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How did cross-cultural dynamics impact decision-making during the revision, endorsement, and implementation of the United Nation's International Search and Rescue Guidelines? And how was cross-cultural bias overcome?

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RUNNING HEAD: HOW DID CROSS-CULTURAL DYNAMICS IMPACT DECISION-MAKING DURING THE REVISION, ENDORSEMENT, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UNITED NATION'S SEARCH AND RESCUE GUIDELINES? AND HOW WAS CROSS-CULTURAL BIAS OVERCOME?

How did cross-cultural dynamics impact decision-making during the revision, endorsement, and implementation of the United Nation's International Search and Rescue Guidelines? And how was cross-cultural bias overcome?

Melanie Jennings

PIM 73

A Capstone Paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of Arts in Intercultural Service, Leadership, and Management

SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro, Vermont, USA

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HOW DID CROSS-CULTURAL DYNAMICS IMPACT DECISION-MAKING DURING THE REVISION, ENDORSEMENT, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UN'S INTERNATIONAL SEARCH AND RESCUE GUIDELINES? AND HOW WAS CROSS-CULTURAL BIAS OVERCOME?

2

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Table of Contents

ACRONYMS	4
ABSTRACT	5
INQUIRY QUESTION AND SUB-QUESTIONS	6
LITERATURE REVIEW	9
DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS	17
PRESENTATION OF DATA	19
REVISION AND EDITING PROCESS	20
ENDORSEMENT OF THE GUIDELINES	24
FIELD IMPLEMENTATION	25
CLASSIFICATION AND RECLASSIFICATION (IEC/IER)	28
LIMITATIONS	29
FURTHER INQUIRY	30
USES OF THE STUDY	30
CONCLUSION	31
REFERENCES	32
LIST OF APPENDICES	34
APPENDIX A: IN-DEPTH INTERVIEW QUESTIONS	34
APPENDIX B: INSARAG MEETING SUMMARY OF THE 4TH GRG MEETING	35
APPENDIX C: FIELD COORDINATION SUPPORT SECTION (FCSS) – INSARAG STEERING GROUP MEETING CHAIRMAN'S SUMMARY	35
APPENDIX D: INSARAG 2015 GUIDELINES VOLUME I - POLICY	35

Acronyms

ESB: Emergency Services Branch

FCSS: Field Coordination Support Section

GRG: Guidelines Review Group

IEC: INSARAG External Classification

IER: INSARAG External Reclassification

INSARAG: The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group

ISG: INSARAG Steering Group

OCHA: Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

UN: United Nations

USAR: Urban Search and Rescue

Abstract

The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) Guidelines are an internationally accepted document that provides guidance to countries affected by sudden-onset disasters causing large-scale structural collapse, as well as international Urban Search and Rescue teams responding in the affected countries. This structure provides a process for preparedness, cooperation and coordination of the national and international participants. The purpose of my research is to examine how cross-cultural dynamics impacted decision-making during the revision, endorsement, and implementation of the United Nation's International Search and Rescue Guidelines and how cultural bias was overcome. I spent six months working directly with INSARAG helping with the revision and editing of the guidelines and I interviewed two members of the INSARAG Secretariat. My analysis (formed in conjunction with personal observation and theories from Anne Rød and Fredholm and Göransson) show that while there is variance in cross-cultural dynamics, it can be mitigated by a process of trust building and by creating a culture within a group that is accepting of cultural differences. The newly revised guidelines were endorsed at the INSARAG Steering Group meeting in February 2015 and implemented into the field. They were then used in April 2015 during the earthquake response in Nepal.

Inquiry Question and Sub-Questions

Context and Background

Standardized search and rescue guidelines make a significant contribution to strengthening humanitarian coordination and response. They are essential for team collaboration during urban search and response operations, especially because of the challenges faced when deploying multiple Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) teams. For example, the guidelines promote cooperation and experience sharing amongst, and in partnership with, member states, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and national, regional, and international partners. Updating and revising the guidelines is crucial for effective communication and collaboration to help ensure high quality support in the critical life-saving activity of search and rescue in the immediate aftermath of a disaster.

The INSARAG (International Search and Rescue Advisory Group) guidelines are an internationally accepted document that provides a methodology to guide countries affected by a sudden-onset disaster causing large-scale structural collapse, as well as international USAR teams responding in the affected country. The guidelines also as (INSARAG Guidelines Volume I, 2015, p. 5). “The methodology, as defined in the INSARAG Guidelines, provides a process for preparedness, cooperation and coordination of the national and international participants. This should then result in an improved understanding at all government levels in the affected country as to how international USAR assistance can be utilized to augment the national response so to ensure the most effective use of resources (INSARAG Guidelines Volume 1, 2015, p. 5).”

INSARAG was established in 1991. This establishment followed the initiatives of the specialized international USAR teams who operated together in the Mexican earthquake of 1985 and Armenian earthquake of 1988. So as not to duplicate existing structures, the group was created within the framework of existing humanitarian coordination within the United Nations (UN). To this end the group's secretariat falls within the Field Coordination Support Section (FCSS) of the Emergency Services Branch (ESB) of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Geneva. Under this umbrella of the UN, the INSARAG has successfully pursued the creation of a UN General Assembly Resolution on "*Strengthening the Effectiveness and Coordination of International USAR Assistance*" in 2002. This resolution is widely considered to have underpinned much of the progress achieved by the group over the last two decades (INSARAG Guidelines Volume I, 2015, p. 6).

The INSARAG's primary purpose is to facilitate coordination between the various international USAR teams who make themselves available for deployment to countries experiencing devastating events of structural collapse due primarily to earthquakes. The advisory group facilitates communication between these groups. The meetings between the USAR teams have resulted in agreements and have streamlined working together during actual disasters. These agreements resulted in the creating of the INSARAG Guidelines, which is a living document outlining the principles agreed within the group.

The INSARAG Guidelines comprise three volumes: Volume I: Policy; Volume II: Preparedness and Response; and Volume III: Operational Field Guide. This internationally accepted document provides a methodology to guide countries affected by a sudden-onset disaster causing large-scale structural collapse, as well as international USAR teams

responding in the affected country. The guidelines outline the role of the UN in assisting affected countries in on-site coordination. They provide a process for preparedness, cooperation and coordination of the national and international participants. This should then result in an improved understanding at all government levels in the affected country as to how international USAR assistance can be utilized to augment the national response so to ensure the most effective use of resources (INSARAG Guidelines Volume 1, 2015, p. 5).

I worked for INSARAG, or the advisory group, from August 2014 to February 2015 in Geneva, Switzerland. My interest and background in emergency services led me to this position and opportunity. While I was working with the advisory group, I supported the preparation of (USAR) team classifications and reclassifications and various INSARAG meetings, events, and earthquake simulation exercises. I also participated in the preparation and implementation of the official endorsement of INSARAG's new guidelines. Because of my experience, I am conducting my research on the following:

Inquiry Question

How did cross-cultural dynamics impact decision-making during the revision, endorsement, and implementation of the United Nation's International Search and Rescue Guidelines? And how was cross-cultural bias overcome?

Sub-questions

1. What was the process for revision of the INSARAG guidelines?
2. How did cross-culture collaboration affect how the Guidelines Review Group (GRG) edited and revised the INSARAG guidelines for endorsement?

3. What impact did cross-cultural dynamics have on the implementation of INSARAG guidelines and on external classification and reclassifications (IEC/IERs)?

This third sub-question provides a follow-up from the previous questions and allows for more insight into how search and rescue teams utilized these new guidelines within their own system and culture. Culturally biased guidelines will only work in systems that share that culture, or in this case, share the search and rescue mentality. These guidelines wouldn't work or even be practical in other cultural systems (non-search and rescue).

Literature Review

Introduction

INSARAG brings together governments, governmental organizations, NGOs and disaster preparedness and response professionals (INSARAG Guidelines Volume I, 2015, p. 6). My research observed cross-cultural collaboration and dynamics in large non-governmental organizations (NGO's) or multicultural teams and decision-making, all of which are applicable to the Guideline Review Group (GRG) who were involved in the revision, editing, and endorsement of the guidelines. In this paper, I define cross-cultural collaboration as the process that "involves people from different cultures with different resources working together for a common goal (Costa & Garmston, 2002, p.12)." Cross-cultural dynamics can be described "as the forces produced by cross-cultural differences that produce certain behaviors, motions, or emotions in interpersonal interactions (Beck et. al, 2007, p.4)."

Cross-cultural collaboration in large NGO's

Looking particularly at cross-cultural dynamics and collaboration in large NGO's or in multicultural teams, research shows that cross-cultural collaboration to address common problems is never easy. "US and European executives say 65% of the challenges they face when managing across different countries can be attributed to cultural differences (Rød, 2012, p. 29)." There must be some amount of adaptability or willingness to shift perspectives and learn from others. Skills such as adaptability, ability to read non-verbal communication styles, active listening, tuning into different styles of communication, being conscious and aware of impact, and a willingness to shift perspectives and learn (Rød, 2012, p. 28).

Cultural norms and intercultural differences demonstrated in the behavior of team members are crucial in understanding a team or team dynamics. We can adapt to visible cues, dress codes, knowing different languages, following local manners and customs, and to some extent reading non-verbal behaviors (Rød, 2012, p. 29). This tends to form cultural competence. "Cultural competence is a set of congruent behaviors, attitudes, and policies that come together in a system, agency or among professionals and enable that system, agency or those professions to work effectively in cross-cultural situations (Cross et al, 1989)." Researchers in the field of cultural competence have very similar theoretical themes. The overarching theme is that "in order to succeed, we need to understand and accept that there are cultural differences, to respect and be sensitive to them, and ultimately work with them (Rød, 2012, p. 30)." One way to achieve this is by gaining, earning, and building trust and credibility. Understanding ourselves and understanding

others whether it is as individuals, teams, or organizations is key to creating trust (Rød, 2012, p. 31).

While trying to build and create trust with others, especially within multicultural teams and large NGO's, sometimes conflict is created. Differing perceptions and assumptions shape how someone reacts to conflict. "The looming deadlines increase pressure and the personal stress team members experience contributes to many of them reverting to the fundamentals of their personal human programming (Rød, 2012, p. 29)." Some ways to prevent conflict include acknowledging cultural differences, especially when approaching problems or tasks, communicating roles, and effective time-management. Group norms can be altered in order to meet the needs of group members with different national, ethnic, religious, gender, or cultural identities (Halverson et. al, 2008, p. 218).

Differing cultural norms lead to "divergent perspectives; relative cultural frames, such as varied approaches to power distance relationships between managers and employees, individualism versus collectivism, temporality and the management of time, and even the dynamics of interpersonal space or habits of eye contact should be considered... (Halverson et. al, 2008, p. 219)." There are many issues that can often be overlooked or forgotten about. Working in multicultural teams involves dimensions such as time orientation, achievement-ascription, individualism-collectivism, gender egalitarianism, and intellectual autonomy and how they impact how problems are solved, decisions are made, and who makes them (Halverson et. al, 2008, p. 219). Recognizing these dimensions and that each person will bring his or her own individual and cultural impact to the team are important for cross-cultural dynamics and collaboration.

Decision-making

In traditional research in human decision-making, “the focus is on what one should do and how one should act based on rational norms and has increasingly shifted towards analyzing the context for decision making, the processes in the situations that are analyzed, the expert knowledge and situation awareness of decision makers, controlling processes, cooperation, coordination and communication (Fredholm & Göransson, 2008, p.113).” Decision-making was a vital part of the revision and editing of the INSARAG guidelines. The processes, analysis, knowledge, and cultural variation of the decision-makers were quite significant and fundamental to the overall endorsed guidelines.

Fredholm and Göransson (2008) discuss various models for decision-making, which I will use to examine cultural differences throughout the INSARAG revision, endorsement, and implementation process. These models of decision-making attribute to cultural differences. The models of decision-making described by Fredholm and Göransson (2008) are categorized as classic, naturalistic, dynamic, and distributed (p. 112-116).

Classic decision-making is more traditional and well structured. Usually these decisions are made by single individuals and are isolated from external disruptions. There is usually enough time to make a decision without any added pressure or stressors. This type of decision-making ‘style’ incorporates normative and descriptive instructive models (Fredholm & Göransson, 2008, p. 112). “Normative models address how people solve problems and make decisions under ideal conditions. These models are based on the choices a rational person makes in a certain situation, and are largely prescriptive (Fredholm & Göransson, 2008, p. 112).” Strong emphasis is placed on the benefit of the

individual. However, people or individuals are not always as rational as this model suggests. In descriptive models “the decision makers often use intuition instead of logical deduction (Fredholm & Göransson, 2008, p. 113).” Individuals seem to consider or idealize what they think will happen if they choose a certain decision and then can alter their plans before they are implemented. Because most classic decision models are often considered to include many incomplete explanations relating to the problems of decision-making, new theoretical structures have been developed on how people make decisions in actual and concrete situations (Fredholm & Göransson, 2008, p. 113). Instead of using rational methods in the classic decision-making model, more dynamic models, such as the naturalistic model, the dynamic model and the distributed model, are based on unstructured problems with shifting and often vaguely defined goals that focus more on how people use their experiences to make decisions (Anchorena, et. al, 2013).

The naturalistic decision-making model is applied under uncertain, dynamic environments and generally under substantial pressure in regard to time with much at stake and many different participants involved (Fredholm & Göransson, 2008, p.114). This model is more targeted toward the decision makers' perception of the situation or their situation awareness instead of their choices or options between variables. “Naturalistic decision making can be defined as the way in which experts – working individually or together in dynamic, uncertain and often rapidly changing environments– identify and gain control of situations, make decisions and take measures having consequences that are meaningful for themselves and for the larger organizations in which they operate (Zsombok, 1997).” Decisions are made after gaining control of the situation and usually

from experience. Rational norms and formal models, like the classic decision-making model, can't be established and instead contextual factors that exist in actual situations must be included because situations can be continuously changing. "Naturalistic models for decision making, however, do not represent a direct counter-reaction to the traditional method of viewing decision making (Fredholm & Göransson, 2008, p.114)." They have resulted from research needed to study decision making under actual situational contexts where the classic theory displays weaknesses.

Another model that looks at decision-making in applied contexts is the dynamic decision-making model. Distributed decision making is applied in dynamic environments, characterised by high information load that are seldom controlled by a single decision maker but instead by a team where the decision makers are only assumed to have access to a reduced intellectual model of the problem (Fredholm & Göransson, 2008, p.116). These decisions are usually made when it's impossible to make optimal or rational decisions, like the classic model. This is because it is impossible to know in advance, the state of the problem space that is to be dealt with (Artman, 1999). In this model, it is not the actual decision that has focus; it is the questions generated by making a more regulated process. Dynamic decision-making involves a "series of decisions to achieve a goal where the decisions are dependent on one another, or in other words, that later decision are based on previous decisions and affect them, and that the states for decision making are constantly changing, in part automatically and in part through the decision maker's actions (Fredholm & Göransson, 2008, p.115)." The environment in this model changes as though it has a memory or as if it occurs in real-time. Decision making in real-time also means that the

situation demands “decisiveness on the part of the decision maker, something that generally leads to stress (Fredholm & Göransson, 2008, p.115).” This model involves continuous action by the decision-maker by making decisions that can change the situation or by letting a situation happen on it’s own or organically.

The final decision-making model discussed by Fredholm and Göransson is the distributed decision-making model. One can say that decision-making is “distributed because a dynamic environment is seldom controlled by a single decision maker but instead by a team (Artman, 1999).” This differs from decision-making in groups, where it revolves more around reaching a consensus among a number of people. Group members have an idea of the situation to be dealt with. “The group members as individuals, however, do not possess all information but are instead dependent on the information being coordinated within the group (Fredholm & Göransson, 2008, p.117).” However, in the distributed model, “decision makers are only assumed to have access to a reduced intellectual model of the problem (Brehmer, 1991).” For example, in the context of INSARAG, a search and rescue team leader or member is not assumed to have enough knowledge to resolve more complex problems that are beyond his or her field of expertise. The problem in the distributed model is coordinating “reduced intellectual models of various participants so as to attain an overall picture, or situational awareness, of the situation (Fredholm & Göransson, 2008, p.116).” However, this isn’t to say that the individuals will attain a complete overall picture of the problem. Information must be coordinated between the participants. Communications constitute a very important and unifying factor in distributed command of incidents (Fredholm & Göransson, 2008, p.116).

The distributed model is fundamental for the integrating participants being able to conduct joint actions and must be based on a common foundation that to a large extent is associated with the discourse, or environment, in which the communication occurs (Clark, 1996).

The discourse embraces our way of communicating and serves as a frame of reference that allows for interpretation and better understanding of what exactly is being communicated.

This frame of reference also “embraces various types of resources that the participants have access to, such as background knowledge, knowledge of operations, social roles and identities, professions, etc., but also the use of objects such as books, manuals, maps, images, computers, etc. (Fredholm & Göransson, 2008, p.116).” Communicating information among a large number of participants takes time and risks that the information communicated is not always interpreted or understood as intended. This type of model constitutes the basis for reflection by decision makers and requires time for assessment.

It can be said, “that there are no direct conflicts between the various scientific models. The naturalistic, dynamic and distributed models are largely based on the classic models for decision making, but have come about as a reaction to the limitations in the classic model in explaining decision making in actual situations in more complex environments (Fredholm & Göransson, 2008, p.117).”

The distinctions made in the literature reviewed above are important for this research paper because the literature served as a guide for my participant observation in order to answer my overarching inquiry question. Rød’s analysis of cross-cultural collaboration was applied to the Guidelines Review Group (GRG) and their actions aligned with her theories, especially regarding how to overcome cultural bias. The forms of

decision-making, described by Fredholm and Göransson, were highlighted throughout the revision and editing process and these were the ways I analyzed cultural differences regarding decision-making within the group.

Data Collection and Analysis

Methodology and Data Collection

My main inquiry question is, "How did cross-cultural dynamics impact decision-making during the revision, endorsement and implementation of the United Nations International Search and Rescue Guidelines? And how was cross-cultural bias overcome?" In order to answer these questions, I relied on three sources of data:

First, I conducted in-depth interviews via Skype with two members of INSARAG, particularly the group that functions as the secretariat of the advisory group. Participants were recruited for the interviews through previous working relationships within INSARAG. These interviews focused on their involvement with the facilitation, administration, training, and implementation of INSARAG IEC/R's and INSARAG Guidelines. The interviews were semi-structured, following a set of questions to guide the conversation while also allowing the interviewees latitude and freedom to discuss what is important to them (Hesse-Biber, 2011, p.102). The interview questions used can be found in Appendix A at the back of this document. I wanted to interview members of the INSARAG Secretariat to provide a more in-depth look into the facilitation of the revision, endorsement, and implementation of the INSARAG Guidelines. Essentially, I wanted to highlight the effort and dedication of the members who guide INSARAG, especially through the revision, endorsement, and implementation of the INSARAG guidelines.

Secondly, throughout my work with INSARAG, I engaged in participant observation where I looked for specific indicators of cross-cultural dynamics and behaviors on how to mitigate cross-cultural bias. These indicators were drawn from two sources. First, Anne Rød's work on cultural collaboration and include the following: a) active listening and participation, b) visible cues, c) attitudes and behaviors surrounding cultural competence (as outlined in the literature review), d) responses to conflict or disagreement, e) roles, responsibilities, communication and decision-making styles, and f) cultural differences in relation to nationality. Second, Fredholm and Göransson's work on decision-making, which includes the aforementioned four decision-making models, each of which represents different cultural variances.

Thirdly, I conducted a content analysis of the INSARAG Guidelines, primarily, Volume I and other related INSARAG documents including: a) the INSARAG Meeting Summary of the INSARAG 4th Guidelines Review Group from November 2014 (Appendix B) and b) the INSARAG Steering Group Meeting Chairman's Summary from February 2015 (Appendix C). This content analysis informed the creation of my interview questions. Content analysis is inherently a mixed methods approach, creating space for both inductive and deductive capabilities. The strength of this method is that it enables researchers to examine patterns and themes within the objects produced in a given culture (Hesse-Biber, 2011, p.233). The specific content that I was searching for in the INSARAG documents were details regarding the Guidelines Review Group Meeting, including: nationalities of group participants, group background, the timeline leading to the guidelines endorsement, and the implementation plan of the guidelines.

Analyzing the data

I started with a deductive approach, meaning I had a set of coded information from interviews and participant observations, to organize and interpret the data (Hesse-Biber, 2011, p.249-250). I transcribed the participants' full conversations from the use of audio or written records and arranged the information into themes or patterns. My data is presented by way of incorporating documents, guidelines, personal statements and narratives, which will be documented throughout the capstone paper, and included as documents in the appendices. Participants will receive a copy of the capstone paper after publication.

Ethics

Ethics are a critical aspect of the research process and must be a foundational consideration from the inception of research questions through the interpretation and publishing of research findings (Hesse-Biber, 2011, p. 59). In accordance with this responsibility, participants in this study were notified that feedback was kept confidential in order to protect their identities, especially because I asked about opinions and experiences. I provided an informed consent form stating risks and benefits prior to interviewing the members of the INSARAG Secretariat. Trust had been established between the participants and me (the researcher) to ensure reliability.

Presentation of Data

I will present my data gathered from my research, in-depth interviews, and participant observation from working with INSARAG and the GRG and answer the following sub-questions listed under the overarching inquiry question:

1. What was the process for revision of the INSARAG guidelines?
2. How did cross-culture collaboration affect how the Guidelines Review Group (GRG) edited and revised the INSARAG guidelines for endorsement?
3. What impact did cross-cultural dynamics have on the implementation of INSARAG guidelines and on external classification and reclassifications (IEC/IERs)?

Revision and Editing Process

This was my first experience playing a role, even a small role, in the revision and editing of an internationally recognized search and rescue guidelines that over one hundred urban search and rescue teams use when deploying into disaster operations. There was some time to prepare because I was administratively prepping for the Fourth Guidelines Review Group (GRG) meeting, which is where the revision and editing of the guidelines took place, but one doesn't know what to expect with a first experience.

Before the GRG meeting, the INSARAG Secretariat's role is to conduct extensive global consultations within its regional groups to USAR teams, team leaders, mentors, leadership, and government officials. "The INSARAG Steering Group (ISG) acknowledged and commended the GRG and the Regional Groups for the extensive global consultations that took place over this time which produced over 425 comments; the feedback received was deliberated at length, and then added to the finalized documents (INSARAG Steering Group Meeting Chairman's Summary, 2015)." INSARAG collects all comments and distributes them to the GRG before the meeting, giving the GRG time to review and reflect on them. "The task of the GRG is to review and revise the INSARAG Guidelines with the

development of the final draft version for the endorsement at the ISG Meeting (INSARAG Meeting Summary of the Fourth GRG, 2014)."

The first day of the Fourth GRG Meeting, in Geneva, my colleagues and I (the INSARAG Secretariat) prepared the site and space that would result in a final revised copy of the INSARAG guidelines. This took place over the course of three days, November 10 through November 12, 2014. "The GRG is chaired by Ambassador Manuel Bessler, Deputy Director-General and Head of the Humanitarian Aid Department, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) (INSARAG Meeting Summary of the Fourth GRG, 2014)." The GRG members were impressive, skilled, knowledgeable, and professional upon further observation of meeting them. They were the top search and rescue leaders or innovators in their field providing guidance and support. "The INSARAG Secretariat presented the feedback that the Secretariat received during the regional and team leaders meetings, and by e-mails, and discussed the objectives of the 4th GRG meeting, and explained the breakout sessions during the meeting. The group unanimously adopted the proposed agenda (INSARAG Meeting Summary of the Fourth GRG, 2014)."

Over the course of three days, cross-cultural dynamics and collaboration played a role throughout the meeting. The GRG had members from many nationalities, including Switzerland, USA, Chile, Australia, Japan, Singapore, just to name a few (see Appendix B – INSARAG Meeting Summary of the 4th GRG, list of participants – Annex A). Members all seemed culturally competent, based on their experience in this type of setting and having been deployed on multiple global disaster operations, and were comfortable with this type of setting and convergence. Members were adaptable and most members practiced active

listening. It was informative to see which members spoke more than others, maybe because of culture or maybe because of power balance, rank or leadership dimensions. There were different styles of communication in this cross-cultural or multicultural group. Again this refers to the literature where adaptability and willingness to shift perspectives plays a large role in the dynamics of a group. Not all members were always conscious and aware of the impact of their communication style or aware of how it may affect others in the group. Others had some difficulty to shift perspectives and hear other group members. This was the fourth meeting for this team and most of the members work together in the field or help with IEC/IER's, so there was already a high level of trust between group members. Even with this level of trust, there were still differing perceptions and interpretations of the guidelines revisions, which can lead to some level of conflict. However, conflict or disagreements were usually easily resolved and consensus was made. For example, when deciding whether to revise a certain section of the guidelines, the GRG took into account how many comments from the global consultations were made about that specific section, and if there was an overwhelming majority, then the section was revised.

Various decision-making styles were apparent throughout the GRG meeting. Natural, dynamic, and distributed decision-making models all were intertwined throughout the process. The natural model existed because the group was under substantial pressure in regard to time with much at stake, like finalizing newly revised guidelines. What I primarily saw throughout the meeting was dynamic and distributed decision-making. A series of decisions were made to achieve a certain goal, finalizing the guidelines, and all

HOW DID CROSS-CULTURAL DYNAMICS IMPACT DECISION-MAKING DURING THE REVISION, ENDORSEMENT, AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE UN'S INTERNATIONAL SEARCH AND RESCUE GUIDELINES? AND HOW WAS CROSS-CULTURAL BIAS OVERCOME?

these decisions were dependent on each other. Essentially revisions in Volume I affect any decisions in Volume II and so on. This was a dynamic environment of every group member making decisions together. Of course the looming deadline to finish all revisions in three days can put huge strain and stress on the group. From personal observation, the GRG handled this well and with professionalism.

After the GRG meeting was over, the INSARAG Secretariat submits the revised guidelines to a technical writer for final editing and there is a final round of global consultations before the endorsement of the guidelines. See GRG timelines below, which can be found in Appendix B in the back of this document.

GRG Timeline		
Date	Event	Responsible
14 Nov	GRG submit volume drafts to Secretariat	GRG Volume OIC's
14-20 Nov	Secretariat reviews inter-linkages of volume drafts	Secretariat
21 Nov- 1 Dec	Technical Writer completes editing	DW, DS, Secretariat
30 Nov	Work on online platforms, ie: e-pub, app, etc	Secretariat, PW
1-19 Dec	Final round of global consultations	Secretariat
20 Dec-31 Dec	Review by GRG	GRG Volume OIC's
1-12 Jan	Technical Writer finalizes editing (final drafts for ISG endorsement)	DW, DS, Secretariat
13 Jan	Secretariat shares final draft with ISG and GRG	Secretariat
9 -10 Feb	GRG Chair and Secretariat finalize presentation for ISG	GRG Chair, Secretariat
11-12 Feb	GRG Chair presents Guidelines 2015 for endorsement	GRG Chair

“The revised INSARAG Guidelines will ensure that our standard setting is leading edge, and up-to-date with best practices (INSARAG Guidelines Volume 1, 2015).”

Endorsement of the Guidelines

The newly revised guidelines went through all final global consultations and were presented at the INSARAG Steering Group (ISG) meeting on February 11-12, 2015 in Geneva, Switzerland. However, before they were officially presented at the ISG, some comments came from the global consultations and decisions were made between INSARAG and the GRG to add or revise the guidelines even further than the GRG meeting. The pressure and deadlines added some amount of tension but the INSARAG Secretariat had to select a final deadline for last revisions of the guidelines so they could be prepared for the ISG meeting. The naturalistic decision-making style was apparent here because INSARAG and the GRG were under substantial pressure in regard to time with much at stake and many different participants involved.

This was a huge event for INSARAG because the guidelines were about to be presented for endorsement. So during the meeting, the INSARAG Secretariat was still dealing with some members who wished for more revisions. There was some level of cross-cultural collaboration between the INSARAG Secretariat and members of INSARAG. From personal observation, members of INSARAG were ultimately satisfied with the revisions. "The ISG unanimously endorsed the new INSARAG Guidelines 2015, and its implementation plan, while aware that it remains a living document that will be updated once every five years. The new guidelines were put into effect on February 11, 2015. All IEC/IER's after April 1, 2015 were required to adopt the new checklist found in the guidelines. Member states welcomed the new guidelines and "and take full ownership of its dissemination internally and regionally" (INSARAG Steering Group Meeting Chairman's

Summary, 2015). Nine member states agreed to help with the translation of the guidelines (see Appendix C, p. 2-3, for languages). This was an example of positive cross-cultural collaboration between INSARAG and its member states.

Field Implementation

As of February 12, the newly endorsed guidelines were put into affect. But what does implementation actually entail? Here is the 2015 Guidelines Implementation Plan:

2015 Guidelines Implementation Plan		
Date	Event	GRG Participation
16 Feb	Global sharing of 2015 Guidelines	GRG Chair, Secretariat
March- 19 Oct	Translation/Printing of 2015 Guidelines	Member States, Donors – rally for this at ISG Meeting in Feb. 2015 by Global and GRG Chair and Secretariat
March	2015 IEC Checklist Introduction for IEC/R for New Zealand and Japan	DP, JD, Secretariat
April onwards	All IEC/R's will utilize 2015 IEC Checklist – Announcement to ALL teams 2015	Secretariat
15-17 April	INSARAG EQ Response Exercise Package Review Workshop	Secretariat, DP, TWG(selected),SM,AS, PB,DS
June	Team Leaders Meeting consultation breakouts on technical content and development. (Discussion on 'Level of Details' - Agree on technical topics, content)	AS,PB,DS,DP, Secretariat
17-18 Oct	GRG meets in UAE - Preparations of a Handover document to GRG 2020 Team	All GRG Members
19 Oct	INSARAG Guidelines 2015 Launch and INSARAG App/E-pub Launch at Global Meeting in UAE	All GRG Members, Secretariat

(See Appendix B for further information)

The new IEC/IER checklist was officially utilized for classifications after April 2015 and this was announced to all USAR teams. A regional exercise workshop was also held to further implement the new guidelines. According to the INSARAG Secretariat, “The INSARAG Regional Exercise will use new guidelines and help explain any complications or confusion.

In time, they will all get used to the new marking system in the new revision of the guidelines.” There still seems to be some confusion regarding the new marking system and this could be related to cultural differences or the way it’s being translated across languages. “Some USAR teams are using both the new and old marking system,” said the INSARAG Secretariat. “But over time, teams will become more comfortable with the new system and revised guidelines. All the teams need more time with the newly revised guidelines. They need to practice them in exercises and any new IEC or IER will have the newly revised guidelines. This will give teams time to get used to them before being deployed with other global teams,” said the INSARAG Secretariat. The exercises help with any confusion that occur because of language or cultural differences. In most cases, exercises invite multiple USAR teams together.

While I was in Switzerland, the Swiss USAR team was reclassifying while the Moroccan USAR team was classifying for the first time. Also, this would be the first classified North African USAR team, and first African USAR team in history. Because of this, they had a joint IEC and IER for the Swiss and Moroccan teams. I was able to attend and observe this event. It was very interesting to see the teams working together. The Swiss team was inviting and welcomed the Moroccan team to Switzerland. The Swiss team was able to teach the Moroccan team some best practices and approaches during the exercises. By the end of the IEC and IER, the Swiss USAR team and newly classified Moroccan USAR team were laughing and dining together. From personal observation, they may have made some life long friends throughout the process and would definitely work well in the field together. INSARAG classified USAR teams working alongside each other will be able to

know the capacities each can offer: 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 (INSARAG Guidelines Volume I, 2015, p. 20).

INSARAG's role in the implementation phase is to disseminate the newly revised guidelines globally to all classified USAR teams (including team leaders, mentors, leadership, and management). One of the goals is to have the INSARAG guidelines become an internationally recognized set of standards for urban search and rescue teams and for them to be shared across all platforms to help ease any language or cultural barriers.

The revised INSARAG Guidelines, which include new methodologies such as the new marking system, were endorsed just before the earthquake in Nepal in April 2015. "The Nepal earthquake was the first large-scale earthquake to have occurred after the endorsement of the revised guidelines (Okita & Katsube, 2015, p.1)." So, this meant USAR teams had to come together in the field and attempt to use these newly endorsed guidelines. There was some level of confusion, but mainly surrounding the revised marking system. "In response to the Nepal earthquake, the INSARAG Secretariat requested teams to use the revised marking system. However, there were reports that some teams mistakenly combined the old marking with the new marking (Okita & Katsube, 2015, p.8)." In time and with more practice with the new marking systems, USAR teams will become more comfortable with the new marking system. According to Okita and Katsube, 2015, "INSARAG has been working on the familiarization of the revised marking system through training exercises, but the Nepal earthquake shows that INSARAG needs to provide more opportunities for training on it in future (p. 8)." Overall, the USAR teams adapted to the

new guidelines, especially given this was the first major response after endorsement. "I haven't heard any complaints about the new guidelines. All teams are happy. I think they just need more awareness and to familiarize themselves with the new guidelines," said the INSARAG Secretariat. There were no reports of language or cultural problems according to the Secretariat.

Classification and Reclassification (IEC/IER)

Another role of INSARAG is to facilitate the implementation of the newly endorsed guidelines for any upcoming IEC/IERs. "I help facilitate, coordinate, and communicate with team leaders, mentors, and classifiers during an IEC/IER," said the INSARAG Secretariat. The INSARAG Secretariat serves as an objective facilitator during an IEC/IER. Along with the facilitator, there are many other stakeholders, all of which are integral to a USAR team being able to successfully undergo an IEC/IER. The stakeholders involved are, but not limited to, IEC/IER classifiers, policy and operational focal points, IEC/IER mentors and mentor team, sponsoring organizations, and sometimes governmental and non-governmental agencies. Cross-cultural collaboration is fundamental for these stakeholders coming together and classifying or reclassifying teams. All have to work together and play roles as decision-makers throughout the IEC/IER processes.

When asked about cross-cultural dynamics during IEC/IERs, the INSARAG Secretariat said, "During the IEC in China, the decision-making process was very different. The top government official makes all the decisions. So essentially one person is making the decision for the team. Usually this government official is the team leader or deputy team leader. This is very different than the European structure, where multiple people are

making decisions together.” This isn’t to say there was anything wrong with this, just that there will be cultural differences throughout every IEC/IER process. Another challenge observed was, “...when the Japan USAR team is deployed and search activities begin, they like to interview local people first before conducting any search and rescue activities. This is different than the European USAR teams because they like to rely on dogs from the very beginning. The dogs clear the site and then the USAR team moves in,” said the INSARAG Secretariat. There are many cross-cultural differences within the USAR teams but the goal is about learning from them and adapting to the differences. The INSARAG Secretariat said, “From what I have seen are challenges with language.” It was very important to have the newly revised guidelines translated into nine languages and hopefully have more languages in the future to allow for a more streamlined approach and comprehensible guidelines.

Because of the IEC/IER process, INSARAG helps to ensure the USAR teams are classified before responding to a disaster operation, which aligns with INSARAG’s vision “to save lives by promoting efficiency, enhanced quality, and coordination amongst national and international USAR teams on the basis of adherence to common guidelines and methodologies (INSARAG Guidelines Volume I, 2015).”

Limitations

I initially started my research to investigate how the implementation of the INSARAG guidelines affected cross-cultural collaboration of USAR teams to examine how the teams were collaborating in the field using the newly endorsed INSARAG guidelines during urban search and rescue operations. Throughout the process, the inquiry statement evolved primarily because I wasn’t able to interview the USAR team leaders or mentors.

There were significant INSARAG events, like the regional team meetings, the INSARAG Global Meeting, and several IEC/IERs during the time I wanted to interview them. Also, their very busy schedules made it difficult to align schedules and obtain participation in between the events from the original focus group. I changed my focus group to the INSARAG Secretariat instead of USAR team leaders. Because of this, my inquiry statement and sub-questions evolved and altered what research was conducted.

Further Inquiry

I would like to see more research conducted on the cross-cultural collaboration and dynamics of USAR teams during disaster operations. I would also like to see more USAR team feedback regarding the guidelines. Also, something I wish I brought up in the capstone paper is gender roles and the apparent lack of women in the search and rescue field. Throughout the GRG meeting, I was typically the only female in a room full of men, if not for one other female who worked in administration. A gender analysis on USAR teams and the search and rescue community would be something I recommend to any future researcher.

Uses of the study

I will provide the INSARAG Secretariat with a copy of this capstone paper in efforts to provide more research on INSARAG as a whole. I hope it will be used for learning and developing purposes, especially regarding cross-cultural dynamics, collaboration, and decision-making.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine how cross-cultural dynamics impacted decision-making during the revision, endorsement, and implementation of the United Nations International Search and Rescue Guidelines and how cross-cultural bias was overcome. I investigated this overarching inquiry question and answered my sub-questions by looking into the cross-cultural dynamics and collaboration of INSARAG's Guideline Review Group (GRG) during the fourth meeting where the guidelines were edited and revised. I also investigated different models of decision-making and applied them to the GRG and further explained the process for revision and implementation of the guidelines.

My analysis, formed in conjunction with research, in-depth interviews, personal observation, and theories from Anne Rød and Fredholm and Göransson, show that while there is variance in cross-cultural dynamics, it can be mitigated by a process of trust building and by creating a culture within a group that is accepting of cultural differences.

Overall, the INSARAG guidelines are a flexible and helpful reference tool for disaster preparedness and response efforts. It is a living document; being improved with the lessons learned from major international USAR operations. The guidelines represent best practice, and all affected and assisting countries are encouraged to actively implement and practice these internationally accepted procedures and to contribute to the guidelines development (INSARAG Guidelines Volume I, 2015, p. 23). They provide the network with an agreed operational basis upon which they work, ensuring understanding within the group, and providing USAR teams with a solid foundation from which they can respond to disasters.

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Appendices

Appendix A

In-Depth Interview Questions

Acronyms:

INSARAG= International Search and Rescue Advisory Group

IEC = INSARAG Externally Classified

USAR = Urban Search and Rescue

OCHA = Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

Capstone Title: *“How the implementation of the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group guidelines affect cross-cultural collaboration of urban search and rescue teams?”* I will be evaluating how the various IEC teams work together in the field and effectiveness of the new guidelines.

1. Name:
2. Profession:
3. What is your role in the coordination and planning of an IEC or IER?
4. What is your experience working with USAR teams throughout the IEC process? How many IEC's have you been to?
5. How are the multiple IEC teams structured during disaster responses, specifically earthquakes? (team leader...etc.). Describe the leadership structure and why those are put in place.
6. Have there been any cultural challenges you've faced when working with various USAR teams during an IEC or earthquake response?
7. What have been some advantages or disadvantages of implementing the new INSARAG standardized guidelines for USAR teams? (including challenges)
8. In your experience, how have the INSARAG guidelines helped or hindered the effectiveness of USAR teams? (effectively working together during a response)
9. Were the new guidelines used on any recent earthquake responses (Nepal)? What was the feedback from the USAR teams on using the new standardized guidelines?
10. Would you like to add anything else?

Appendix B

INSARAG Meeting Summary of the 4th GRG Meeting, November 10-12, 2014

*Please see attached PDF

Appendix C

Field Coordination Support Section (FCSS) – INSARAG Steering Group Meeting Chairman’s Summary – 2015

*Please see attached PDF

Appendix D

INSARAG 2015 Guidelines Volume I – Policy

*Please see attached PDF

Note: Due to formatting and merging of Microsoft Word and Adobe PDF documents, all INSARAG documents will be attached below in order of Appendices B-D.

Meeting Summary of the INSARAG 4th Guidelines Review Group (GRG)

Geneva, 10-12 November 2014



FIELD COORDINATION SUPPORT SECTION (FCSS)

Emergency Services Branch (ESB)

Background

The INSARAG Guidelines Review Group (GRG) held its fourth meeting at the Centre International de Conférences Genève (CICG) on 10-12 November 2014. The task of the GRG is to review and revise the INSARAG Guidelines with the development of the final draft version for the endorsement at the INSARAG Steering Group (ISG) Meeting February 2015; the GRG is chaired by Ambassador Manuel Bessler, Deputy Director-General and Head of the Humanitarian Aid Department, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC). (See Participant list in **Annex A**)

Welcome Address

Jesper Lund, INSARAG Secretariat and David Sochor, SDC, opened the meeting referring to Ambassador Bessler's wishes that the review be capacity driven and on schedule. They appreciated the GRG members' contribution and dedication to the GRG work.

The INSARAG Secretariat presented the feedback that the Secretariat received during the regional and team leaders meetings, and by e-mails, and discussed the objectives of the 4th GRG meeting, and explained the breakout sessions during the meeting. The group unanimously adopted the proposed agenda. (**Annex B**)

The goal of this fourth GRG meeting was mainly to review, to evaluate and to incorporate the different comments and to check the consistency between the 3 Volumes and 3 Manuals.

Updates & Discussions

1. Ambassador Manuel Bessler attended the GRG meeting on 10 November, and was briefed the result of the consultations held at the INSARAG regional and team leaders meetings. The Secretariat received the feedback on the draft Guidelines as follows:

(feedback by Volume/Manual)

- 130 feedback contributions for Vol. I Policy
- 61 feedback contributions for Vol. II-A Capacity Building
- 66 feedback contributions for Vol. II-B Operations
- 94 feedback contributions for Vol. II-C IEC/R
- 37 feedback contributions for Vol. III Field Handbook

(feedback by meeting, etc)

29%: AEME, 16%: AP, 10%: Americas, 36%: TL, and 9% e-mail

Ambassador Manuel and the Secretariat agreed the timeline towards the endorsement of the INSARAG Guidelines 2015 at the next ISG Meeting in February 2015, and the implementation plan after the endorsement until the INSARAG Global Meeting in October 2015.

The Implementation plan requires the agreement and support at the ISG 2015 to extend the GRG for another 6 months to support the 2015 Guidelines implementation process. The extension will enable the participation of GRG members at various INSARAG events in 2015, right through to the launch in the global meeting in October 2015. (**Annex C**)

2. Mr. Patrick Hernusi, Information Services Branch, OCHA, presented the possible options of proliferation of the INSARAG Guidelines such as Apps and eBooks. The GRG and the Secretariat will determine what types of platform the INSARAG use for the dissemination of the Guidelines.

3. The Chief of FCSS, Jesper Lund, recommends a long standing UNDAC/INSARAG member, and now a consultant from Denmark, to be consulted to review the INSARAG Guidelines and identify possibly missing linkages between the volumes and technical areas where the level of detail could be further developed into technical guidance documents. This work will take place in November-December 2015. *Action by the Secretariat.*

Next Steps & Closing Remarks:

The meeting appreciates the presence and support of Switzerland and Ambassador Manuel Bessler, INSARAG GRG Chairman, who endorsed the timeline till the next ISG 2015 and the implementation plan till the Global Meeting. The Secretariat greatly appreciates the contribution and continuing support of all review participants and their respective sponsoring organizations.

Annex A: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS- Including invited working group members

1	Manuel Bessler	Switzerland	SDC	Chair	manuel.bessler@eda.admin.ch
2	David Sochor	Switzerland	SDC	Chief of Staff/ Chair Rep.	david.sochor@eda.admin.ch
3	Mario Simaz	Switzerland	SDC	Member	mario.simaz@eda.admin.ch
4	Dewey Perks	USA	Americas	Member/ TWG	dperks@ofda.gov
5	Sebastian Mocarquer	Chile	Americas	Member	smocarquer@gmail.com
6	John Denny	Australia	AP	Member	john.denny@fire.nsw.gov.au
7	Anwar Abdullah	Singapore	AP	Member	Anwar_abdullah@sddf.gov.sg
8	Paul Burns	New Zealand	AP	Member-Team Leader rep	paul.burns@fire.org.nz
9	Peter Wolff	Germany	AEME	Member	peter.wolff04@gmail.com
10	Marwan Bader Al-Sum'i'at	Jordan	AEME	Member	plan_dpt@cdd.gov.jo; ofcd86@yahoo.com
11	Arjan Stam	Netherlands	AEME	Member-Team Leader rep.	arjan.stam@brandweer.vrhm.nl
12	Hakan Karay	Switzerland	IFRC	Member	hakan.karay@ifrc.org
13	Tsukasa Katsube	Japan	AP	Training WG	Katsube-Tsukasa.2@jica.go.jp
14	Rudi Coninx	Switzerland	WHO	Medical WG	coninxr@who.int
15	Jesper Lund	FCSS	OCHA	Secretary of INSARAG	lund@un.org
16	Winston Chang	FCSS	OCHA	INSARAG Secretariat	changw@un.org
17	Peter Muller	FCSS	OCHA	UNDAC Secretariat	muller2@un.org
18	Christophe Schmachtel	FCSS	OCHA	INSARAG Secretariat	schmachtel@un.org
19	Yosuke Okita	FCSS	OCHA	INSARAG Secretariat	okitay@un.org
20	Hanako Kataoka Hafiz	FCSS	OCHA	INSARAG Secretariat	Kataoka-hafiz@un.org
21	Melanie Jennings	FCSS	OCHA	INSARAG Secretariat	jenningsm@un.org

Annex B: MEETING AGENDA

AGENDA**Sunday, 9 November**

Arrival of Participants – own arrangement

Monday, 10 November

09:00 – 09:30	Opening by GRG Representative and INSARAG Secretariat	David and Jesper
09:30 – 10:00	Update on GRG Consultations from Team Leader and Regional Meetings	David and Winston
10:00 – 10:30	<i>*Tea/Coffee Break</i>	
10:30 – 12:30	Detailed discussions and inputs from revisions	David
	Volume I INSARAG Secretariat	
	Volume II	
	Manual A Anwar Abdullah (OIC), Tsukasa	
	Manual B David Sochor (OIC), Sebastian, John, Rudi, Hakan	
	Manual C Dewey Perks (OIC), Yosuke	
	Volume III Paul Burns (OIC), Arjan, Peter, Mario, Marwan	
12:30 – 13:30	<i>*Lunch – own arrangements</i>	
13:30 – 14:30	Continue revisions in 5 groups	
14:30 – 16:00	Discussion on the results of the consultations from the regions, the necessary adaptations	Manuel Bessler
16:00 – 17:00	Update on INSARAG Guidelines App – Options <i>Information Services Branch – OCHA</i>	Patrick Hernusi
17:00	Allocation of tasks for next day	Winston, David
19:00	<i>Official Dinner - Hosted by GRG/SDC Chair At GAYA (Korean restaurant)</i>	

Tuesday, 11 November

09:00 – 17:00 *(coming together at 11:00 and 16:00 for progress reports)*

4 Groups Breakout –Detailed Discussions to Review Content,
Information flow, common linkages between Volumes

Note for Day 2 breakout session:

Volume I *Policy* is the base for the work on all four manuals of Volume II. At all-times the integrity between these two documents has to be checked and maintained.

Volume II *Preparedness and Response* is the base for Volume III *Field Handbook*. At all-times the integrity between these two documents has to be checked and maintained.

It is important to avoid duplications within and between the Volumes and the Manuals and to indicate the cross references.

It is as well important to maintain the appropriate levels without losing the necessary information

18:00 **Dinner – own arrangements*

Wednesday, 12 November

09:00 – 10:00 Conclusions and Consolidation of DRAFT Volumes by respective breakout group OIC's

Breakout Groups

10:00 – 10:30 **Tea/Coffee Break*

10:30 – 11:30 Report back by breakout group OIC's

11:30 – 12:20 Next Steps

***David and
INSARAG Secretariat***

12:30 Closure of Meeting

***David and
INSARAG Secretariat***

Departure of Participants

Annex C: TIMELINE LEADING TO ENDORSEMENT and 2015 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

GRG Timeline		
Date	Event	Responsible
14 Nov	GRG submit volume drafts to Secretariat	GRG Volume OIC's
14-20 Nov	Secretariat reviews inter-linkages of volume drafts	Secretariat
21 Nov- 1 Dec	Technical Writer completes editing	DW, DS, Secretariat
30 Nov	Work on online platforms, ie: e-pub, app, etc	Secretariat, PW
1-19 Dec	Final round of global consultations	Secretariat
20 Dec-31 Dec	Review by GRG	GRG Volume OIC's
1-12 Jan	Technical Writer finalizes editing (final drafts for ISG endorsement)	DW, DS, Secretariat
13 Jan	Secretariat shares final draft with ISG and GRG	Secretariat
9 -10 Feb	GRG Chair and Secretariat finalize presentation for ISG	GRG Chair, Secretariat
11-12 Feb	GRG Chair presents Guidelines 2015 for endorsement	GRG Chair

2015 Guidelines Implementation Plan		
Date	Event	GRG Participation
16 Feb	Global sharing of 2015 Guidelines	GRG Chair, Secretariat
March- 19 Oct	Translation/Printing of 2015 Guidelines	Member States, Donors – rally for this at ISG Meeting in Feb. 2015 by Global and GRG Chair and Secretariat
March	2015 IEC Checklist Introduction for IEC/R for New Zealand and Japan	DP, JD, Secretariat
April onwards	All IEC/R's will utilize 2015 IEC Checklist – Announcement to ALL teams 2015	Secretariat
15-17 April	INSARAG EQ Response Exercise Package Review Workshop	Secretariat, DP, TWG(selected),SM,AS, PB,DS
June	Team Leaders Meeting consultation breakouts on technical content and development. (Discussion on 'Level of Details' - Agree on technical topics, content)	AS,PB,DS,DP, Secretariat
17-18 Oct	GRG meets in UAE - Preparations of a Handover document to GRG 2020 Team	All GRG Members
19 Oct	INSARAG Guidelines 2015 Launch and INSARAG App/E-pub Launch at Global Meeting in UAE	All GRG Members, Secretariat

Overview

The meeting was opened by Ambassador Toni Frisch, the Global Chairman of INSARAG and Mr. Rashid Khalikov, Director of OCHA Geneva. Mr. Jesper Lund, Chief of FCSS and Secretary of INSARAG summarised the key issues, which were discussed at the INSARAG Steering Group Meeting 2014, and elaborated the issues to be discussed in the upcoming sessions.

The meeting was attended by 148 participants and observers from 44 countries and organisations (see Annex A), including Regional Chairs and Vice-Chairs, Working Group Chairs, National Focal Points and representatives from classified teams, and observers. OCHA's Regional Offices and Emergency Services Branch (ESB) also attended.

The ISG adopted the 2015 meeting agenda (see Annex B).

Summary of presentations and discussions

Regional Work Plans and Strategies Report:

The Global Chair recalled the INSARAG Global Strategy 2014-2017, which was endorsed at the ISG in 2014.

The Regional Chairs 2015 (Ms. Davene Vroon of New Zealand - Regional Chair of Asia-Pacific, Mr. Mohamed Al-Ansari of UAE - Regional Chair of Africa, Europe and Middle-East, Mr. Cristóbal Góñi of Chile - Regional Chair of the Americas) presented their respective regional work plans for 2015, which were tailored based on the INSARAG Strategy 2014-2017. These included plans for INSARAG External Classification/Reclassifications (IEC/R), capacity building projects, and exploring new communication systems for improving disaster management and networking between focal points.

The Regional Chairs agreed to support the 2nd INSARAG Global Meeting in Abu Dhabi in October, and will coordinate regional consultations and provide necessary inputs to the draft INSARAG Abu Dhabi Declaration. The Regional Chairs also supported the implementation of the new INSARAG Guidelines, including translation and printing of the guidelines into the languages of their respective regions in 2015.

Mr. Mohamed Al-Ansari of UAE officially announced that in consultations with the INSARAG Secretariat, UAE would host the INSARAG Team Leaders Meeting 2015, back-to-back with the Global Meeting (16-17 Oct: Team Leaders Meeting, 18-19 Oct: Global Meeting, 20 Oct: Regional Meetings).

Ukraine thanked the INSARAG network and Poland the 2014 AEME Regional Chair, and OCHA for their support towards their successful IEC in 2014, despite the situation that they were in at that time.

Global Updates & Key Developments in 2014:

Mr. Lund from the INSARAG Secretariat provided an update on global INSARAG activities highlighting the Guidelines review process and IEC/Rs in 2014.

Dr. Ian Norton, World Health Organization (WHO), briefed on the Ebola response by Foreign Medical Teams (FMTs) in the West African region. FMTs must be prepared to respond for Ebola and other types of disasters, such as earthquakes, as well. In these cases, the close coordination with INSARAG and its USAR teams is crucial in order to provide adequate care to patients/victims.

Representatives of each region (Ms. Davene Vroon, NZ - Regional Chair of Asia-Pacific Region 2015, Mr. Mariusz Feltynowski, Poland - Regional Chair of Africa, Europe and Middle-East Region 2014, Mr. Cristóbal Góñi, Chile - Regional Chair of Americas Region 2015) briefed on INSARAG activities conducted in their respective regions in 2014.

The Chairs of the Medical Working Group (MWG), Dr. Anthony Macintyre, and the Training Working Group (TWG), Mr. Dewey Perks, reported on work accomplished in 2014 and future plans. The ISG welcomed their support and agreed to extend their work to support the GRG until the Global Meeting in October 2015. The TWG will work on development of USAR Coordination Cell (UCC) training and the INSARAG Exercise Review workshop, and e-learning on the First Responders Training Package. The MWG will develop Medical Guidance Notes and collaborate with WHO on FMTs, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) on the First Responders Training Package.

In the absence of a Chair for the MWG, Dr. Macintyre had been working as interim Chair of MWG. The ISG officially agreed for Dr. Macintyre to be appointed Chair of the MWG, considering his notable contributions.

Mr. Lund, the Secretary of INSARAG, proposed that a new IER approach with greater ownership for the team and the Regional Groups be explored for future reclassifications. He welcomed discussions and suggestions in view of the heavy but necessary commitment of the FCSS-INSARAG team in managing IERs, and welcomed feedback on this proposal. Singapore welcomed the idea of greater flexibility for IERs, and appreciated the incorporation of its recommendation made at the AP regional meeting held in Singapore in September 2013 for a calibrated approach to IER, which would afford better system sustainability and recognition of the competency level of each team.

INSARAG Guidelines 2015:

The Chair of the Guidelines Review Group (GRG), Ambassador Manuel Bessler (Switzerland), and GRG members reported on progress made in the past two years leading to the completion of the INSARAG Guidelines 2015. The updated Guidelines consist of three volumes: *Volume I: Policy*, *Volume II: Preparedness and Response (Manual A: Capacity Building, Manual B: Operations, and Manual C: IEC/Rs Guide)*, and *Volume III: Operational Field Guide*.

The ISG acknowledged and commended the GRG and the Regional Groups for the extensive global consultations that took place over this time which produced over 425 comments; the feedback received was deliberated at length, and then added to the finalised documents.

The ISG unanimously endorsed the new INSARAG Guidelines 2015, and its implementation plan, while aware that it remains a living document that will be updated once every five years. The ISG also welcomed the extension of the GRG until the end of the Global Meeting in October 2015, to support the agreed guidelines implementation phase.

The new Guidelines are put into effect as of 11 February 2015. As for the IEC/R Checklist, the IEC/Rs in March (Japan and New Zealand) will use the existing Checklist while classifiers will test the 2015 Checklist in parallel. All IEC/Rs after 1 April 2015 are required to adopt the Checklist 2015 found in INSARAG Guidelines Manual C – IEC/R Process. The electronic version of the 2015 guidelines can be found in the Virtual OSOCC (VO) and the INSARAG website, as well as on the following link here:

<https://owncloud.unog.ch/public.php?service=files&t=cbc5f06551bb6218e397354ddc9e2bd2>

Mr. Chang, from the INSARAG Secretariat, discussed the various dissemination platforms for the new Guidelines; ranging from conventional hard copies to making them electronically available in various media platforms, and as an application for computers and smart telecommunication devices. The GRG team will explore making the guidelines available in E-Pub, PDF, OCHA Humanitarian Kiosk (App) and through the information management portal “KOBO” where rescue teams can upload and share interactive INSARAG forms during field operations. The Secretariat welcomes additional suggestions for disseminating the new Guidelines.

In summary, Member States welcomed the new Guidelines, and take full ownership of its dissemination internally and regionally. A total of nine Member States indicated their support to translate the guidelines. They are: UAE

(Arabic), China (Chinese), France (French), Germany (German), Israel (Hebrew), Japan (Japanese), Russia and Belarus (Russian), Peru (Spanish), and Turkey AKUT (Turkish). The INSARAG Secretariat requested that the OSOCC Guidelines 2014 and INSARAG First Responders Package that are related and mentioned in the guidelines, be included for translation.

The recommended size and format of the various volumes for printing have to take into account the inputs from the regional group, teams and donors; also considering appropriateness and practicability in accordance to printing facilities available.

On request of Mr. Bos, focal point for the Netherlands, Ambassador Bessler explained the content of Volume C to be guiding in the way the goals of classified teams are to be achieved. In this respect the guidelines never can replace, nor be in competition with sovereign country's rules and legislation, e.g. regarding medical services.

First Responders Training Package:

Ms. Margareta Wahlstrom, Special Representative of the Secretary General (SRSG) for the UN International Strategy for Disaster Risk Reduction (ISDR), gave a keynote speech on *the "Post Hyogo Framework for Action and INSARAG's Relevance"*, and welcomed the First Responders Training Package - an initiative taken by INSARAG and the IFRC. She presented the World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, which will be held in Sendai, Japan in March 2015, and reiterated the importance of readiness for response and strengthening local communities. She cited the contribution from INSARAG in preparedness activities, as an example in this endeavour. Japan, Mr. Shigenobu Kobayashi, welcomed participants from all the Member States from INSARAG to the upcoming WCDRR conference.

Mr. Walter Cotte, Under Secretary General (USG) of the IFRC, stressed the renewed collaboration by IFRC and the INSARAG network, recalling the MoU signed on 1 November 2013, and the first responders' medical training provided by IFRC. He highlighted that IFRC's capacity building focuses and starts at the community level, and IFRC's network and partnership outreach are expanding globally. The IFRC is proud to collaborate with INSARAG in this initiative and its roll-out so that more communities can be better prepared and respond during disasters, which translates into more lives saved.

Mr. Dewey Perks, Chair of the TWG, briefed on the framework of the INSARAG First Responders Training Package, which was developed by the TWG in collaboration with the IFRC. The target audience of the First Responders Training is the local communities, as they will be the first to respond during disasters, and need to be well trained and prepared. Mr. Albrecht Broemme (Germany) and Zhao Ming (China) shared their positive experiences of the implementation of First Responders courses conducted in China. The First Responders Training Package will be available at the INSARAG website - [Http://insarag.org](http://insarag.org).

The ISG welcomed the INSARAG First Responders Training Package for global sharing, and fully supports the implementation of the Package, especially in disaster-prone countries. UAE announced its support to develop an e-learning platform of the First Responders Training Package.

Bolstering Partnerships:

Mr. Pekka Tiainen, representing the European Union (EU), updated on INSARAG's relevance to the annual EU MODEX Exercise and made reference to the 2014 IER for ICE-SAR team that was conducted successfully as part of this large scale exercise.

Mr. Michael Pernsteiner from the International Rescue Dog Organisation (IRO) briefed on their contributions to INSARAG and their role in training search dogs, including previous contributions to the technical search topic in the guidelines. The IRO and the INSARAG Secretariat signed a Letter of Exchange on 11 February 2015, further strengthening the partnership at the technical level.

INSARAG Global Meeting in 2015:

Mr. Mohamed Al-Ansari, UAE, welcomed Member States to participate and contribute in the 2nd INSARAG Global Meeting to be hosted by the UAE in Abu Dhabi from 18-19 October 2015. The INSARAG Team Leaders (TL) Meeting (16-17 October) and the Regional Meetings (20 October) will be held back to back with the Global Meeting, and the participants are also welcomed to attend the TL Meeting and Regional Meetings. Official invitations will be sent out six months before the Global Meeting.

Mr. Jesper Lund discussed how outcomes of the INSARAG Global Meeting will contribute toward the World Humanitarian Summit 2016. In addition, an INSARAG 25th Commemorative Book will be launched to celebrate 25 years of INSARAG.

Mr. Shigenobu Kobayashi, Japan, summarised the Hyogo Declaration, which was announced at the first Global Meeting in Kobe, Japan, in 2010. Japan, as the host country of the first Global Meeting, promised to support UAE, and, taking this opportunity, thanked all the countries that responded to the Great East Japan Earthquake and Tsunami in 2011. Mr. Kobayashi also highlighted the importance of capacity building.

Mr. Yosuke Okita, INSARAG Secretariat, introduced the main points of the draft INSARAG Abu Dhabi Declaration (see Annex C). Member States are requested to provide their feedback to the Regional Chairs (Chile, New Zealand and UAE), and the Regional Chairs will work together to finalize the INSARAG Abu Dhabi Declaration through regional consultations from now until the meeting in October. Ambassador Frisch reiterated the respect for the sovereignty of affected country, and the importance of working with local governments.

Dr. Jemilah Mahmood, Chief of the World Humanitarian Summit (WHS) Secretariat, via Skype from New York, welcomed INSARAG's commitment and engagements in humanitarian response to sudden onset disasters and preparedness activities. She welcomed the work of INSARAG as being directly relevant to the four focus themes of the WHS and qualified the INSARAG Abu Dhabi Declaration as a valued and relevant contribution to the WHS in 2016. She is looking forward to further discussing with INSARAG how to best to integrate the INSARAG Abu Dhabi Declaration into the WHS process, including at the Summit itself in Istanbul in May 2016.

The INSARAG Secretariat recalled the 2014 Regional Meeting discussions on the nomination and designation of a Global Chair, following Ambassador Toni Frisch's wish to step down after the Global Meeting. Ambassador Bessler, the Chair of GRG, and Head of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid, was proposed as candidate meeting all the requirements and criteria of the Global Chair of INSARAG in accordance with the governance decisions of 2011. Unless there are objections to the nomination of Ambassador Bessler as INSARAG Global Chair, it is expected that he will take over this function from Ambassador Frisch on the occasion of the Global Meeting.

Member States supported the concept and preparatory plans for the Global Meeting 2015, including the key outcome – the INSARAG Abu Dhabi Declaration, and will make plans to participate in the event.

Announcements from Member States and Closing statements

The following announcements were made by Member States and Organisations:

- Saudi Arabia reported a USD 250,000 earmarked funding for FCSS-INSARAG activities for 2015, and welcomed observers to their upcoming IEC in 1-5 April 2015.
- Singapore announced they will host an OSOCC course for Asia-Pacific in November.
- Israel confirmed their support for search dog capacity building training.
- IRO supports search dog capacity building to ensure a common approach for future and welcomed INSARAG to its training events worldwide.

Ambassador Frisch summarised the 25-year history and developments of INSARAG and its flexibility and adaptability to strive for excellence in an ever changing environment. The notable milestones include the support to the establishment of GA 57/150 in 2002, IEC in 2005 and Global Meeting in Japan in 2010. He thanked the global

INSARAG community that has become a family for their support and commitment to improving standards and saving lives. Mr. Lund thanked Ambassador Frisch for his sterling work as the Global Chair of INSARAG. Under his leadership, INSARAG has developed into a brand name associated with clear globally accepted standards.

Notable points going forward

The Steering Group meeting:

- i. Endorsed the new INSARAG Guidelines 2015. The ISG also approved the Implementation and Dissemination plan proposed by the GRG, and welcomed the translation of the Guidelines into several languages. Translations of relevant documents connected to the guidelines i.e. OSOCC Guidelines 2014 and the INSARAG First Responders Package are strongly encouraged.
- ii. Supported the continuation of the Training, Medical and Guidelines Review Training Working Groups through 2015 to work in support of ongoing technical INSARAG work and the implementation of the new Guidelines
- iii. Expects Ambassador Bessler to take over the function as INSARAG Global Chair from Ambassador Frisch at the INSARAG Global Meeting 2015, unless there are any objections to the nomination.
- iv. Welcomed the First Training Responders Package, and its roll-out plans. Commended the collaboration of INSARAG and IFRC for capacity building at the first responders- i.e. community-level, and encourage more of such collaboration. UAE announced its support to develop an e-learning platform of the First Responders Training Package.
- v. Congratulated the successful implementation of IEC/R exercises as part of the EU MODEX Exercise and welcome future INSARAG teams to leverage on this initiative.
- vi. Noted that a new IER approach with greater ownership for the team and the regional group is needed for future reclassifications. The ISG welcomed discussions and suggestions in view of the heavy but necessary commitment of the FCSS-INSARAG team in managing IERs and welcome feedback on this proposal.
- vii. Appreciated the contribution from IRO's contributions and commitment to INSARAG.
- viii. Supported the framework and preparatory plans for the Global Meeting 2015, this includes ongoing regional consultations on the INSARAG Abu Dhabi Declaration – to be shared at the WHS 2016, and plans for participation in the Exhibition and meetings. The ISG further welcomed the back-to back events of the Team Leaders meeting and Regional Meetings together with the Global Meeting from 16-20 October 2015.

INSARAG Guidelines

Volume I: Policy

Contents

Abbreviations	3
Foreword.....	4
Introduction	5
Purpose of the INSARAG Guidelines	5
1. INSARAG.....	6
1.1. What is INSARAG?.....	6
1.2. Vision and Role.....	6
1.3. Mandate of INSARAG.....	6
1.4. Values, Operational Norms and Humanitarian Principles	6
1.5. Structure and Working Process.....	7
1.5.1. INSARAG Structure	7
1.5.2. INSARAG Steering Group	8
1.5.3. INSARAG Secretariat	8
1.5.4. INSARAG Regional Groups.....	9
1.5.5. INSARAG Working Groups.....	9
1.5.6. INSARAG USAR Team Leaders	10
1.6. Membership	10
1.6.1. Requirements.....	10
1.6.2. Policy and Operational Focal Points.....	10
1.6.3. INSARAG Website and USAR Directory	11
2. National USAR Capacity Building	12
2.1. USAR Response Framework.....	12
2.2. USAR Capacity Building	13
2.3. USAR Capacity Assessment Missions	14
3. International USAR Operations	15
3.1. USAR	15
3.2. International USAR Response Cycle.....	15
3.3. Stakeholders and Operational Actors	16
3.3.1. Affected Countries	16
3.3.2. Assisting Countries: Bilateral Responders.....	16
3.3.3. International USAR Teams	17
3.3.4. USAR Team Capabilities	17
3.3.5. OCHA, UNDAC and LEMA.....	18
3.3.6. Reception and Departure Centre (RDC).....	18
3.3.7. On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC)	18
3.3.8. USAR Coordination Cell (UCC)	18
3.3.9. Global Disaster Alert Coordination System (GDACS)	19
3.3.10. Virtual On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (VO)	19
4. International Classification and Reclassification of USAR Teams	20
4.1. Background.....	20
4.2. Categories of USAR Teams	20
4.3. INSARAG External Classification (IEC).....	21

4.3.1.	Process	21
4.3.2.	Cost for IEC/R	21
	Conclusion	23
	Annexes	24
	Annex A: Terms of Reference for INSARAG Focal Points.....	24
	Annex B: Terms of Reference for the INSARAG Global Chair, Regional Chairs and Vice-Chairs.....	25

Abbreviations

FCSS	Field Coordination Support Section
FMTs	Foreign Medical Teams
GDACS	Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System
Hazmat	Hazardous materials
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
IEC	INSARAG External Classification
IER	INSARAG External Reclassification
INSARAG	The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
LEMA	Local Emergency Management Authority
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OSOCC	On-Site Operations Coordination Centre
RDC	Reception/Departure Centre
UCC	USAR Coordination Cell
UN	United Nations
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination team
USAR	Urban search and rescue
VO	Virtual On-Site Operations Coordination Centre

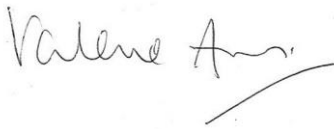
Foreword

Since its inception in 1991, the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) has made a significant contribution to the strengthening of the role of the United Nations in making humanitarian coordination and response more effective, timely, and coherent. As a result, a greater number of lives are saved in the wake of disasters.

Over the past 23 years, the cooperation of the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) with INSARAG has continuously been strengthened, building upon the foundation of UN General Assembly resolution 57/150 of 2002 on “Strengthening the effectiveness and coordination of international urban search and rescue assistance.”

To ensure that INSARAG is fit-for-purpose, the network has revised the INSARAG Guidelines based on lessons learnt and the sharing of best practices amongst its members. The new Guidelines help ensure high quality support in the critical life-saving activity of search and rescue in the immediate aftermath of a disaster.

We look forward to your continued collaboration. Our partnership and the support of Member States are essential to the success of the INSARAG network.



Valerie Amos

Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator

February 2015

Introduction

The INSARAG Guidelines comprise three volumes: Volume I: Policy; Volume II: Preparedness and Response; and Volume III: Operational Field Guide.

This is the INSARAG Guidelines, Volume I: Policy. This volume describes the INSARAG methodology for international urban search and rescue (USAR) operations and the policy that underpins it. In particular, it describes:

- INSARAG and how it operates
- The roles of affected countries and those assisting in international USAR responses
- Building national USAR capacity
- The INSARAG External Classification (IEC) and INSARAG External Reclassification (IER) systems

This volume is targeted at the sponsoring organisations' person nominated to be a country's Policy Focal Point – the one who represents the country's capabilities in providing or receiving USAR assistance –, and at others involved in providing humanitarian assistance at a policy- or decision-making level.

The three volumes describe the INSARAG methodology. The other two volumes are as follows:

- Volume II: Preparedness and Response
 - Manual A: Capacity Building
 - Manual B: Operations
 - Manual C: INSARAG External Classification and Reclassification

These manuals provide guidance and procedures on USAR methodology and explain the minimum standards and procedures for building up a USAR team, as well as on training, readiness, classification and operations. Volume II is based on the required capabilities. It is targeted at the person nominated as the Operational Focal Point of the INSARAG member country, as well as at the focal point of a USAR team and a USAR team's management.

- Volume III: Operational Field Guide

This pocket-size volume provides field and tactical information at a glance, and ought to be carried by all responding USAR team members in trainings and missions.

Important note: The Guidelines can be downloaded from www.insarag.org. Hard copies in English (and translated versions where available) can be requested from the INSARAG Secretariat by email on insarag@un.org. Supplementary guidance notes on technical issues developed by INSARAG Working Groups and relevant institutions are available from www.insarag.org.

Purpose of the INSARAG Guidelines

This internationally accepted document provides a methodology to guide countries affected by a sudden-onset disaster causing large-scale structural collapse, as well as international USAR teams responding in the affected country. The guidelines also outline the role of the UN in assisting affected countries in on-site coordination.

The methodology, as defined in the INSARAG Guidelines, provides a process for preparedness, cooperation and coordination of the national and international participants. This should then result in an improved understanding at all government levels in the affected country as to how international USAR assistance can be utilised to augment the national response so to ensure the most effective use of resources.

1. INSARAG

1.1. What is INSARAG?

INSARAG was created in 1991 following the initiatives of the specialised international USAR teams who operated together in the Mexican earthquake of 1985 and Armenian earthquake of 1988. INSARAG is an inter-governmental humanitarian network of disaster managers, government officials, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and USAR practitioners operating under the umbrella of the UN, and within the realm of its mandate contributes to the implementation of the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (ISDR).

INSARAG successfully achieved the adoption of a UN General Assembly Resolution, GA57/150 in 2002 on "Strengthening the Effectiveness and Coordination of International USAR Assistance" (<http://www.insarag.org/en/about/ga-resolution.html>). This resolution has underpinned much of the progress achieved by INSARAG.

1.2. Vision and Role

INSARAG's vision is to save lives by promoting efficiency, enhanced quality, and coordination amongst national and international USAR teams on the basis of adherence to common guidelines and methodologies.

INSARAG's role is to prepare for, mobilise and coordinate effective and principled international USAR assistance in support of an affected country in collapsed-structure emergencies and to support capacity-building at the international, regional, sub-regional and national level. INSARAG does this by:

- Developing and promoting common standards for USAR assistance, coordination methodologies and tools, and mobilisation and information exchange protocols between relevant stakeholders
- Promoting cooperation and experience-sharing amongst, and in partnership with, Member States, NGOs, and national, regional and international partners

The INSARAG Hyogo Declaration of 2010 (<http://insarag.org/en/about/mandate-of-insarag-leftmenu.html>) on the "Recognition and strengthening of international urban search and rescue operational standards," adopted in the first INSARAG Global Meeting, gave INSARAG a renewed impetus and guidance for its work, and emphasised on the need for strengthening of national response capacities and highly recommends that building national, local and community capacity is critical for effective response.

1.3. Mandate of INSARAG

INSARAG is mandated by the INSARAG Steering Group to:

- Render emergency preparedness and response activities more effective and thereby save more lives, reduce suffering and minimise adverse consequences
- Improve efficiency in cooperation among international USAR teams working in collapsed structures at a disaster site, including by managing the INSARAG External Classification (IEC) process
- Promote the strengthening of national USAR capacities and activities designed to improve search-and-rescue preparedness in disaster-prone countries, thereby prioritising developing countries, including by assisting countries in setting up national USAR team classification processes
- Develop internationally accepted procedures and systems for sustained cooperation between national USAR teams operating on the international level
- Develop USAR procedures, guidelines and best practices, and strengthen cooperation between interested organisations during the emergency relief phase

1.4. Values, Operational Norms and Humanitarian Principles

Adherence to common standards and methodology: Members of 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 long experience. The INSARAG network continues to develop these standards and procedures through shared and continued learning.

Inclusiveness: INSARAG brings together governments, governmental organisations, NGOs and disaster preparedness and response professionals. INSARAG particularly encourages disaster-prone countries to join the network, as well as any country or organisation with USAR response capacity. INSARAG emphasises the importance for gender awareness and considerations while working in disaster-affected areas.

Professionalism: INSARAG promotes responsible, ethical and professional standards amongst USAR teams and stakeholders.

Respect for diversity: INSARAG acknowledges and respects USAR teams' varied 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 by international USAR teams 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 agree to accept 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 and advocated by OCHA, promotes coordination of preparedness and capacity building activities, and, throughout an operation, assists countries in coordinating the emergency response.

INSARAG operates in accordance with the Humanitarian Principles, which form the core of humanitarian action. Please see https://ochanet.unocha.org/p/Documents/OOM_HumPrinciple_English.pdf for more details.

1.5. Structure and Working Process

1.5.1. INSARAG Structure

INSARAG is composed of a Steering Group, three Regional Groups, and the Secretariat, as well as the USAR Team Leaders Meeting, and the Working Groups (see Figure 1). The decision-making process is described in Figure 2. This structure provides the framework for decision-making and associated processes as approved by the Steering Group in 2013.

This structure ensures that INSARAG's aims can be achieved at a regional level, whilst ensuring full ownership and that objectives are in line with best practices as defined and agreed by the global network.



Figure 1: The INSARAG organisational structure.

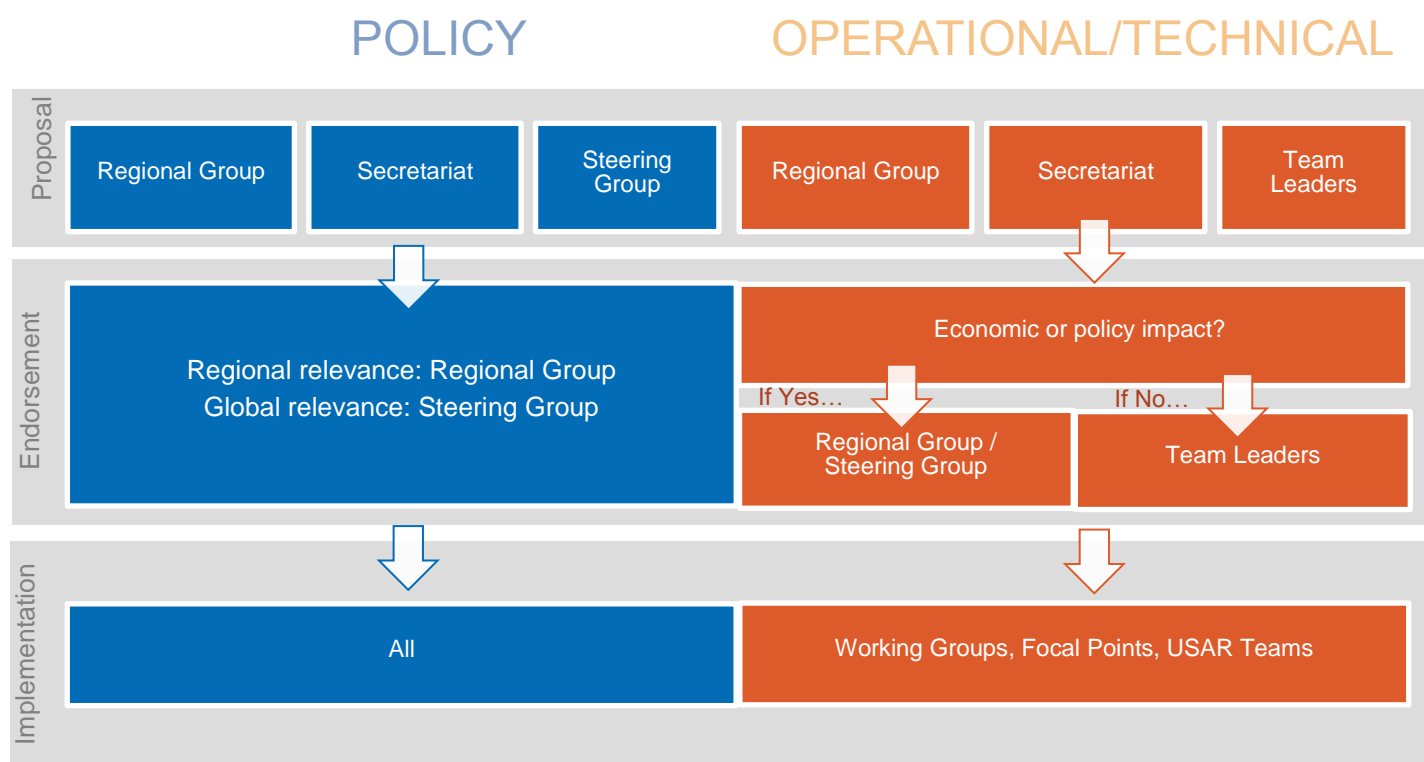


Figure 2: The INSARAG Decision-Making Process

1.5.2.INSARAG Steering Group

The Steering Group, supported by the Secretariat, develops policy and is responsible for providing the strategic direction of INSARAG.

The Steering Group is composed of the Global Chair, the three Regional Group Chairs and Vice-Chairs, the Working Groups (usually the Chairperson), the Secretariat, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies. Policy Focal Points of member countries with IEC classified teams, including representatives from classified NGO teams, and the USAR Team Leaders participate.

The groups that fall under the Steering Group (see Figure 1) are:

- The three Regional Groups
- The USAR Team Leaders
- The Working Groups

1.5.3.INSARAG Secretariat

The INSARAG Secretariat is housed within the OCHA, which is the department in the UN Secretariat mandated to mobilise and coordinate multilateral humanitarian action in response to emergencies. Within OCHA, the INSARAG Secretariat is located in the Field Coordination Support Section (FCSS) of the Emergency Services Branch of OCHA-Geneva. FCSS also manages the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) mechanism.

The Secretariat serves as a direct link between the Global and Regional Chairs, the INSARAG Focal Points, the USAR teams and the INSARAG network. It co-organises all INSARAG meetings, including the Regional Group meetings, workshops, IEC and IER exercises for USAR teams, and training events, in cooperation with host countries.

The Secretariat is also responsible for the management and maintenance of the INSARAG website (<http://www.insarag.org>). This includes the USAR Directory of INSARAG members and their teams.

The Secretariat also facilitates any relevant projects that have been agreed upon and launched by the INSARAG network.

1.5.4.INSARAG Regional Groups

The three INSARAG Regional Groups are:

- The Africa-Europe-Middle East region
- The Americas region
- The Asia-Pacific region

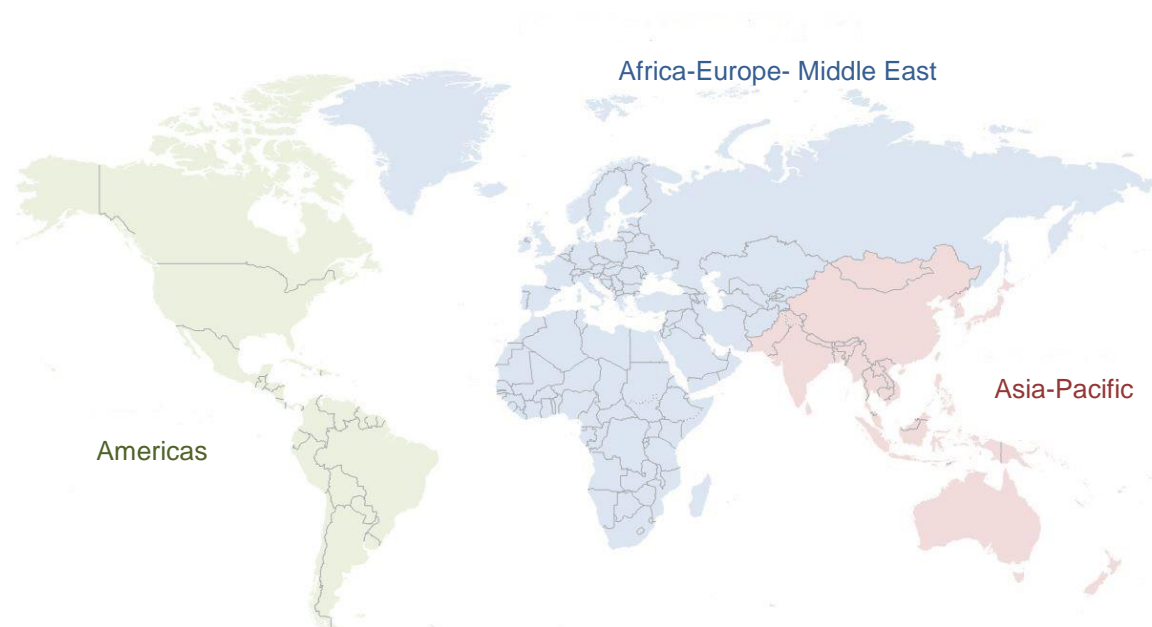


Figure 3: The INSARAG Regional Groups

These Regional Groups meet annually to take measures to strengthen national and regional disaster preparedness, and USAR response. The Regional Groups work to ensure that the strategic direction and policies from the Steering Group are implemented, and to assimilate relevant information from participating countries for submission back to the Steering Group.

Each Regional Group is governed by a troika system where there is a Chairperson and two Vice-Chairpersons and made up of the incoming chair and former outgoing chair. They have a one-year tenure and represent the region at the Steering Group. Countries and organisations are represented in the Regional Groups through their INSARAG Policy and Operational Focal Points.

The Regional Groups are responsible for the implementation of the Steering Group decisions at the regional level, as well as for carrying out the regional annual work programme and activities planned for the region. Together with the Secretariat, they work closely with OCHA Regional and Country Offices to ensure synergies with OCHA's plans and priorities for the region. They also endorse the creation of sub-regional groups of collaborative partners as relevant.

The sub-regional groups of collaborative partners are initiated in regions where their establishment – due to geographical, cultural and language commonalities – ensures effective implementation of the INSARAG mandate.

Since 2010 in Kobe, Japan, and once every five years, all regional groups come together in the INSARAG Global Meeting where the network convenes with the objective of strengthening the global network, thereby ensuring that it is fit for purpose in today's rapidly changing world.

1.5.5.INSARAG Working Groups

Task-specific Working Groups may be established when needed at the request of the Steering Group, the Regional Groups, or the USAR Team Leaders, and endorsed by the Steering Group. Their purpose is to develop solutions to

specific technical issues. They could also be tasked with the preparation and development of training packages for relevant trainings and exercises, such as the INSARAG earthquake response simulation exercise.

Each Working Group has a Chair, plus two or three members nominated from each region to ensure a full, worldwide perspective on operational and training issues raised by the USAR Team Leaders Meetings.

It may co-opt suitable USAR team members who have the relevant experience and qualifications to address the particular issue under discussion. The Secretariat facilitates the selection of these groups, assists in establishing the terms of reference, provides guidance, and establishes timelines for work completion.

The Working Groups ceases when they complete their assigned tasks. Extensions of the Working Group beyond the given mandate are decided by the Steering Group at its annual meeting in Geneva.

1.5.6.INSARAG USAR Team Leaders

The USAR Team Leaders are a network of experienced national and international USAR practitioners who respond to collapsed structure incidents and other disasters as appropriate. It is composed of USAR Team Leaders and INSARAG Operational Focal Points from member countries.

This network is also called upon for nominations to participate in the Working Groups, engage in other INSARAG activities, including capacity building, and to contribute to the continued development of INSARAG as a whole.

This expert group meets annually at the INSARAG Team Leaders Meeting to share and discuss best practices, technical ideas and operational issues. The USAR Team Leaders' inputs, advice and experience serve to improve the operational capabilities of the INSARAG methodology for both national and international USAR response. Team Leaders are encouraged to constantly exchange technical information and best practices bilaterally and sharing through the VO.

1.6. Membership

INSARAG Membership is open to all UN Member States, NGOs and organisations involved in USAR activities, and upon recommendation and approval by their respective governments. INSARAG also maintains close cooperation with regional mechanisms.

INSARAG members are invited to meetings of the relevant INSARAG Regional Group and USAR Team Leaders, and to participate in the Working Groups which are made up of suitable experts nominated by the Team Leaders and Regional Groups and are supported by their respective sponsoring organisations.

Members have access to INSARAG information and knowledge-sharing tools through the INSARAG website, and through disaster alert and information sharing platforms such as the Global Disaster Alert and Coordination System (GDACS), which includes the Virtual On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (VO).

Member States with USAR teams deploying internationally are encouraged to undertake INSARAG External classification, however, this is not a requirement to be a member of the INSARAG network. As a first step, teams are encouraged to undertake national classification.

1.6.1.Requirements

To improve preparedness and response, INSARAG members share information and best practices with other INSARAG members and USAR teams, including teams that are developing a response capability or are preparing for classification.

INSARAG members are encouraged to actively participate in, and contribute to, INSARAG Regional Meetings, earthquake response simulation exercises, and other INSARAG forums such as the USAR Team Leaders Meetings, to contribute to the Working Groups, and also to support by providing technical experts to other INSARAG initiatives such as capacity assessment missions and regional exercises.

1.6.2.Policy and Operational Focal Points

It is recommended that all Member States participating in INSARAG designate policy and operational points-of-contact for appropriate and effective information exchange, in accordance with the respective national disaster management structure. In the preparedness and response phases, INSARAG Focal Points serve as the primary link and information channel between the country and the INSARAG network, which is particularly important in

response to emergencies so as to have an effective information flow between the affected country and the potential international responders. Regional, intergovernmental and international organisations participating in INSARAG are also encouraged to designate policy and operational focal points.

The Policy Focal Point is to be the central point-of-contact between the Secretariat, the INSARAG community, and all organisations in that country involved in the INSARAG network. This person represents the country's capabilities in providing or receiving USAR assistance, assisted for operational matters by the operational focal point who is normally a USAR professional.

The Policy Focal Point normally sits in the central institution or agency of the national disaster management structure or in the agencies responsible for international cooperation and humanitarian response, and represents the country on USAR policy matters in the Regional Group and, as appropriate, in the Steering Group.

The Operational Focal Point should normally have USAR responsibilities as part of their daily functions and, by consequence, is recommended to be a USAR specialist. They represent the country primarily on operational USAR matters in INSARAG meetings, workshops, and events.

The responsibilities of INSARAG Focal Points can be described as ensuring the efficient information exchange and validation at the appropriate levels in the preparedness and response phases on USAR matters, including capacity building, trainings, policy matters, emergency alerts, requests or acceptance of assistance, mobilisation and provision of international assistance. For the annual budget planning process, Focal Points have to take into account costs for participation and engagement in supporting INSARAG events and the workplan.

The designation of INSARAG Focal Points is at the discretion of the government, in line with its respective disaster management structure and serve as a point-of-contact between the national government and the INSARAG network, including the INSARAG Secretariat, and the Regional and Steering Groups. Member States are requested to inform the INSARAG Secretariat on the designation of their INSARAG Focal Points and update this information whenever Focal Points change.

See Annex A on more detailed terms of reference of INSARAG Focal Points.

1.6.3.INSARAG Website and USAR Directory

The INSARAG website shares information on INSARAG generally, as well as the summaries from previous events and upcoming activities.

The INSARAG USAR Directory is a unique database with the details of all INSARAG member countries and organisations and their USAR teams. The directory also contains contact details for relevant Policy and Operational Focal Points.

The directory categorises USAR teams into the following:

- **International:** Medium or Heavy IEC teams
- **National:** Light, Medium, or Heavy national teams
- Governmental and NGO teams not yet classified

In order to be part of the USAR Directory, teams need the endorsement of their country's Policy Focal Point. Teams can request registration via their Policy Focal Point through the Secretariat. Once registered, the country's Operational Focal Point can update the team's entry.

Important note: The USAR Directory can be accessed at <http://www.insarag.org>.

2. National USAR Capacity Building

When a disaster strikes, people look first to their own communities and governments for help, and second, to neighbouring countries and regional/international organisations. International aid is the third tier of humanitarian assistance, which is called in for specialised tasks such as complex search and rescue after an earthquake.

UN General Assembly Resolution 57/150 recommends that countries build up strong national USAR response capacities to deal with any eventuality as the first step. The Resolution identifies that each country has a responsibility first and foremost to take care of the victims of natural disasters and other emergencies occurring in its own territory. Countries must be able to initiate, organise, coordinate and provide humanitarian assistance in their own territories if required.

Furthermore, the Resolution “Encourages the strengthening of cooperation among States at the regional and sub-regional levels in the field of disaster preparedness and response, with particular respect to capacity building at all levels.”

It is thus essential that countries have an effective and sustainable national USAR capability and a national crisis management system first, before developing an internationally-deployable capability, i.e. an IEC team.

The following paragraphs describe INSARAG’s guidance to Member States on building their national USAR capacity. This will be further elaborated in Volume II, Manual A: Capacity Building.

2.1. USAR Response Framework

The USAR response framework (see Figure 4) recognises that search and rescue efforts are chronological and continuous, starting immediately after the occurrence of a large-scale structural collapse disaster.

Rescue efforts start immediately with passers-by rushing in to assist. Within minutes local emergency services respond. The rescue efforts continue with the arrival of regional or national rescue resources within hours. International rescue teams respond in the days after the event and following an official request by the affected government for international assistance.



Figure 4: The INSARAG USAR response framework

The INSARAG response framework represents all levels of response, starting with spontaneous community actions immediately following the disaster, supplemented initially by the local emergency services and then by national rescue teams. The response of international USAR teams supports national rescue efforts.

Each new level of response increases the rescue capability and overall capacity but has to integrate with, and support, the response already working at the disaster.

In order to ensure interoperability between the different levels of USAR response, it is vital that working practices, technical language and information are common and shared through all levels of the USAR response framework.

Important note: Member States are strongly encouraged, as a first step, to conduct a self-assessment of their USAR response capacity based on the INSARAG Capacity Assessment Checklist for National USAR Teams – see Volume II, Manual A: Capacity Building.

2.2. USAR Capacity Building

USAR capacity building is the process of developing a robust and sustainable disaster management framework with a USAR capability. Countries should have the ability to effectively use their own capability and to integrate international assets into the national response.

Capacity building should cover all five components of USAR capability; that is, management, search, rescue, medical and logistics.

It is recommended that countries seeking USAR capacity building should follow the USAR development cycle (see Figure 5).

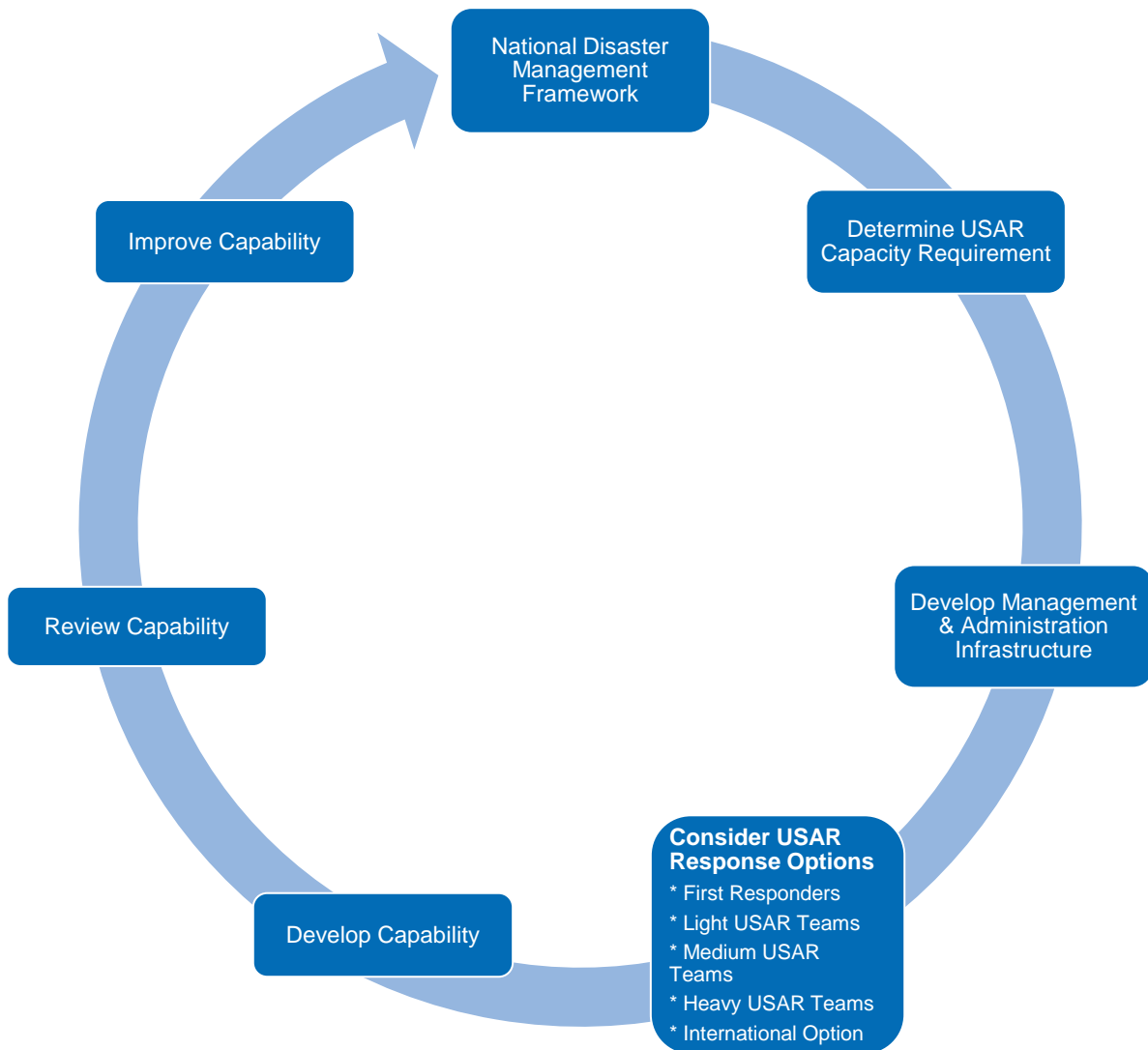


Figure 5: The USAR development cycle.

2.3. USAR Capacity Assessment Missions

In order to support countries and organisations in the process of national USAR capacity building, the INSARAG Secretariat, when requested by the relevant government, can facilitate an INSARAG USAR Capacity Assessment Mission. This would be coordinated by the INSARAG Secretariat between the requesting country and USAR experts from the INSARAG network sponsored by their governments/organisations.

A USAR Capacity Assessment Mission aims to identify existing capacities and determine the required capacities according to the country's USAR objectives and needs. This provides an indication of the gaps between the current capacity and the required capacity, which in turn assists in tailoring the initiatives to be employed in developing USAR capacity.

The INSARAG network provides unique access to a pool of experienced and qualified USAR experts that are able to conduct an assessment of existing capacity, mapped against needs, and who are then able to provide recommendations on the subsequent implementation of USAR capacity development initiatives.

For more information on building national USAR capacity, please refer to Volume II, Manual A: Capacity Building.

3. International USAR Operations

3.1. USAR

USAR involves the location, extrication, and initial stabilisation of people trapped in a confined space or under debris due to a sudden-onset large-scale structural collapse such as an earthquake, in a coordinated and standardised fashion. This can occur due to natural disasters, landslides, accidents, and deliberate actions.

The goal of search and rescue operations is to rescue the greatest number of trapped people in the shortest amount of time, while minimising the risk to rescuers.

3.2. International USAR Response Cycle

An international USAR response has the following phases, known as USAR response cycle:

- **Phase I – Preparedness:** The preparedness phase is the period between disaster responses. In this phase USAR teams conduct training and exercises, review lessons learned from previous experiences, update standard operating procedures, and plan future responses
- **Phase II – Mobilisation:** The mobilisation phase is the period immediately following the occurrence of a disaster. International USAR teams prepare to respond and travel to deploy and assist the affected country requesting international assistance
- **Phase III – Operations:** The operations phase is the period when international USAR teams are performing USAR operations in the affected country. In this phase international USAR teams arrive at the Reception/Departure Centre (RDC) in the affected country, register with the On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC), and conduct USAR operations in line with the operational objectives of the Local Emergency Management Authority (LEMA). This phase ends when the USAR team is instructed to cease USAR operations
- **Phase IV – 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 OSOCC, and then depart from the affected country through the RDC
- **Phase V – 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 an after-action review in order to improve the overall effectiveness and efficiency for response to future disasters. Figure 6 illustrates the INSARAG international USAR response cycle

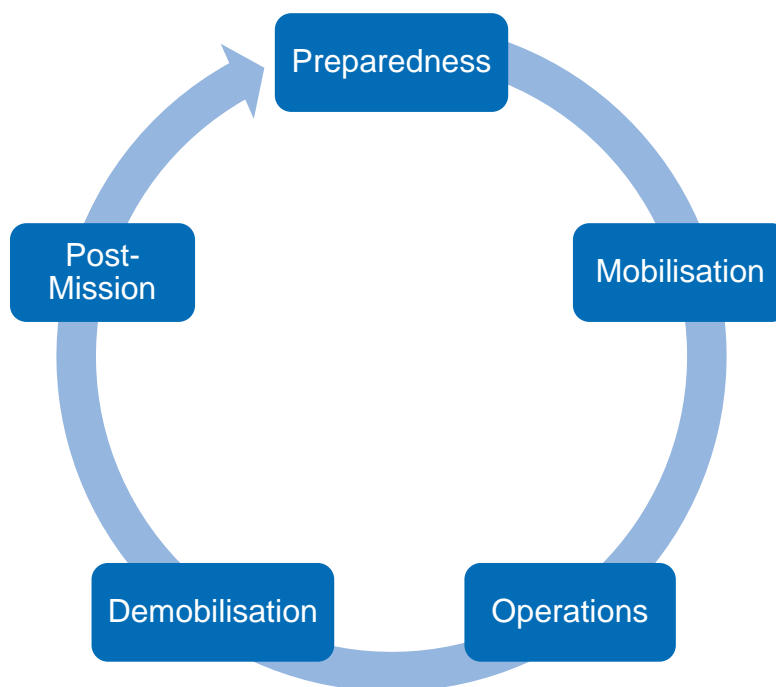


Figure 6: The INSARAG International USAR Response Cycle.

3.3. Stakeholders and Operational Actors

3.3.1. Affected Countries

Affected countries are those that experiencing a sudden-onset disaster that may require international USAR assistance. They must undertake a number of activities throughout the response cycle.

In disasters such as earthquakes, reaching trapped and injured victims quickly is the top priority in successful life-saving rescue operations. Potentially affected countries are encouraged to have a national disaster response mechanism in place such that in the first hours they are able, through their initial response and assessments, to make a decision and announce whether or not the situation is overwhelming, and, therefore, warrants immediate support from international USAR teams.

The INSARAG Hyogo Declaration of 2010 "... invites countries affected by disasters to consider the specific assistance of INSARAG IEC teams to respond by offering priority access to such teams that will make a genuine and meaningful difference in the life-saving search and rescue phase of an earthquake or other disasters involving collapsed structures."

Affected countries can formally request assistance through their UN Resident Coordinator's Office, the OCHA Regional or Country Office, directly through the INSARAG Secretariat or bilaterally to countries with whom it may have agreements. In the latter case, affected countries are encouraged to coordinate with and inform the INSARAG Secretariat of the response requirements.

One of the affected country's main responsibilities is to ensure that its LEMA is functional during the disaster so as to exercise its primary role in initiating, coordinating and organising the international humanitarian assistance on their territories, and that they have overall responsibility for the command, coordination and management of the response operation.

If able, the affected country also establishes or supports the first arriving INSARAG team to establish an RDC and an OSOCC. They further conduct needs assessments and identify their priorities and where international teams can be best deployed so as to fill the gaps or augment the national rescue operations.

When international assistance is no longer required, the affected country declares the end of USAR operations, through its LEMA and after consultations with OCHA or the UNDAC team that manages the OSOCC.

Countries likely to be affected by such disasters are strongly encouraged to develop and maintain their own national first response USAR capacity according to the INSARAG Guidelines.

3.3.2. Assisting Countries: Bilateral Responders

Many countries, international organisations and NGOs have standby capacity (e.g. INSARAG USAR teams, Foreign Medical Teams (FMTs) that can be deployed on short notice to assist in disasters in affected countries. They may coordinate their assistance bilaterally with the affected country or through a regional organisation, such as the European Union or the Association of South East Asian Nations.

A country or organisation may also decide to channel their support through the UN agencies or NGOs. Humanitarian partners in-country normally set up a coordination process (e.g. through clusters) in support of the affected country.

Bilateral response represents the vast majority of international assistance in major disasters, which is usually managed by the authorities of the affected country. All countries are encouraged to coordinate their assistance also through the international platforms established for this purpose such as the VO and the physical OSOCC in-country as well as the specific clusters.

Assisting countries in the context of INSARAG are those with suitable USAR teams who are deploying to the affected country to provide USAR assistance to saving lives.

The INSARAG Hyogo Declaration 2010 "calls upon all urban search and rescue teams responding internationally to earthquakes to follow the field coordination procedures of OCHA, especially those laid down in the INSARAG Guidelines and Methodology and to coordinate their work with the direction of the RDC and the OSOCC established in the disaster area by the UN" and in support of the government's overall response plan.

3.3.3. International USAR Teams

INSARAG international USAR teams are response assets from the international community that respond to carry-out USAR activities in collapsed structures.

USAR teams prepare for international deployment by maintaining their capability in a state of readiness for rapid international deployment. During operations, teams perform tactical operations as required in accordance with the INSARAG Guidelines, coordinate with the OSOCC, and align their response with the priority needs of the affected country.

For more information on the USAR team functions, structure and coordination processes, please refer to Volume II, Manual B: Operations.

3.3.4. USAR Team Capabilities

USAR is considered to be a multi-hazard discipline designed to respond to sudden-onset events that result in collapsed structures in an urban environment.

USAR teams conduct search and rescue operations in collapsed structures, and provide emergency medical care to trapped people. They are equipped with search tools (dogs and electronics) to find survivors. They also need to access and control utilities such as electricity and water, and detect hazardous materials (hazmat). They assess and stabilise damaged structures. Such teams are also adaptable when working in challenging environments and can support in assessments, debris removal, victim search, medical assessments/treatment.

Countries are encouraged to standardise USAR team capacities at the national level, based on their local needs and using the INSARAG Guidelines as appropriate, and establish corresponding USAR team classification processes at the national level.

USAR teams deploying internationally should also have the capability to undertake a number of activities associated with large-scale disasters and augment ongoing national rescue efforts. These include:

- Providing initial Disaster Impact Assessments
- Supporting establishment of coordination structures
- Undertaking early relief operations prior or jointly in support of other humanitarian systems

Some teams have additional resources to support relief operations – often referred to as “beyond the rubble” – with specific thematic assistance such as medical capabilities, water purification and clearing or making safe of dangerous damaged structures and debris.

If they are the first coordination resource to arrive in an affected country, these teams are also able to set up the RDC and the provisional OSOCC so as to assist the national authorities in coordinating incoming international resources.

USAR teams are expected to be self-sufficient, around the clock for 7-10 days of operational deployment and work at more than one site, depending upon the USAR team’s classification. They will establish a Base of Operations (BoO) that will support the teams for the duration of the response and serve as the communications hub for the team’s operations.

When USAR teams augment the USAR Coordination Cell (UCC) in the OSOCC with personnel, they should understand the existing LEMA coordination structure and the civil-military coordination platform in place and/or the request for assistance being facilitated/coordinated by the UN Civil-Military Focal Point in the UNDAC team. This includes being aware of potential needs that USAR teams may request from the military in case of unforeseen developments such as:

- Transport for arriving USAR teams from airport to OSOCC/Base of Operations and subsequent tasked areas of operations
- Fuel for USAR teams’ vehicles and generators
- Helicopters for rapid air assessments by the UNDAC team and partners (extent of impact, key infrastructure constraints, priority needs and areas)
- Maps, if available, for USAR team tasking
- Facilitation of immediate set up of Airport Reception Centre by the UNDAC/USAR teams
- Security support (route or area security) for USAR teams travelling to/working in insecure areas

The professional standing and conduct of INSARAG USAR teams when operating at a disaster is of prime concern to INSARAG because every member represents INSARAG. International responders need to consider the cultural, ethical, and moral differences of the country in which they are providing assistance. They must not impose any additional burden on the resources of affected countries, and can achieve this by responding in a well-prepared manner, properly trained and equipped to fully support the national authorities.

USAR teams should refer to Volume II, Manual B: Operations and Volume III, Operational Field Guide for guidance.

3.3.5. OCHA, UNDAC and LEMA

OCHA serves as the INSARAG Secretariat and is mandated to coordinate international assistance in disasters and humanitarian crises exceeding the capacity of the affected country.

Many organisations, such as governments, NGOs, UN agencies, and individuals, respond to disasters and humanitarian crises. OCHA shares timely information and works with all participants to respond to disasters in such a way as to assist the government of the affected country to ensure the most effective use of international resources.

The UNDAC team is an OCHA tool used for deployment primarily to sudden-onset emergencies. OCHA dispatches an UNDAC team when requested to do so by the affected government or the UN Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator in the affected country.

UNDAC team members are experienced emergency managers from countries, international organisations and OCHA. The UNDAC team is managed by the Field Coordination Support Section in OCHA, Geneva, and works under the authority of the UN Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator and, where existing, the OCHA Country Office. It also works in support of, and in close cooperation with, the LEMA and the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT). The UNDAC team assists the LEMA with the coordination of international response including USAR, assessments of priority needs and information management by establishing, amongst other structures, an OSOCC and RDC, when required.

3.3.6. Reception and Departure Centre (RDC)

The RDC is established to support the affected countries in coordinating incoming international USAR teams and other humanitarian assistance and reporting this to the LEMA through the OSOCC. It is established by the UNDAC team or the first arriving INSARAG USAR team, in collaboration with the local airport authorities. This RDC also serves as a tool to coordinate the departure of the teams in a proper manner.

3.3.7. On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC)

An OSOCC is established close to the LEMA and as close to the disaster site as is safe. The OSOCC coordinates international responders in support of the LEMA, and also supports the initial inter-cluster coordination mechanisms such as health, water, sanitation, and shelter.

The OSOCC has two core objectives:

- To rapidly provide a means to facilitate on-site cooperation, coordination and information management between international responders and the government of the affected country in the absence of an alternate coordination system.
- To establish a physical space to act as a single point of service for incoming response teams, notably in the case of a sudden-onset disaster where the coordination of many international response teams is critical to ensure optimal rescue efforts.

3.3.8. USAR Coordination Cell (UCC)

The UCC is a specialised and integral part of an OSOCC during an earthquake or collapsed-structure emergency. It is established to assist and coordinate multiple international USAR teams during the operations phase of a disaster.

Important note: The requirements for establishing a provisional OSOCC and a UCC are detailed in Volume II, Manual B: Operations and the OSOCC Guidelines.

3.3.9. Global Disaster Alert Coordination System (GDACS)

GDACS services aim at facilitating near real-time alerts, and information exchange among all actors in support of decision-making and coordination. GDACS services build on the collective knowledge of disaster managers worldwide and the joint capacity of all relevant disaster information systems.

3.3.10. Virtual On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (VO)

The VO is a web-based information management tool. It is a virtual version of the OSOCC and is part of the GDACS platform.

The VO is a crucial information sharing portal to facilitate near real-time information exchange amongst international responders and with the affected country, and the UN response mechanisms, following a sudden-onset disaster.

Access to the VO is restricted to emergency response stakeholders – registration is required. The VO is managed by the Activation and Coordination Support Unit at OCHA in Geneva.

Important note: USAR teams can access detailed information in Volume II, Manual B: Operations. GDACS and the VO can be accessed at www.gdacs.org and vosocc.unocha.org respectively.

More information on OCHA's emergency disaster response systems is available at <http://www.unocha.org/what-we-do/coordination/response/overview>.

4. International Classification and Reclassification of USAR Teams

4.1. 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 its Directory of International USAR Teams. INSARAG strongly recommends Member States to establish national USAR team classification processes as an initial step.

In 2005, the INSARAG network supported the establishment of independently verifiable, operational standards for international USAR teams through the IEC process, and encourages all Member States with USAR teams to be deployed internationally to ensure their teams take into account the IEC process.

In a world in which disaster response is becoming more complex, INSARAG has provided a commendable standard-setting model for the rest of the humanitarian community. The IEC system provides a global and strategic approach to ensure that there are well-qualified and professional teams all around the world – especially close to potential disaster prone areas – that are ready to respond at a moment's notice, and operating upon 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.

4.2. Categories of USAR Teams

The INSARAG Guidelines classify USAR teams according to their capacity to provide the key components of USAR. The five key components are management, search, rescue, medical, and logistics.

Light USAR teams

Light USAR teams have basic or minimal operational capabilities in terms of rescue equipment, knowledge and competencies, and do not necessarily all of the five key USAR components. However, Light USAR teams are usually able to assist with the surface search and rescue of victims in the immediate aftermath of a sudden-onset structural collapse disaster. Due to their limitations, Light USAR teams do not partake in the IEC process and therefore do not normally deploy internationally.

Medium USAR teams

A Medium USAR team comprises the five components listed above and has the ability to conduct complex technical search and rescue operations in collapsed or failed structures of heavy wood and/or reinforced masonry construction, including structures reinforced and/or built with structural steel. They must also conduct rigging and lifting operations. A Medium USAR team is expected to have the operational capability to work only at one worksite.

Heavy USAR teams

Heavy USAR teams comprise the five components listed above and 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. They must also conduct rigging and lifting operations. A Heavy USAR team is expected to have the equipment and manpower to work in a technical capacity at two work-sites simultaneously. A second worksite 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 independent logistical support. Generally an assignment of this sort would last greater than 24 hours.

Important note: A detailed description, including compositions, of Medium and Heavy USAR teams is outlined in the Volume II, Manual A: Capacity Building.

4.3. INSARAG External Classification (IEC)

“Guarantee of effective and professional international assistance.”



Figure 7: The INSARAG patch.

Numerous countries and organisations have successfully undergone the IEC since it started in 2005, while many others have shown keen interest or are preparing their 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 recognised by the INSARAG tag that they wear, and have most recently proven to be a 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 an example of how independent peer review can provide an added value in preparedness for response, and at the times of response. Both classifiers and the team undergoing IEC learn from one another, and this interaction is indeed highly valuable, because, in an earthquake, they will be the same people working closely together, to help save lives.

To ensure coherence in international USAR response, international teams with the capacity to deploy internationally are strongly encouraged to engage in the IEC process.

4.3.1. Process

Any USAR team having the mandate to deploy internationally is eligible to apply for an IEC, provided it has the endorsement of its country's INSARAG Policy Focal Point. Upon successful completion of an IEC, USAR teams are included in the USAR Directory at the classification level achieved.

The IEC assesses and classifies two key components of response and technical capability of international USAR operations:

- Response capability
- Technical capability

USAR teams are required to demonstrate their proficiency during a 36-hour simulated, realistic structural collapse exercise, using their full range of USAR skills and equipment required for the desired classification level. Successful teams are recognised as having met universal USAR standards and are accorded a team patch to identify their professional level in the field. The image at the top of this page is an example of such an identifying patch.

The INSARAG Secretariat facilitates all IEC/Rs and closely engages all teams throughout their respective IEC planning timelines and in close cooperation with their focal points, mentors and IEC Team Leaders.

4.3.2. Cost for IEC/R

All costs associated with the planning, preparation and execution of the IEC/R exercise is the responsibility of the host country or the organisation requesting classification or reclassification.

Many USAR teams have successfully undergone the IEC/R process through close bilateral cooperation among member states. Mentoring and training support are discussed and agreed mutually amongst the stakeholders.

In an IEC/R, the associated costs of individual IEC/R classifiers are covered by their respective sponsoring organisation. The IEC/R requesting host country or the organisation however, determines and manages observers invited. IEC/R teams preparing for their own exercise are usually given priority places for observers.

INSARAG External Reclassification (IER)

IER is the process a classified team is required to periodically undergo in order to maintain their classification status. If for whatever reasons a USAR team elects not to reclassify, it surrenders its INSARAG classification.

USAR teams may need to be reclassified for the following reasons:

- Classification period of five years expires
- Change in the USAR team's structure
- Change in classification level
- Inappropriate international response conduct

Any classified team that is not able to run an IER five years after being classified will have to submit relevant justifications through their Policy Focal Points to the INSARAG Secretariat, who will then consult with the INSARAG Global Chair. In such an instance, their classification status would be considered as pending, contingent on future reclassification.

Important note: For more information, please refer to Volume II, Manual C: INSARAG External Classification and Reclassification.

Conclusion

The INSARAG Guidelines, prepared by USAR responders and representatives of INSARAG member countries, is recognised by the UN General Assembly Resolution 57/150 as “a flexible and helpful reference tool for disaster preparedness and response efforts.” It is a living document, being improved with the lessons learned from major international USAR operations. It is also the reference document for capacity building at all levels. The Guidelines represent best practice, and all affected and assisting countries are encouraged to actively implement and practise these internationally accepted procedures and to contribute to its development.

I would like to thank all the members of INSARAG who have supported the work of INSARAG since its establishment. We should be proud of what INSARAG has achieved, and we should continue with even greater determination to implement UN General Assembly Resolution 57/150 at all levels worldwide.



Ambassador Toni Frisch

INSARAG Global Chair

February 2015

The INSARAG Guidelines remain a living document. INSARAG values all feedback and you can send this to the INSARAG Secretariat at insarag@un.org.

Annexes

Annex A: Terms of Reference for INSARAG Focal Points

The responsibilities of INSARAG Focal Points can be described as ensuring the efficient information exchange and validation at the appropriate levels in the preparedness and response phases on USAR matters, including capacity building, trainings, policy matters, emergency alerts, requests or acceptance of assistance, mobilisation and provision of international assistance. The responsibilities can be categorised as follows:

1. **Policy:** Ensure the promotion of INSARAG Guidelines and methodology within the country and contribute to the continued policy development
2. **Operational:** Coordinate the internal information exchange of their own country/organisation with INSARAG during emergencies and strengthen the preparedness both for national and international response

There are also certain administrative responsibilities, such as serving as a point-of-contact between the national government and the INSARAG network, including the Secretariat, the Regional and the Steering Groups

If appropriate, the responsibilities of the policy and operational focal points may also be carried out by the same person.

Responsibilities: INSARAG Policy Focal Point

- Act as focal point on INSARAG policy matters of the government to the INSARAG network, including the Secretariat in OCHA, the respective Regional Group and Chairmanship as well as the INSARAG Steering Group and the Global Chair
- Act as point-of-contact for all national USAR teams – including NGO teams – on INSARAG matters, and be able to endorse the application of national USAR teams for INSARAG External Classifications
- Ensure the promotion and implementation of INSARAG Guidelines and methodology as part of the national disaster management plan and for the national and international response of the country's USAR teams as defined in UN General Assembly Resolution 57/150 of 16 December 2002 on Strengthening the Effectiveness and Coordination of International USAR Assistance"
- Ensure that relevant information is communicated in a timely manner in times of emergencies to the INSARAG network through the INSARAG Secretariat and/or the relevant channels (i.e. the VO), including on request or acceptance of international assistance
- Represent or ensure representation of the own country at meetings of the respective INSARAG Regional Group, and if applicable the INSARAG Steering Group

Responsibilities: INSARAG Operational Focal Point

- Act as point-of-contact on INSARAG operational matters for national USAR teams within the country and promote the capacity building of the teams and national disaster management structure in line with INSARAG Guidelines and methodology, including the preparation for the establishment of RDC and OSOCC when required
- When affected by an emergency of international significance within the own country, act as counterpart to the INSARAG Secretariat/OCHA and provide relevant information updates for the international operation in regular intervals to the INSARAG network on the VO
- When responding to an emergency in a third country, act as counterpart to the INSARAG Secretariat/OCHA and provide relevant information updates on the own country's planned or implemented response in regular intervals to the INSARAG network on the VO

INSARAG Focal Points, whether policy or operational, are also expected to assume administrative responsibilities such as the following:

- Disseminate information from the INSARAG Secretariat, in particular invitations to INSARAG meetings, workshops, training courses or USAR exercises, among relevant disaster management authorities and USAR teams in own country
- Have the capacity to verify or decide whether the own country is prepared support and host INSARAG activities, such as specific workshops, trainings, the annual Team Leaders' meeting or INSARAG regional exercises.

Annex B: Terms of Reference for the INSARAG Global Chair, Regional Chairs and Vice-Chairs

Responsibilities: INSARAG Global Chair

- Lead the promotion of the INSARAG methodology and guidelines globally amongst countries and organisations and promote participation in all INSARAG bodies
- Lead advocacy on the implementation of the INSARAG Hyogo Declaration and the UN General Assembly Resolution 57/150.
- Chair the annual meeting of the Steering Group
- Actively coordinate the activities of the Steering Group with the Secretariat, including through regular teleconferences and other meetings
- Participate and represent the INSARAG global network in the annual meetings of the other INSARAG bodies (i.e. Regional Group Meetings, Team Leaders Meeting etc.) when available
- Represent the INSARAG network globally in relevant meetings, events and the media

Responsibilities: INSARAG Regional Chairs

- Promote the INSARAG methodology and guidelines amongst countries and organisations of the region and promote their participation in the INSARAG Regional Group, including events like INSARAG regional earthquake response simulation exercises
- Support the implementation of the INSARAG Hyogo Declaration and the UN General Assembly resolution 57/150
- Host and co-organise the annual meeting of the Regional Group, with the support of the INSARAG Secretariat and the Vice Chairs (i.e. preparations for the two-day meeting, logistical arrangements, identifying meeting venue, if possible, covering the costs of accommodation in order to facilitate participation by all countries of the Regional Group)
- Represent the INSARAG network in the region in relevant meetings and events
- Participate and represent the region in the annual INSARAG Steering Group meeting, in February in Geneva, Switzerland
- Actively coordinate the activities of the Regional Group with the Secretariat and the Vice-Chairs, including through regular teleconferences and other meetings
- If possible, participate and represent the region in the annual meetings of the other INSARAG regional groups

INSARAG Regional Vice-Chairs

- Promote the INSARAG methodology and guidelines amongst countries and organisations of the region and promote their participation in the INSARAG Regional Group, including events like INSARAG regional earthquake response simulation exercises
- Support the implementation of the INSARAG Hyogo Declaration and the UN General Assembly resolution 57/150
- Support the Chair in hosting and co-organising the annual meeting the Regional Group, with the support of the INSARAG Secretariat
- In discussion with the Regional Chair, represent the INSARAG network in the region in relevant meetings and events
- Participate and represent the region in the annual INSARAG Steering Group meeting, in February in Geneva, Switzerland
- Actively coordinate the activities of the Regional Group with the Secretariat and the Chair, including through regular teleconferences and other meetings
- If possible, participate and represent the region in the annual meetings of the other INSARAG regional groups