

IER 2017 Onwards - A Lighter System, and Greater Ownership by Teams for IER Arrangements

Introduction

During the Asia Pacific Regional Meeting in Xi'an on 25th August 2016, a paper was shared with the attendees titled "IER 2017 Onwards - A lighter system and greater ownership by teams for IER arrangements." In essence, the paper proposed a greater involvement by the team undergoing reclassification in terms of arranging the IER exercise and logistics supporting the IER. Additionally, it spoke of the process for pre-greening areas in the checklist where it was mutually agreed between the team, mentor and IER Team Leader, and thus, these aspects would not be required to be assessed during the exercise. This paper and surrounding issues were discussed during 3 breakout sessions at the AP Meeting and below is a summary of these sessions.

There was broad consensus that a lighter approach is achievable and sensible and that teams should and could have more ownership of the IER process alleviating the pressure on FCSS. In addition, there was broad consensus of pre-greening the checklist but it was important that this process was based on solid evidence and not below the expected standards.

Particular aspects discussed on these arrangements were as follows:

1. Pre-Greening Checklist

Whilst this was an agreed position, there were aspects raised about this process. One view was that anything that was yellow at the previous IEC or IER could not be pre-greened but that these areas should be demonstrated during the exercise at the IER. Another view raised that there should be pre-determined criteria in the criteria that could be pre-greened whilst other criteria should remain as checklist capabilities that should be demonstrated in an exercise. It is recommended that these points be further discussed with the Training Working Group (TWG) to gain their view prior to presenting to the Team Leaders Meeting in Japan.

2. Mentors

It was recommended that mentors are engaged further out from the IER and it was proposed that a 2-3 year lead in period would be more suitable rather than 6-9 months. There is no expectation that there will be an increase in workload for the mentor, but rather their engagements with the team would be spread out further and could be scheduled to take place at the time of the team's annual exercise. This would allow the team to implement improvement strategies over a longer period of time and would potentially increase their ability of pre-greening more areas over an extended period whilst guided by their mentor. This then would normally reduce the number of Classifiers required for the IER. It was recommended that these mentors would be highly experienced and are hand selected by INSARAG and that they meet on a scheduled basis to ensure consistency in terms of evidence collection, evaluation and assessment. It was further recommended that the mentors and assessors are still sourced from all regions rather than a regional perspective to ensure sharing of best practice and consistency. Further, it is recommended that the mentors for teams are different for each of their reclassifications to ensure a broad and diverse view.

3. Corrective Action Plan

It was recommended that after an IER, the team would then be required to develop a Corrective Action Plan to address the areas in their classification that require further improvement. These areas would be identified either in the advisory notes or as yellows. This would assist the team to begin an improvement process in years that followed to ensure their readiness for the next IER and this may also improve the areas that can be pre-greened for the next IER. This Corrective Action Plan could then be added to the file with the Secretariat so it could be viewed by the next mentor and IER team leader to confirm and potentially pre-green.

4. Deployments

The issue of assessing and pre-greening team capabilities based on their deployments was discussed. In broad terms across the 3 sessions, this was not supported. It was discussed that the strength of the INSARAG IEC and IER process is that it is a peer review process and that there were too many issues around subjective assessments and in field assessments by people who perhaps did not have the necessary skills or background.

5. Greater Ownership for the teams being re-classified

All attending representatives from the teams were in agreement that they were willing and capable to undertake additional roles and logistical arrangements for the IERs.

Associated issues to note

- a. There was discussion on the need for a continued review by the Secretariat of the IEC and IER assessment reports submitted in an effort to address trends that require improvement and also best practices. There is a desire by teams to know what is best practice and how to share these learnings. In addition, if there is a trend identified as emerging for the same area that needs improving then this could be highlighted and incorporated into the regional earthquake exercise scenario and desktop exercises for continual operational improvements.
- b. Once the above process is endorsed and approved by the ISG, there may be a requirement for the TWG to make some adjustments to the guidelines/manual to ensure that the process is clear and consistently applied.
- c. Once the above process is in place, there should be a nominated period in the future to then evaluate whether it is more appropriate to have a different checklist for the IEC and the IER. It would be expected that a team doing continual IERs are well past the entry level at the IEC stage and that teams would benefit being assessed under a more appropriate checklist to enable increased capability and improvement.