasks and evolutions are available, and make plans for contingencies in the event that a particular rescue activity needs to be repeated, and be fully in control of the exercise grounds and driving the simulation exercise through to its conclusion.

2.8 IEC Host Organisation

In certain countries the IEC/R host organisation and the team's sponsoring organisation may be the same, however this is not always the case. The host organisation has the responsibility of taking care of all of the administrative, hospitality and logistics requirements to support the IEC/R. Several key factors to consider include:

- Appoint an IEC/R Coordinator/ Liaison Officer (LO) who will do all of the liaising with the classification team, INSARAG Secretariat and if relevant, the observer group;
- If the host country has elected to invite observers, then similarly it is preferable that there is an Observer Coordinator;
- The IEC/R Coordinator will take care of, among others:
 - Invitations and assistance with visas;
 - Preparing the IEC/R information package;
 - Hotel accommodation bookings;
 - Working space for the IEC/R team;
 - Ground transport arrangements;
 - Function coordination:
 - Welcome reception;
 - Official functions as required by the host country;
 - Media Liaison.

2.9 IEC/R Observers

Teams undergoing IEC/R exercises are encouraged to accept observers from the teams preparing to undergo an IEC/R. The INSARAG Secretariat reserves the right to negotiate with the team undergoing the IEC/R exercise regarding whether it will accept observers in special cases.

It is the responsibility of the USAR team/sponsoring organisation being classified to determine if they will support an observers' program during its IEC/R exercise. This will include the components of the classification process that will be made available to the observer program. This in turn must be declared on the VO when referencing the IEC/R exercise so that potential observers are aware of the level of engagement they can expect.

The USAR team/sponsoring organisation will also determine how many observers they will support. USAR team/sponsoring organisation are encouraged to issue specific invitations giving priority to those teams preparing to undergo an IEC/R.

A country that elects to have an observer program is required to appoint a dedicated Observer Coordinator/ Liaison Officer (LO) to oversee the observers for the duration of the classification.

The observers' program must clearly state what will be provided and the roles and responsibilities of both the host and the observers. This will include travel to the country, accommodation during the process, transport to and from the venues, the required PPE for observers during the program.

The observers from USAR teams preparing to undergo an IEC/R are strongly encouraged to be accompanied by their mentor who is responsible for explaining the IEC/R exercise process to the team.

The observers will be advised that they have been invited to observe and not make comment about the process or the outcome of the process or to interfere with the USAR team being classified or the IEC/R classifiers.

Any interaction between the observers and the classifiers and exercise participants must be coordinated through the Observer Coordinator, IEC/R Team Leader, INSARAG Secretariat Representative and EXCON.

Observing technical elements of the exercise must be coordinated with EXCON in consultation IEC/R Team Leader.

Observers need to inform the host of their expectation and requirements regarding what specific elements of the exercise they would like to observe. The hosts should conduct an observers' briefing at the onset of the IEC/R to ensure all observers are familiar with observer schedule.

It is the responsibility of the host organisation, **NOT** the IEC/R Team Leader, to manage the observer delegation throughout the exercise.

3. IEC Application Process

The **IEC Two-year Planning Timeline (Annex F)** provides an outline of a time frame that a USAR team needs to adhere to with regard to its IEC preparations.

Once a USAR team and its sponsoring organisation have agreed to undergo the IEC, it is required to submit an application to the INSARAG Secretariat making use of the **IEC Application Phase 1 (Annex G)**.

The requirements for this application are as follows:

- The government's INSARAG Political Focal Point is required to submit a written application to the INSARAG Secretariat stating that the USAR team would voluntarily like to undergo an IEC;
- This application must be submitted to the INSARAG Secretariat **a minimum of two years prior to** the desired date. However it is important to note that due to the demand for IECs, there is a possibility that a team may have to wait longer than two years before it can be scheduled into the IEC/R Calendar;
- The application must be completed in English;

- Regardless of whether a USAR team is an official government team, an NGO or combination government/NGO team, it requires the formal acknowledgement of the INSARAG Country Focal Point in order to be eligible to undergo an IEC/R;
- The application form, which includes the requirements for the Abbreviated POE, is to be submitted at the time of the application (See Section 3.1).
- The application form will include a preliminary report from the Mentor that attests to the fact that the team is administratively and operationally ready to proceed, **IEC Mentors Assessment Report (Annex H)**.

In order for the mentor to be able to accurately inform the INSARAG Secretariat on the team's state of preparedness and complete the Mentors Assessment Report, the mentor is required to complete a detailed assessment of the team's administrative and operational readiness to undergo the IEC.

Upon receipt of the written application, the Abbreviated POE and the mentor's report, the INSARAG Secretariat will evaluate whether the USAR team in question is likely to attain the standards required for the IEC within the available timeline. If the INSARAG Secretariat is satisfied with the initial substantiation of the team's capability, it will:

- Inform the INSARAG Country Focal Point in writing that the team has been successful in its application;
- Allocate a provisional IEC exercise date;
- Enter the IEC into the schedule of upcoming IECs which is available on the VO.

If the INSARAG Secretariat is **not satisfied** with the initial substantiation of the team's capabilities, it will inform the INSARAG Country Focal Point, USAR team and mentor in writing identifying the areas of concern. Upon receipt of written notification that the team will not be accepted onto the IEC calendar at this stage, the USAR team is required to do the following:

- In consultation with its mentor, develop a strategic plan to address the shortcomings identified;
- Once these interventions have been successfully implemented, re-apply to the INSARAG Secretariat using a new IEC Application Phase 1 (Annex G) and IEC Mentors Assessment Report (Annex H).

3.1 Abbreviated Portfolio of Evidence

The contents of the Abbreviated POE are included in the IEC Application Phase 1. The Abbreviated POE, completed in English, is required to provide documented evidence to demonstrate that the USAR team has been developed in accordance with the INSARAG Guidelines and has adopted the INSARAG methodology.

4. IEC Preparation

The USAR team in consultation with the mentor needs to develop a strategic plan to address any administrative or operational gaps identified during the mentor's assessment. The implementation of this strategic plan needs to be undertaken against **realistic timelines**. This will enable the respective stakeholders to maximise the USAR team's success in its IEC bid.

During the course of the preparation process it may be determined that the requirements for a successful IEC cannot be met within the available timeframe. In this event, a deferment or postponement may be sought from the INSARAG Secretariat. An alternative date will be determined in consultation with the USAR team, mentor and INSARAG Secretariat. It will need to take into account other confirmed events and availability of IEC/R classifiers.

4.1 Comprehensive Portfolio of Evidence

4.1.1 Submission of the Comprehensive POE

The submission of a Comprehensive POE by the USAR team to the INSARAG Secretariat **at least 12 months** ahead of the scheduled IEC date is a key deliverable in the lead up to the IEC exercise. The primary reason why the Comprehensive POE is required at least 12 months ahead of the scheduled IEC date is to allow time for any queries raised by the Secretariat and IEC classifiers to be addressed. The POE is to be submitted on the **IEC/R Application Phase 2 (Annex I)**.

The requirements pertaining to the submission of the Comprehensive POE are as follows:

- The USAR team is to submit the completed Comprehensive POE to the INSARAG Secretariat a minimum of one year ahead of the scheduled IEC exercise date;
- Prior to submission of the POE it must be reviewed and endorsed by the mentor;
- This application must be completed in English. Where this is not possible, a covering letter in English must accompany any non-English documents briefly explaining its contents;
- If a USAR team cannot meet this key deadline, the INSARAG Country Focal Point is required to provide written justification to the INSARAG Secretariat as to reasons why it cannot meet this deadline and offer an alternative date of submission for consideration;
- In addition to the Mentor, the USAR team is required to nominate a point of contact within the team who can be contacted by the INSARAG Secretariat and the IEC/R classifiers who will facilitate the feedback required for any queries raised regarding the Comprehensive POE.

4.1.2 Contents of the Comprehensive POE

Refer to **IEC Application Phase 2 (Annex I)** for a detailed list of the contents of the Comprehensive POE. It must be noted however that the INSARAG Secretariat and/or the IEC Team Leader may request additional information.

If required, USAR teams can contact the INSARAG Secretariat for samples of the Comprehensive POE.

4.1.3 Review of the Comprehensive POE

Once received, the INSARAG Secretariat will forward the Comprehensive POE to the selected IEC Team Leader. The IEC Team Leader will coordinate a detailed review of

the POE with the members of the classification team. If required, the IEC Team Leader will conduct interviews with relevant members of the USAR team, the mentor and INSARAG Country Focal Point. They may also request additional documentation in support of the Comprehensive POE or request that some documents be translated into English.

The classifiers will base their recommendation on whether to proceed as planned or postpone the IEC exercise on the documented evidence of the Comprehensive POE. The Comprehensive POE therefore forms a critical component of the preparation process. The aim is to assist with making an informed decision to go ahead or postpone; this is to be finalised a minimum of 4 months ahead of the provisionally scheduled date. This will allow sufficient time for the final preparation if the IEC is to go ahead and will also allow sufficient time for a postponement without incurring any financial costs on the part of the classification team.

4.2 IEC Exercise

The EXCON is required to design and develop a field exercise (FIELDEX) that will provide the platform for the IEC. There are several key elements to consider in the development of the FIELDEX:

- Observation of a constantly evolving 36 hour (minimum) USAR exercise. The exercise is to be conducted as follows:
- The first 6 hours are used for the Response Capability evaluation which includes:
 - Alert and Activation;
 - Recall of the USAR team;
 - Pre-deployment medical screening;
 - Pre-deployment logistics check;
 - Pre-deployment personal equipment issue;
 - Pre-deployment briefings;
 - Departure customs and immigration;
 - Getting to the point that the USAR team is ready to “board the aircraft”;
- The clock restarts when the USAR team arrives at simulated border crossing point, where the USAR team has 1 hour to complete border crossing activities;
- The remaining 29 hours are used for the Technical Capacity evaluation which includes:
 - Set up and operation of the RDC and OSOCC .Personnel assigned to RDC and OSOCC are "out of play" until they have demonstrated proficiency at what is required for the RDC and OSOCC functions. This is for a minimum of two hours for the RDC, and for the OSOCC, to be operational and coordinate the USAR response until the classifiers determine that it is no longer necessary, minimally three hours;
 - Set up and operation of the BoO;
 - Reconnaissance operations;
 - USAR operations;
 - Demobilisation planning processes and developing a demobilisation plan.

Any travel time to the exercise venue has to be added to the 36 hours.

- The technical phase of the exercise is required to be conducted at a suitable venue that provides realistic props commensurate with the level of classification being sought;
- The technical scenarios should resemble real-life situations likely to be encountered during actual emergencies;
- The degree of technical complexity must be commensurate with the level of classification being sought;
- The technical scenarios must enable the USAR team to apply all of the technical skills required by the IEC/R Checklist;
- If the USAR team is aiming for a **Heavy classification**, the EXCON needs to ensure there are **two separate work-sites** with props commensurate with the technical requirements. Separate work-sites are defined as any work-site that requires separate logistical support;
- The EXCON is required to introduce “injects” that enable the USAR team to implement its redundant capacity plan of personnel (crew rotations) and equipment;
- To ensure self-sufficiency, the EXCON is required to ensure the USAR team is restricted to the equipment cache with which they would deploy internationally. During the IEC exercise, no equipment from external sources may be utilised except for a crane to demonstrate proper rigging and heavy lifting capability;
- The EXCON team should instruct role players to talk English so that the interaction between the USAR team and the role players can be properly evaluated by the IEC team. English should be used at RDC, OSOCC and when interacting with LEMA. If this is not possible, then translation should be provided on-site for classifiers so that they can perform their individual tasks adequately.
- Any alert and activation process should be demonstrated during the exercise. A power point presentation is not accepted to replace this demonstration.



The exercise should be designed making use of constantly evolving realistic structural collapse scenarios and should not be an exercise that demonstrates individual technical skills (staging the exercise using prefixed skill-performance stations). Furthermore, the simulated disaster exercise is required to encompass all of the key stages of international disaster response.

For the FIELDEX it is most likely that the USAR team will deploy to the venue by road. The IEC team will still however assess the air transport plan, as presented in the Comprehensive POE, if this is the means of transport used for international deployment. A demonstration of road transportation at the IEC exercise will not be accepted.

4.2.1 Alert and Activation

This includes but is not limited to:

- Notification of a Breaking Emergency;
- Monitoring of situation and placing the USAR team on standby;
- Request for international assistance;
- Approval for international deployment;
- Activation of USAR team.

4.2.2 Mobilisation

This includes but is not limited to:

- Arrival of team members at designated Point of Assembly (POA):
 - Pre-deployment medical screening of personnel and search dogs;
 - Pre-deployment briefing;
 - Pre-deployment logistics check;
 - Equipment loading;
- Arrival of team at designated Point of Departure (POD):
 - Departure customs;
 - Loading requirements for aircraft including hazardous materials' shipment declaration;
 - Departure immigration.



4.2.3 Arrival in Country

This includes but is not limited to:

- Arrival in affected country:
 - Arrival immigration;
 - Arrival customs;
 - Meeting with airport authorities;
 - Establishing and operating the RDC;
- Meeting with LEMA;
- Establishing and operating the OSOCC;
- Set up of BoO:
 - See INSARAG Guidelines Section F8.7 BoO Layout for an example of how to establish the BoO;
 - Note: One of the key elements the IEC classifiers will measure is the team's ability to communicate between the BoO and the work-sites, and how it coordinates equipment staging between the BoO and the work-sites. Therefore for the FIELDEX, the BoO should be established in a location that is NOT within walking distance of the work-sites.
 - USAR teams should also consider the size of their BoO footprint in anticipation of other arriving USAR teams.



4.2.4 USAR Operations

This includes but is not limited to:

- Reconnaissance;
- Work-site prioritisation;
- Use of INSARAG Marking and Signalling system;
- Search, rescue and medical activities commensurate with the level of classification being sought.

4.2.5 Demobilisation

This includes but is not limited to:

- LEMA declares end of rescue phase;
- Demobilisation including the planning process and development of a demobilisation plan.

Note: An IEC video of an actual IEC is available from the INSARAG Secretariat on request.

5. IEC Evaluation Process

Although the INSARAG community agrees that all USAR teams involved in international disaster response should undergo an IEC, this is a **voluntary process** and not being classified does not prevent a team from being registered in the Directory of International SAR Teams and responding internationally.

It should be stressed that the IEC is neither a test nor a competition. The IEC evaluates a USAR team to ensure it has successfully completed all criteria required by the INSARAG Guidelines and that the team fulfils the minimum, acceptable, safe standards of an INSARAG Medium or Heavy team.

The IEC is a peer review amongst USAR practitioners and both the USAR team and classifiers mutually benefit and learn from the experience.

The IEC Checklist, based on the INSARAG Guidelines, has been developed by the INSARAG Secretariat in consultation with the INSARAG community and it has been approved for use by the ISG. It is utilised by the classifiers during the IEC/R and its primary purpose is to ensure that the classification is conducted in an objective manner and is consistent from one IEC/R to another, thereby maintaining a uniform standard.

The IEC/R Checklist is reviewed periodically and amended as required. Any suggested amendments are proposed to the ISG, through the INSARAG Secretariat, for consideration. Only after approval from the ISG has been obtained is the updated IEC/R Checklist implemented for use.

The classifiers will conduct their work in English during the IEC/R exercise. However, the USAR team being classified may use its preferred language provided there are sufficient interpreters to ensure effective communication with the IEC/R team. The

exception to this is the management element of the USAR team as well as those team members' assigned RDC and OSOCC responsibilities. These team members are required to, at a minimum, be proficient at speaking English so as to ensure the USAR team is able to communicate and safely operate in the international environment.

Referring to the INSARAG Guidelines Chapter G: “Building USAR Capacity”, USAR Teams before applying for IEC, are strongly encouraged to first conduct a self-assessment using the Checklist in G10 : “INSARAG Organisational and Operational Guidelines for Capacity Building of National USAR Teams”.

5.1 IEC Programme

The IEC Programme is required to be submitted to the INSARAG Secretariat as part of the Comprehensive POE. Regardless of the level of classification being sought, the following IEC Programme is suggested:

IEC/R classifiers will arrive one day before the IEC exercise is scheduled to start.

- The IEC/R Team Leader and Secretariat Representative should assemble the classifiers to finalise the following:
 - IEC/R classifiers members' introduction;
 - Review of IEC/R Program;
 - IEC/R member tasking from IEC Team Leader;
 - Develop IEC/R work schedule;
 - Review IEC/R Checklist;
 - Review Comprehensive POE;
 - Prepare for meeting with USAR team and other relevant stakeholders.

Day 1

- Elaboration of the Comprehensive POE and documentation meeting:
 - IEC/R Classifiers meeting with the representatives from the USAR team management, representatives from its sponsoring organisation and the mentor. There should be sufficient time allocated for a detailed review. The IEC Team Leader may request this session to be extended if required. The following events should be scheduled:
 - IEC/R briefing by host organisation;
 - Open forum discussion regarding the Comprehensive POE;
 - Question and Answer session including e.g.,:
 - Mobilisation procedures;
 - Implementation of the USAR team's redundancy plan;
 - Most recent USAR training exercise;
 - Latest medical evaluation for participating USAR team members;
 - Details on post mission debriefing (if the team has been deployed on mission);
 - Medical evacuation and/or repatriation procedures;

- Random review of team documentation as deemed appropriate by the classifiers e.g., SOP, personnel training records, vaccination records, logistical inventory;
- Field Visit Segment:
 - IEC/R Classifiers visit the USAR team's logistics base or other specific areas of interest (Search dogs, medical, etc.).
 - IEC/R Classifiers visit the FIELDEX venue and review scenarios to ensure the exercise will enable the USAR team to:
 - Work in a simulated real-life environment in a constantly evolving 36 hour exercise;
 - Apply all the technical skills and equipment required by the IEC/R Checklist;
 - Employ the technical capacity commensurate with the level of classification being sought.

Day 2:

- Commencement of the simulation exercise;
- Simulation exercise begins at a time determined by the EXCON and continues until the 36-hour requirement is met.

Day 3:

- Conclusion of the simulation exercise;
- Classifiers conduct regular internal meetings and drafting of the IEC/R Report.

Day 4:

- Conduct any follow up meetings or interviews that may be required;
- Finalising the findings and draft IEC/R Report;
- Debriefing of the USAR management and team, with discussions and recommendations arising from the IEC/R;
- IEC team departs as scheduled.

Most USAR teams would like to include a closing ceremony into the program, attended by governmental officials and the local media. The INSARAG Secretariat strongly discourages this practice as it adds undue pressure to both the classifiers and the USAR team and there is no guarantee that the USAR team will be successful in its IEC/R bid.

Should a closing event be suggested during the course of the IEC, the Secretariat Representative and IEC TL will advise and take a final decision on this.

6. IEC Reporting

Upon completion of the IEC, the IEC Team Leader will provide the USAR team with a verbal debriefing of the findings of the classifiers and may announce the overall result the team has achieved. The detailed findings will be recorded in the IEC/R Report, the template for which is available in **IEC/R Report Template (Annex J)**. Should there be issues that require discussion on the final remarks (yellow boxes) arising from the classifiers, these should be resolved and agreed prior to the departure of the IEC team. The IEC Team Leader will have up to 2 weeks to provide the INSARAG Secretariat the final report and recommendations for the USAR team with regards to registering them as an IEC recognized team at the level classified.

The INSARAG Secretariat will provide the final report with the results to the USAR team and its sponsoring organisation **within 30 days** of the completion of the IEC/R. If the USAR team has been successful, the INSARAG Secretariat will update Directory of International SAR Teams and the INSARAG website with the classification the team has achieved.

The IEC/R Report is considered to be “**Restricted**”. Accordingly, the INSARAG Secretariat will only make these reports available to the USAR team management, the team’s mentor and its sponsoring organisation. Whether this report will be shared with any third party is at the sole discretion of the USAR team in question. However, the INSARAG Secretariat encourages USAR teams to share lessons learned at INSARAG events such as the regional meetings and team leaders’ meetings .These best practices can provide a valuable learning opportunity for other teams.

The IEC/R provides a USAR team with unique access to international USAR experts. These experts may be able to impart valuable guidance and advice to a team. The IEC/R Report provides a mechanism for suggestions and recommendations from the classifiers which serve to aid the USAR team in further optimising its performance. This is done through the Advisory Notes section of the IEC/R Report.

Sharing of key lessons and best practices by the IEC team through the INSARAG events such as the Regional and Team Leader’s meetings are highly encouraged.

6.1 IEC/R Checklist

The **IEC/R Checklist is available in Annex A**. Each line item of the IEC/R Checklist is awarded a colour and code. The interpretation of this rating system is as follows:

- A green box with a ‘Y’ (representing ‘Yes’) which indicates that the assessed team meets or exceeds the minimum standards.
- A yellow box with a ‘Y’ (representing ‘Yes’) indicates that the team meets the minimum standards; however, the IEC team has determined that further improvements are necessary. The reasons for assigning a yellow box will be provided in the Advisory Notes (Section 4) of the IEC Report.
- A red box with ‘NY’ (representing ‘Not Yet’) which indicates that the assessed team has not met the minimum standards at this point in time. A USAR team that receives any number of red colours is deemed to be “not yet successful” Anything marked as “red” requires the IEC Team to develop a Corrective Action Plan (separate from the Advisory Note) which is submitted to the INSARAG Secretariat for consideration.
- There is also a Remark column where the IEC classifier can record any relevant comments (positive as well as areas for improvement).

While every opportunity will be made to allow for repeat evolutions during the exercise, the IEC classifiers will ultimately make the final decision if the team has, or has not satisfactorily met the INSARAG minimum standards for a particular IEC requirement.

If a team is deemed to be “not yet” successful, the INSARAG Secretariat in conjunction with the IEC/R Team Leader, the USAR team, the mentor and the sponsoring organisation will determine the most appropriate means for re-assessing the issue/s that require remedial attention. This will include implementation of the Corrective Action Plan (CAP) and an appropriate timeline. Upon satisfactory completion of the CAP, a mutually agreed date for a new classification will be coordinated by the INSARAG Secretariat.

6.2 IEC/R Appeals Process

The IEC/R process has been established to maximise a team’s chances of being successful in its IEC/R bid. While every effort is made to avoid disputes, there may be circumstances in which they arise. In the run up to the IEC/R exercise, there may be situations where disputes arise between the INSARAG Secretariat, the mentor and the USAR team regarding its state of readiness to undergo the IEC/R exercise. There may also be a situation where the IEC/R Team Leader may not agree, based on the Comprehensive POE, that the USAR team is ready to undergo the IEC exercise. During the IEC/R exercise, a dispute between the IEC/R team and the USAR team, the mentor and or its sponsoring organisation may also occur.

The INSARAG Secretariat representative will act as the mediator between the IEC Classifiers and the USAR team, Mentor or its sponsoring organisation in the event of any dispute.

The final outcome of the IEC/R will be determined after close consultation with key parties: the IEC Team Leader and classifiers; USAR team, mentor and the Chief of FCSS (INSARAG Secretariat).

7. IEC Recognition

If a USAR team is successfully classified as a Heavy team, it could respond as a Medium Team if required. However, a Medium team cannot use its classification to respond as a Heavy team.

If a Heavy team responds as a Medium team, it is required to clearly declare this on the VO, its USAR Team Fact Sheet and at any other relevant documents or forums.

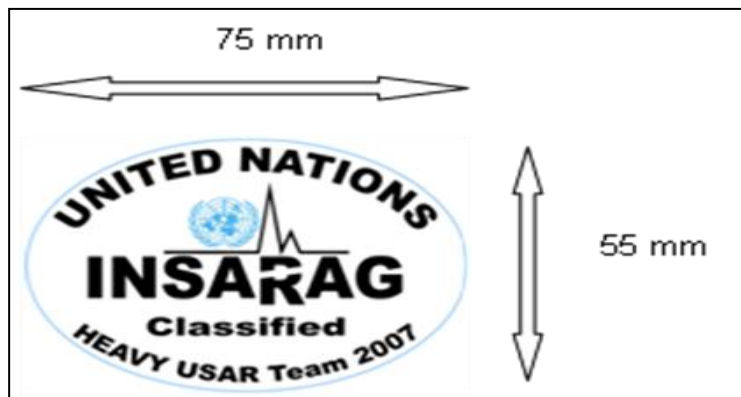
7.1 IEC Certificate

Following successful completion of the IEC, the USAR team will be issued a certificate at the annual INSARAG Team Leader meeting. The certificate, signed by the INSARAG Secretariat, has **a validity of 5 years** as long as active USAR response and participation is continued within the 5 year period if and when appropriate. See **Section 8, Obligations of Classified USAR Teams**.

7.2 IEC Patch

Following successful completion of the IEC, the USAR team will be provided an electronic copy of the artwork of the IEC patch/ decal by the INSARAG Secretariat. The following conditions regarding the wearing of the IEC patch apply:

- Black wordings over white background, and United Nations logo and circumference of patch to be in UN light blue - Pantone (PMS 279). If required, the INSARAG Secretariat can provide the USAR team with the contact details of its vendor;
- It is recommended for teams to wear the patch sewn onto a Velcro backing, on the left shoulder. If an organisation patch is already located in that position, then the IEC patch may be placed above that patch or above the left breast pocket;
- A helmet sticker/ decal that complies with the design guidelines of the patch, is also permissible;
- The design of the patch is not to be modified in any way;
- The size of the patch should be 75mm x 55 mm.



7.3 Directory of International SAR Teams

The USAR Team is required to submit an updated **Directory of International SAR Teams (Annex B)** form to the INSARAG Secretariat. The INSARAG Secretariat will then update the directory and the VO accordingly.

7.4 RDC & OSOCC Banners

The USAR team may also be issued an official UN banner for the RDC and OSOCC. The INSARAG Guidelines requires that if the USAR team is the first arriving team and also arrives prior to the UNDAC team, they are to establish a provisional RDC and OSOCC and commence international response coordination activities until the UNDAC team arrives.

8. Obligations of Classified USAR Teams

Following successful classification, to maintain currency for the 5-year period of classification, USAR teams are expected to meet certain obligations including but not limited to the following:

- Deploy to at least one international incident;

- USAR teams are required to respond in the configuration in which it was classified. The exception is when a Heavy team elects to respond as a Medium team. If a team responds at a capacity less than its classification, the following applies:
 - The USAR team management has a responsibility to clearly declare its response capacity on the VO and modify their USAR Team Fact Sheet accordingly;
 - The USAR team is required to remove or cover over its IEC Patch so as to avoid confusion in the affected country (unless a Heavy team will be responding in a Medium team configuration);
 - The INSARAG Secretariat will request a written report from the INSARAG Country Focal Point as to why the team did not respond according to its classification (unless a Heavy team responded in a Medium team configuration). This report will then be tabled for review at the next ISG Meeting.
- When responding to international disasters, ensure that the USAR team applies the INSARAG methodology;
- Conduct an annual simulated USAR response FIELDEX;
- The USAR team, or representatives of its sponsoring organisation, are required to be active participants in annual INSARAG activities:
 - USAR Team Leaders Meeting;
 - INSARAG Regional Group Meetings;
 - Earthquake Simulation (SIMEX) Response Exercises.
- Support the IEC/R process. The ISG highly recommends that USAR teams:
 - Provide minimally three to five USAR experts to become IEC/R classifiers annually.
 - Willingly share information with other USAR teams that are developing a response capacity.
 - Arrange bilateral assistance to other teams requiring mentors.
 - Willingly share information with other INSARAG USAR teams that are preparing for a classification.
 - Nominate team members to undergo UNDAC training.
- The INSARAG Political Focal Point is required to immediately inform the INSARAG Secretariat of any changes within the USAR team and its support framework that may fundamentally affect its capacity to function at the classified level. Based on a review of the structural changes within the USAR team, the ISG may determine that they are required to undergo a reclassification.

If the team does not meet these expectations, the INSARAG Secretariat will require the INSARAG Country Focal Point to provide written documentation to explain the reasons for non-adherence. Depending on the circumstances, the case may be passed on to the ISG for determination, which could include the team being declassified.

Non-adherence to the obligations of classified USAR Teams will also negatively impact on a USAR teams reclassification bid.

Regarding capacity development, classified USAR teams are strongly encouraged to assist to develop USAR capacities at the national level.

9. Joint IECs

If two USAR teams elect to conduct a Joint IEC/R exercise, they are required to submit a written request to the INSARAG Secretariat seeking approval. Neighbouring countries or multiple teams within one country are encouraged to consider conducting a joint IEC exercise. This offers an opportunity for each USAR team to share costs as well as providing an opportunity to strengthen national or regional cooperation. Exercising bilateral relationships, integrating and coordinating two USAR teams working together in joint rescue operations and co-locating in a designated BoO area injects a greater degree of realism into the exercise.

There are however several disadvantages that can arise from conducting classification activities in this manner, including IEC Team cost, competition amongst the teams, and divided focus within the USAR teams. This also increases the burden on the INSARAG Secretariat since it will require additional UN staff as well as two complete, separate teams of classifiers.

It must however be noted that a joint IEC exercise will not in any way compromise each USAR team's bid as each team will be individually assessed on its own merits.

10. INSARAG External Reclassification

The INSARAG External Reclassification (IER) is the process a previously classified team is required to periodically undergo in order to maintain their classification status. If the USAR team elects not to reclassify, it will surrender its INSARAG classification.

It is compulsory all teams wanting to undergo an IER to engage the services of a mentor or mentoring team.

The **IER Two-year Planning Timeline (Annex K)** outlines the time frame that a USAR team needs to adhere to with regard to its IER.

10.1 IER Pre-Screening

The INSARAG Secretariat will make an initial screening assessment of teams due for reclassification at least 12 months before reclassification falls due. This is to establish if the team has fulfilled the obligations expected of an INSARAG classified team since its last classification (see **Section 8, Obligations of Classified USAR Teams**). This screening will consider the following:

- Whether the team has deployed to any USAR emergencies requiring international response since it was last classified.
- Whether the team has attended any major USAR exercises since it was last classified.
- Whether the team has deployed in the configuration in which it was classified.
- Whether the team has regularly attended INSARAG activities such as:
 - Regional INSARAG Meetings;
 - Annual USAR Team Leaders Meetings;

- INSARAG Earthquake Simulation Exercises;
- Participation in INSARAG Working Groups;
- Whether the team provided IEC/R classifiers;
- Whether the team has undertaken any INSARAG related capacity building activity or mentorship of another USAR team undergoing IEC/R.

It is expected the team will take part in at least one INSARAG related activity every year plus contribute to the pool of IEC/R classifiers each year. If these criteria are not met the INSARAG Secretariat may either:

- Postpone the reclassification until the team's INSARAG activity increases;
- Require some formal assurances from the INSARAG Country Focal Point that the team will increase its INSARAG activity in the near future.

10.2 Reasons for Reclassification

10.2.1 Expiration of Classification Period

The ISG has determined the need for reclassification after **5 years**. Should a USAR team not be able to reclassify at the 5th year mark for valid reasons announced by their respective INSARAG Country Focal Point, the ISG may approve a 1 year extension, on a case by case basis. No additional extensions will be granted.

10.2.2 Change in USAR Team Structure

The classification awarded is applicable to the USAR team structure evaluated. If there has been any structural change in the configuration of the team, the onus is on the team and/or its sponsoring agency or INSARAG Country Focal Point to inform the INSARAG Secretariat in a timely manner.

The INSARAG Secretariat will facilitate a review of the structural change to determine whether it impacts the USAR team's classification. If it is determined that the structural change has had a negative effect on the classification, the INSARAG Secretariat will inform the USAR team and its sponsoring organisation that a reclassification is required. The INSARAG Secretariat will consult with the ISG Chairman and advise the USAR team on whether it can retain its current classification pending the re-classification.

10.2.3 Change in Classification Level

This occurs when a team migrates from one classification level e.g., Medium to Heavy or vice versa. Ideally USAR teams should aim to undergo this classification review at the five year mark. However, if a USAR team would like to migrate from one level to another within the five year period, they are required to submit a written request to the INSARAG Secretariat. A full IEC process is required for a Medium team who wishes to upgrade to the Heavy level.

10.2.4 Inappropriate International Response Conduct

All INSARAG classified teams are expected to uphold the highest standards of integrity and professionalism, and are deemed to be representing the INSARAG community in all their actions. Any formal complaints received by the INSARAG Secretariat regarding a

classified USAR team's conduct during international deployments or INSARAG training exercises will be reviewed by the ISG. The ISG may elect to establish an ad-hoc team of experts to review the incident and recommend an appropriate course of action. The ISG may determine that a warning is issued or in serious cases, the team's IEC status be revoked.

10.3 Scheduling an IER Exercise

The IER must occur at some stage within the 5th calendar year following the original IEC. The INSARAG Secretariat will confirm the exact date of the reclassification exercise with the team concerned. Any applications for an IER exercise that fall either before or after the USAR team's five year cycle must be submitted to the INSARAG Secretariat for consideration.

For cases where an IER Exercise should be scheduled as written at 10.1.2, 10.1.3 or 10.1.4; the INSARAG Secretariat will discuss the date with the USAR team in question.

10.4 IER Process

The IER will always include the submission of a Comprehensive POE, a self-assessment IER Checklist and some element of a scenario-based FIELDEX involving a continuous tactical USAR operation that lasts up to 36-hours. The objective is to allow the USAR team to pre-populate the IEC/R Checklist with evidence it has gathered in the previous five years. If the pre-populated IEC/R Checklist is agreed to by the INSARAG Secretariat, the mentor and the IER Team Leader, the size of the IER cadre might be reduced. Where possible, the IER Team Leader or classifiers from the original IEC will be included in the IER team.

10.4.1 IER POE Requirements

The submission of a Comprehensive POE by the USAR team to the INSARAG Secretariat is to be done as prescribed in **IEC/R Application Phase 2 (Annex I)**.

The requirements pertaining to the submission of the Comprehensive POE are as follows:

- The completed Comprehensive POE must be submitted to the INSARAG Secretariat a minimum of **12 months** ahead of the scheduled IER date;
- If a USAR team cannot meet this timeline, it is required to provide written justification to the INSARAG Secretariat as to reasons why it cannot do so and offer an alternative submission date for consideration. The INSARAG Secretariat may then elect to postpone the IER exercise;
- The POE is required to be written in English;
- The USAR team is required to nominate a focal person who can be contacted by the INSARAG Secretariat and the IER Team Leader and who will facilitate the feedback required from the USAR Team and mentor for any queries raised regarding the POE;
- The Comprehensive POE should also include:
 - A copy of the original IEC Report;
 - Copies of previous IER Reports (if applicable);

- Documented evidence demonstrating how the USAR team has addressed any issues highlighted during the IEC or previous IER reports;
- Updated contact details for the INSARAG Country Focal Point and USAR team, if these have changed;
- Documented evidence demonstrating how the USAR team has addressed any new requirements added to the IEC/R process since its last classification;
- Documented evidence demonstrating how the USAR team is involved in INSARAG activities;
- Documented evidence of international USAR response or training activities.

10.4.2 Self-Assessment using the IEC/R Checklist

All the items proposed by the team as being satisfactorily demonstrated by means of prior evidence must be fully detailed in the IER Comprehensive POE, with relevant documents e.g.; photographs, and reports available to verify this. Evidence that might be acceptable is:

- Items completed satisfactorily during actual deployments;
- Items completed satisfactorily during full scale exercises;
- Items completed satisfactorily during specific exercises;
(bullets 2 and 3 above need to be relatively recent examples that can be verified in some reliable way e.g. witnessed, photographs, video or proof of success);
- Documentary evidence that the team have fully maintained competence of a checklist item which had been satisfactory in the team's original IEC or reclassification; e.g. detailed training records.

NOTE: how the evidence is measured and approved will be determined by the:

- INSARAG Secretariat
- IER Team Leader
- Mentor
- USAR Team focal point

If agreement can't be reached, the default position is that the item(s) will need to be demonstrated during the FIELDEX.

10.4.3 IER Simulation Exercise

Although every IER will require some level of a scenario-based FIELDEX, it is expected that teams will be able to provide verifiable evidence for a number of the checklist items rather than physically demonstrate every item. To determine what is acceptable, the team should submit an IEC/R Checklist that has been pre-populated and outlining what they will demonstrate in the FIELDEX. However the FIELDEX **must** include:

- All items mentioned in the Advisory Note or marked yellow from the previous classification;
- Any additions, changes or amendments to the IEC/R Handbook including the IEC/R Checklist as compared to when the team was last classified;
- Any item where the team has significantly changed its equipment, policy or procedures since its last classification;

For details pertaining to the IER FIELDEX, see Section 4.2. However an abbreviated or modified FIELDEX may be acceptable depending on the evidence provided by the team as agreed with the IER stakeholders.

10.5 IER Team

An IER Team Leader will be appointed **12 months** prior to the reclassification by the INSARAG Secretariat. The remaining IER team members will be identified by the INSARAG Secretariat based on the specific requirements of the IER exercise. The default position will be a classifier for each area. The agreed levels of evidence will be used to determine the involvement of each classifier.

Where possible, at least one member of the IER Team will be a member from the previous IEC or IER Team.

10.6 IER Reporting

Upon its completion, the IER Team Leader will provide the USAR team with a verbal debriefing of the classifier's findings. The detailed findings will be recorded in the IEC/R Report, the template for which is available in **IEC/R Report Template (Annex J)**. The INSARAG Secretariat will compile and maintain a list of all best practices for sharing which will be discussed at the INSARAG Regional and Team Leaders meetings, and other IEC/R training events.

The IER Report will be provided to the USAR team and its sponsoring organisation through the INSARAG Secretariat **within 30 days** of the completion of the IER. The IER Report is considered to be **“Restricted”**. Accordingly, the INSARAG Secretariat will only make these reports available to the INSARAG Country Focal Point, USAR team management and its mentor.

Whether this report will be shared with any third party is at the discretion of the USAR team in question. However, the INSARAG Secretariat strongly encourages USAR teams to share these documents as this provides a valuable learning opportunity for other teams.

A USAR team that receives any number of red colours is deemed to be “not yet successful”. Based on the issues in question, if requested the IER team will provide a suggested CAP and a timeline in which this could be implemented. The INSARAG Secretariat in conjunction with the IER Team Leader will determine the most appropriate means for re-assessing the issue in question. Upon the satisfactory correction of the issue as determined during a reassessment, the USAR team will be deemed to be successful.

Any appeals to the final decision of the classifiers will follow the procedures highlighted in **Section 6.2, IEC/R Appeals Process**.

10.7 IER Recognition

The recognition given a USAR team that has been successfully reclassified is the same as that following a successful IEC. The USAR Team will be issued a new IEC

certificate valid for a further 5 years and the IEC patch will be amended to indicate the most current year of the reclassification. The update classification result will also be recorded on the Directory of International SAR Team and the VO.

11. Conclusion

The ISG acknowledges the enormous commitment, both financially and in terms of time, required from many different stakeholders to ensure a team's classification attempt and reclassification is successful.

This IEC/R Handbook, developed by the INSARAG community, serves as the reference guide for all USAR teams preparing to undergo an IEC/R. It is envisaged that by adopting and applying the information herein, a USAR team will improve its chances of success. The IEC/R Handbook also serves to define the INSARAG Minimum Standard.

The latest information on IEC/R events and activities is available on the VO or the INSARAG website, www.insarag.org if there are any queries or comments arising from this IEC/R Handbook, you are requested contact the INSARAG Secretariat: insarag@un.org