

The Strategic Plan of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) presents the vision, overarching goals and strategic objectives of the network, endorsed by its Global, Regional and Working Groups' Chairs, for the period 2021-2026.

Our Vision and Mission

OUR VISION is to save lives by promoting efficiency, enhanced quality and coordination amongst national and international Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams based on adherence to common guidelines and methodologies.

OUR MISSION is to prepare for, mobilize and coordinate effective, principled and flexible USAR assistance in support of countries affected by collapsed structure emergencies, and to actively support capacity-building at the local, national, regional and international level to ensure a localized and coherent response to emergencies.

Our Mandate and Role

OUR MANDATE is recognized and supported by United Nations General Assembly Resolution 57/150 of 16 December 2002 on *Strengthening the Effectiveness of International Urban Search and Rescue Assistance* and recalled in several further Resolutions. The INSARAG Hyogo Declaration (2010) on the *Recognition and Strengthening of International Urban Search and Rescue Operational Standards* and the INSARAG Abu Dhabi Declaration (2015) on *Strengthening Preparedness and Response Standards of National and International Urban Search and Rescue Operations* adopted in the first and second INSARAG Global Meetings respectively, gave us renewed impetus and guidance for our work ahead and put special emphasis on the need for national capacity building. Experiences in recent emergencies and other related platforms such as the World Humanitarian Summit in 2016 have recalibrated our focus and resources towards national capacity strengthening.

OUR ROLE is to:

- Develop and promote globally recognised standards for USAR assistance, coordination methodologies and tools;
- Mobilize and coordinate information exchange protocols between relevant stakeholders for rapid response;
- Promote cooperation and share experience at local, national, regional and international levels with partners, National Disaster Management Agencies from Member States, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), private sector, academia and relevant networks.

Our Values and Operational Norms

- **Adherence to common standards and methodology:** Members of the INSARAG commit to adhere to the INSARAG Guidelines and methodology as globally accepted and independently verifiable minimum operational standards and procedures, based upon expert knowledge and experience. The INSARAG network continues to develop these standards and procedures through shared and continued learning.
- **Inclusiveness:** INSARAG brings together national and international disaster preparedness and response actors and experts. INSARAG particularly encourages disaster-prone countries to join the network, as well as any country or organisation with USAR response capacity.
- **Gender:** INSARAG promotes the integration of gender perspectives in its daily work with the aim of creating a working environment conducive to gender equality.
- **Professionalism:** INSARAG promotes responsible, ethical and professional standards amongst USAR Teams and stakeholders.
- **Respect for diversity:** INSARAG acknowledges and respects USAR Teams' various operational procedures in achieving common objectives, while disseminating principles and minimum standards agreed upon by the INSARAG network.
- **Cultural sensitivity:** INSARAG promotes awareness and respect of cultural differences so that international USAR Teams can cooperate more effectively with national and international actors.
- **Needs-driven:** Mobilisation and deployment of international USAR Teams is only supported when the affected country's capacities are overwhelmed by the impact of a collapsed-structure emergency and national authorities accept or request international assistance. Moreover, the type of international assistance rendered is based on the needs of the affected country and not driven by the availability of resources.
- **Coordination:** INSARAG promotes internationally agreed coordination structures managed by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), promotes coordination of preparedness and capacity

building activities, and, throughout operations, assists Member States and affected countries in coordinating the emergency response.

- **Predictability:** INSARAG promotes predictability in search and rescue response operations, both in terms of response capacities availability, as well as in terms of coordination platforms ensuring efficient use of available assets in relation to the identified humanitarian needs.

All members of the INSARAG community, led by the Global and Regional Chairs, supported by Working Groups and the INSARAG Secretary in OCHA, work to encourage the relevance, sustainability and cost-effectiveness of INSARAG activities.

Our Strategic Objectives

Our Strategic Objectives for 2020-2025, developed by the INSARAG network, provide the global framework that informs the INSARAG Regional Group in the development of their strategies and objectives and thus attempts to guide their implementation.

Strategic Objective 1: Quality Standards

Strengthen global standards for a high quality of national and international USAR response

Objective 1.1: Emphasise the importance of the United Nations General Assembly Resolution 57/150 on “*Strengthening the effectiveness and coordination of international urban search and rescue assistance*” and continue to update, evaluate and **improve INSARAG methodology** to be ‘fit for purpose’.

Action Plan: INSARAG Regional Groups contribute to the improvement/enhancement of the INSARAG guidelines in preparedness and response at national, regional and international level.

Objective 1.2: Promote the **adoption and implementation** of INSARAG’s methodology for emergency preparedness and response by national governments and USAR teams.

Action Plan: Countries translate the guidelines and incorporate them into their national disaster preparedness and response plans and their standards for USAR teams.

Objective 1.3: Encourage USAR teams mandated for international deployments to participate in the **INSARAG External Classification (IEC)** and Reclassification (IER) process and to contribute to the strengthening of the process.

Action Plan: USAR teams engage in the review of the IEC/R roster and implement the recommendations elaborated.

Objective 1.4: Promote the establishment of **national USAR team accreditation** systems.

Action Plan: Countries adopt and apply the INSARAG Recognised National Accreditation Process (IRNAP). The Secretariat, with the support from Regional Chairs, develops a trained pool of experts to support the IRNAP processes, supported by the INSARAG classified teams in the region.

Strategic Objective 2: Localization

Enhance frontline response coordination by localizing INSARAG methodology and concepts

Objective 2.1: Enhance efficiency and effectiveness of **frontline emergency response coordination by adapting and localizing** the INSARAG coordination methodology and concepts to country contexts.

Action Plan: Countries incorporate the principles of USAR coordination into disaster preparedness and response plans as well as into national and international training programmes.

Objective 2.2: Promote **capacity development** at national and local level and strengthen **community preparedness**.

Action Plan: Regional Groups to support disaster prone countries in exploring ways to implement the National Accreditation Process and the INSARAG First-Responders Training Package for communities.

Objective 2.3: Advocate for **national and regional ownership** of preparedness and coordination efforts, in line with national priorities.

Action Plan: In situations where global travel restrictions are in force, regional team can provide bilateral support and guidance to disaster prone countries. They can do this through strengthening disaster preparedness and enhancing regional coordination for effective response.

Objective 2.4: Actively encourage innovative approaches, **sharing of expertise and good practices** amongst countries and organizations for national capacity building for a stronger coordination of national and international USAR assistance.

Action Plan: Support the creation and/or articulation of relevant networks and cross-collaboration of good practices through meetings and exercises to test national response plans as well as the INSARAG and the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team methodologies.

Strategic Objective 3: Flexible Response

Advance flexible assistance for more comprehensive and adaptable humanitarian response

Objective 3.1: Promote **agility and flexibility** of rescue teams in response operations across other disaster relief activities. Given the increase in extreme weather-related disasters requiring assistance beyond conventional USAR operations, to ensure future sustainability of USAR assets at national and international level and to stay relevant to the needs of the affected people.

Action Plan: Regional Groups to further discuss and explore the potential development of adaptable and flexible response operations in disaster relief activities, e.g. in response to severe storms or floods, in accordance with the INSARAG's commitment to agreed quality standards and coordination methodologies, while taking into account the needs of the affected people, and USAR teams' capacities and current mandates.

Objective 3.2: Promote **new ways of working** to be functional in difficult circumstances, such as the COVID-19 crisis, to be ready when disasters strike, and to stay fit for purpose in an evolving operating environment.

Action Plan: INSARAG explores and further develops new ways of working, such as remote opportunities in support of response operations, meetings, trainings and exercises.

Strategic Objective 4: Partnerships

Boost and develop partnerships for sustainable participation, ownership and governance

Objective 4.1: Strengthen collaboration and coordination, expand **established technical partnerships** and harness the collective **synergies of national expert members** for effective coordination and stronger preparedness.

Action Plan: Strengthening ongoing partnerships, such as with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), regional organizations, technical networks (Emergency Medical Teams (EMT) initiative, Environment and Humanitarian Action Network (EHAN), UNDAC etc.) and the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) through annual meetings, technical working groups consultations and joint training exercises (e.g. consolidated trainings in INSARAG Earthquake Response Exercises), to help strengthen the capacity and resilience of local communities.

Objective 4.2: Promote a broader outreach and increased engagement with **new relevant partners** in preparation for a collective response in case of disasters.

Action Plan: Establish mutual technical partnership arrangements with local and regional partners, agencies, administrations, NGOs, private sector entities and networks of first responders, together with the national disaster management authorities.