EXPLANATORY NOTE ON THE TECHNICAL REFERENCE LIBRARY AND INSARAG GUIDANCE NOTES

Background

During the INSARAG Steering Group (ISG)[1] Meeting 2018, a key decision was made for the INSARAG Guidelines Review Group (GRG) 2020, as part of its Terms of Reference (TOR), to develop the Technical Reference Library (TRL) - a new knowledge repository that resides within the INSARAG.Org where all the best practices within the INSARAG community are uploaded and shared.

2.   These materials would provide guidance to the USAR teams beyond what is specified as the minimum requirements within the INSARAG Guidelines. The key difference between the materials in this library is that, unlike the INSARAG Guidelines and other ISG-endorsed materials in the Guidance Notes, the materials within the TRL are non-binding. They are also not part of the Guidelines. With inputs from the regional and Team Leader (TL) meetings, the library's concept endorsed by the ISG.

3.   In parallel with the TRL concept approval, the ISG also approved the segregation of the following items from the INSARAG Guidelines: (i) checklists (e.g. NAP verification checklist, IEC/R checklist), (ii) forms, (iii) Vol III (Operational Field Guide); and (iv) manuals (e.g. UC Manual) and be placed under the "Guidance Notes" section of INSARAG.org. The abovementioned items will remain an integral part of the Guidelines. This move was made to facilitate a more flexible and quicker content review/revision[2] process.

4.   Refer to **Appendix 1** for more information on the segregation of INSARAG Guidelines, Guidance Notes and the Development of Technical Reference Library

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[1] The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) was established to facilitate coordination between the international USAR teams in earthquake response as well as to work towards establishing minimum international standards for USAR teams. As part of the efforts to continually engage the large INSARAG community, the INSARAG Steering Group (ISG) meeting is held annually to provide updates and to deliberate on critical decisions involving the entire community.

[2] The contents of the INSARAG Guidelines will continue to be reviewed under a five-year cycle. The segregation allows contents within the Guidance Notes to be reviewed/updated when necessary.

Aim

5.   This note aims to apprise on:

   a. the features of the TRL and INSARAG Guidance Notes; and

   b. the revised INSARAG.org webpage layout.

Features of the TRL

6.   The TRL will reside within the INSARAG.org webpage and be organised to reflect the five key USAR components. All WG, Classified and Undergoing IEC teams are eligible to contribute to such best practices. Viewership of the materials within the TRL will be accessible by the wider INSARAG community.

7.   The TRL will comprise six categories – the first being "IEC/R AAR" and the other five[3] as derived from the INSARAG Volume 2, Manual B Guideline "International USAR Response Cycle": (i) Preparedness (ii) Mobilisation (iii) Operations (iv) Demobilisation and; (v) Post-Mission. The proposal aims to provide familiar terminology to the reader / uploader and facilitate easy viewing / upload of the desired content. Refer to **Appendix 2** for more information on the "International USAR Response Cycle".

8.   To ensure quality control, the respective Operational Focal Point (national) must endorse all submissions made by the team. Also, the Operational Focal Point will need to consult with the specific INSARAG Working Group (WG) for their agreeance if it relates to their respective area of interest, expertise and responsibility. Respective Working Groups are also able to contribute to the TRL upon approval of its document / proposal by the respective WG Chair.

9.   The INSARAG Secretariat UN OCHA will manage and facilitate the TRL, with assistance from the respective Operational Focal Point (National) and INSARAG WG.

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[3] The five categories from the Guideline "International USAR Response Cycle" were endorsed as categories for the TRL during the ISG 2019 meeting

Features of the INSARAG Guidance Notes

10.   Guidance Notes comprises three key INSARAG components that are binding. Thus, any proposed amendments or changes to any material under the Guidance Notes must be approved by the ISG before revision is allowed to be uploaded into the INSARAG.Org.

11.   The first key component is the relevant materials like Forms or Annexes that form part of the various Volumes of the approved Guidelines. However, it is important to note that not all Annexes in the Volumes must reside in the Guidance Notes. Relevant Annexes shall still be part of the Volumes to provide better clarity and immediate reference and understanding.

12.   The second component is the INSARAG External Classification (IEC) and INSARAG External Reclassification (IER) Checklists that the teams need to use to prepare themselves for external classification and reclassification. There will be six checklists available for teams to refer to: (i) Light IEC, (ii) Light IER. (iii) Medium IEC, (iv) Medium IER, (v) Heavy IEC and Heavy IER.

13.   The final component that would reside in the Guidance Notes is the ISG approved Manuals. Examples are the UC and NAP/IRNAP Manuals.

14.   To ensure consistency, all existing Guidance Notes in the current INSARAG.org (e.g. issued by the Medical Working Group) which are not to be part of the Guidelines (i.e. non-binding) will be renamed as 'Reference Notes' and moved to the TRL.
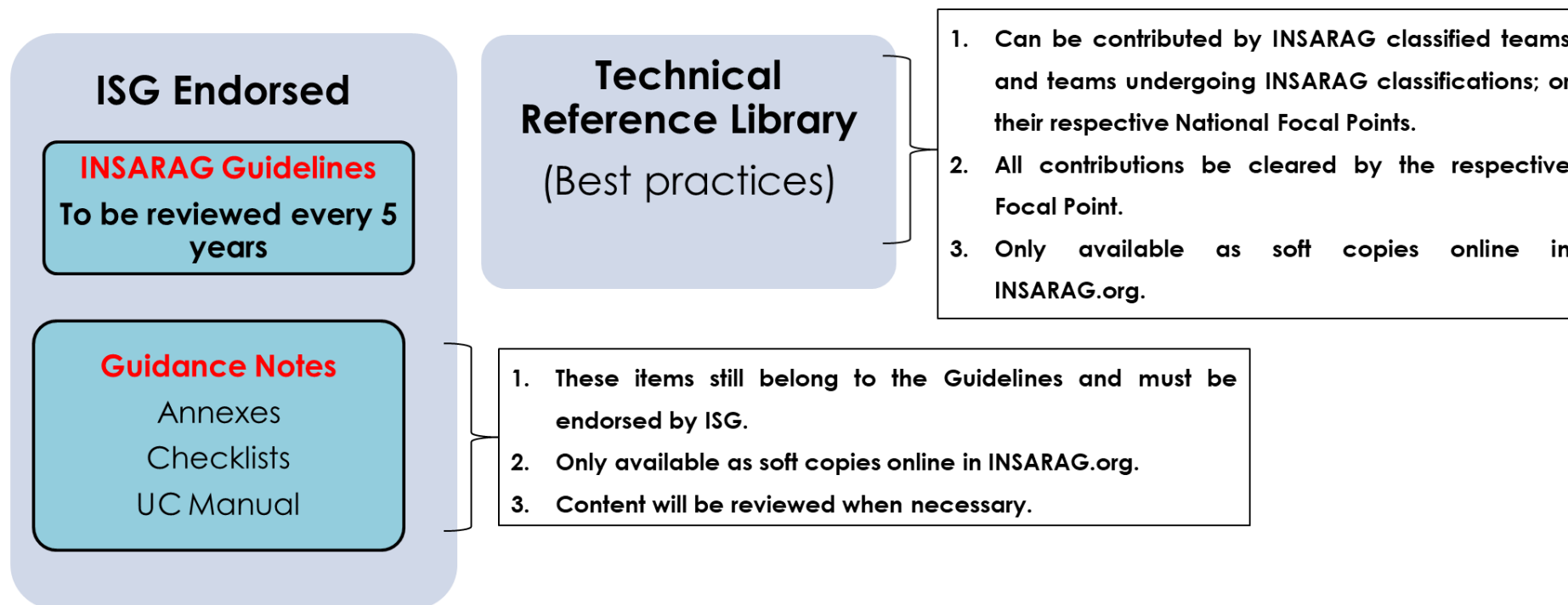
Conclusion

15.   In summary, the key features of the TRL and INSARAG Guidance notes are shown in the **Table 1** below.

Table 1: Features of the TRL and INSARAG Guidance notes		
	Technical Reference Library	**INSARAG Guidance Notes**
What Platform?	INSARAG webpage (insarag.org)	

Who is the Manager?	TRL to be managed and facilitated by INSARAG Secretariat, UN OCHA, assisted by the respective Operational Focal Point (national) and respective Working Groups.	INSARAG Guidance Notes to be managed and facilitated by the respective INSARAG Working Groups.
What Function does it Serve?	Knowledge repository for best practices	Knowledge repository for (i) checklists (e.g. NAP verification checklist, IEC/R checklist), (ii) forms, (iii) Vol III (Operational Field Guide) and (iv) manuals (e.g. UC) and be placed under the "Guidance Notes" section of INSARAG.org. Items remain an integral part of the Guidelines and can be reviewed/updated when necessary.
Who can Contribute / View?	Contribute – all INSARAG-classified teams and teams undergoing INSARAG classifications; or their respective National Focal Points. All contributions to be cleared by the respective Focal Point. View – wider INSARAG community	Contribute – INSARAG-Working Groups. All revisions must be approved by the ISG. View – wider INSARAG community

Segregation of INSARAG Guidelines, Guidance Notes and the Development of Technical Reference Library

The figure below is a visual representation on the segregation of the Guidance Notes and INSARAG Guidelines and the introduction of Technical Reference Library.

ISG Endorsed

INSARAG Guidelines
To be reviewed every 5 years

Guidance Notes
Annexes
Checklists
UC Manual

Technical Reference Library
(Best practices)

1. Can be contributed by INSARAG classified teams and teams undergoing INSARAG classifications; or their respective National Focal Points.
2. All contributions be cleared by the respective Focal Point.
3. Only available as soft copies online in INSARAG.org.

1. These items still belong to the Guidelines and must be endorsed by ISG.
2. Only available as soft copies online in INSARAG.org.
3. Content will be reviewed when necessary.

Introduction to the International USAR Response Cycle

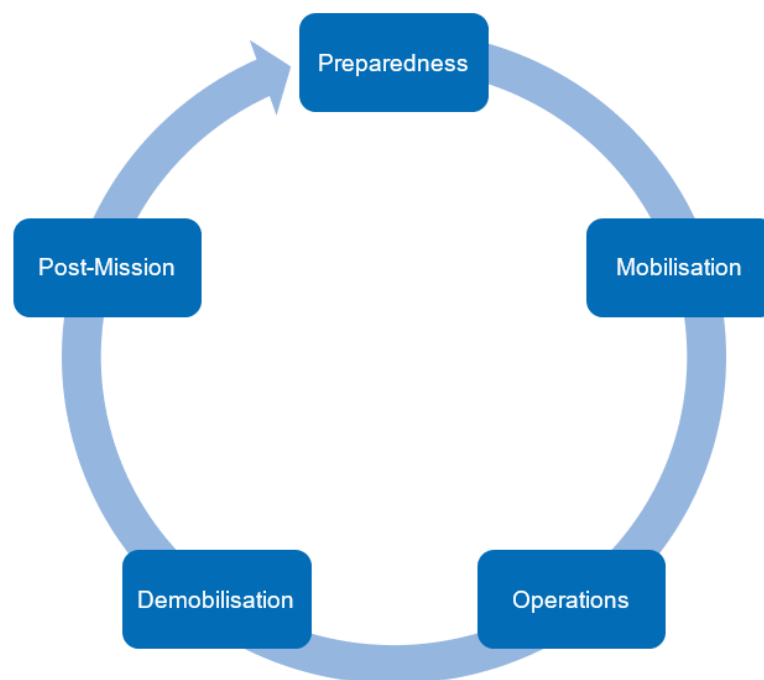1.   An international USAR response has the following phases:

Figure 1: The International USAR Response Cycle.

a. **Preparedness**

The preparedness phase is the period between disaster responses. In this phase USAR Teams undertake preparatory measures to ensure that they are at the highest level of readiness for deployment as possible. Teams will conduct training and exercises, review lessons-learned from previous experiences, update Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) as required, and plan future responses.

b. **Mobilisation**

The mobilisation phase is the period immediately following the occurrence of a disaster. International USAR Teams prepare to respond and travel to assist the affected country.

c. **Operations**

The operations phase is the period when international USAR Teams are performing USAR operations in the affected country. It starts with arrival of a USAR Team at the Reception/Departure Centre (RDC) in the affected country, registration with the OSOCC, reporting to the Local Emergency Management Agency (LEMA) (or National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)), and performing of USAR operations. The phase ends when the USAR Team is instructed to cease USAR operations.

a. **Demobilisation**

The demobilisation phase is the period when international USAR Teams have been instructed that USAR operations are to cease. USAR Teams commence withdrawal, coordinating their departure through the UCC, and then depart from the affected country through the RDC.

b. **Post-Mission**

The post-mission phase is the period immediately after a USAR Team has returned home. In this phase the USAR Team is required to complete and submit a post-mission report and conduct a lessons-learned review to improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency for response to future disasters. The post-mission phase continuously merges into the preparedness phase.

2.   For more information, refer to "INSARAG Guidelines, Volume 2, Manual B.