



INSARAG Guidelines 2026

Volume 4: IEC/R

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Note: Every listed appendix is located in the section *Guidance Appendices* on www.insarag.org

Abbreviations

A-PoE	Abbreviated Portfolio of Evidence
BoO	Base of Operations
C-PoE	Comprehensive Portfolio of Evidence
EXCON	Exercise Control
FTX	Field training exercise
FIELDEX	Term used to define a 36-hour full field exercise
ICMS	Information Coordination Management System
IEC	INSARAG External Classification
IER	INSARAG External Reclassification
INSARAG	International Search and Rescue Advisory Group
ISG	INSARAG Steering Group
LEMA	Local Emergency Management Authority
LO	Liaison Officer
NDMA	National Disaster Management Authority
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OSOCC	On-Site Operations Coordination Centre
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
RDC	Reception/Departure Centre
RSB	Response Support Branch
SCC	Sector Coordination Cell
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
ToR	Terms of Reference
UC	USAR Coordination
UCC	USAR Coordination Cell
UN	United Nations
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination Team
USAR	Urban Search and Rescue
VOSOCC	Virtual On-Site Operations Coordination Centre

1 Introduction

The INSARAG Guidelines comprise five volumes:

Volume 1: Policy describes the INSARAG methodology for international urban search and rescue (USAR) operations and the policy that underpins it.

Volume 2: National Capacity Building defines capacity building as the process of identifying and supporting existing Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) resources or developing new capacities.

Volume 3: Operations is targeted at the INSARAG Operational Focal Point, the Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) team management, the INSARAG Team Focal Point, and the INSARAG Secretariat with the purpose of providing guidance in the training, preparations and coordination of a USAR team for national and/or international operations.

This Volume 4: INSARAG External Classification and Reclassification purposes to ensure that a USAR team preparing to undergo an IEC/R has a deep understanding of the expected planning, preparation and delivery requirements. By following these minimum standards, a USAR Team will be prepared to offer professional services, operate in a collaborative manner, and provide timely life-saving assistance to an affected population.

Volume 5: Operational Field Guide targets all USAR managers and team members and is designed to be a quick-reference guide that assists with field and tactical information for all missions, exercises and training sessions.

The INSARAG Guidelines 2026 have been endorsed by the INSARAG Steering Group. All volumes, Guidance Appendices and materials from the Technical Reference Library can be downloaded from www.insarag.org.

1.1 Purpose of this volume

The United Nations (UN) General Assembly Resolution 57/150 of 16 December 2002 on “Strengthening the Effectiveness and Coordination of International USAR Assistance” endorses the International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) Guidelines as the principal reference for the coordination of international Urban Search and Rescue (USAR) response. The INSARAG Guidelines defines the methodology that countries affected by a sudden onset disaster can expect from the INSARAG USAR response community. This trained and practiced methodology is implemented by international USAR responders, to provide assistance during international USAR response operations.

In the effort to achieve this objective and to guarantee quality assurance and the minimum standards, the INSARAG network has developed a peer review-processes: the INSARAG External Classification (IEC) and INSARAG External Reclassification (IER), mandatory for achieving and maintaining the INSARAG classification.

An IEC/R is a demanding process that is not to be underestimated. This volume describes the requirements for this process and the process itself. The process requires the total administrative, financial and operational commitment of the sponsoring organisation, the USAR team, its mentor, the IEC/R cadre as well as several other stakeholders to ensure success. USAR teams, their mentors and the IEC/R classifiers are required to familiarise

themselves with the contents of this Volume, and to use it as a reference source for the entire IEC/R process.

Any questions with regards to the content of this Volume 4 should be directed to the INSARAG Secretariat and your appointed mentor (as appropriate)

2 INSARAG Classification/Re-Classification (IEC/R) Overview

2.1 INSARAG Aspiring (Re) Classified Team's EC/R Requirements

INSARAG classified USAR teams undergoing an IEC/R are required to:

- Comply with and operate according to the methodology and minimum standards prescribed by the INSARAG Guidelines
- Be able to rapidly deploy within the shortest possible timeframe following a disaster to maximise their positive impact on the affected community
- Understand and comply with the roles and responsibilities regarding the set-up, operation and staffing of an RDC, UCC and/or SCC
- Understand the roles and responsibilities regarding the LEMA and be able to integrate effectively with the response resulting in a coordinated and coherent rescue effort in support of the LEMA
- Understand how international USAR assistance compliments the national response effort
- Requesting governments will then be aware of the type of value-adding support that is arriving from INSARAG classified USAR teams

2.2 IEC/R Purpose

The purpose of the IEC/R is to enable the classified USAR teams to operate according to the INSARAG minimum standards and to provide the government of an affected country with a database of independently classified INSARAG light, medium or heavy USAR teams that will:

- Mobilise and deploy rapidly
- Be self-sufficient
- Perform life-saving operations professionally and safely
- Coordinate its activities based on the priorities established by the Local Emergency Management Authority (LEMA)
- Assist LEMA and UN with the Reception/Departure Centre (RDC), the USAR Coordination Cell (UCC), the Sector Coordination Cell (SCC) and Operations
- Coordinate its efforts with other international responders and augments national resources.
- Not become a burden to the affected country
- Adopt internationally accepted coordination mechanisms established on-site. Ensure linkage to the Early Relief phase of an incident to support wider humanitarian response efforts.
- Take responsibility and adhere to INSARAG Minimum Standards and Processes

2.3 Scheduling an IER Exercise

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

2.4 USAR Team Capabilities

USAR teams establishing USAR capacity are required to refer to the INSARAG Guidelines (Volume 2: National Capacity Building, chapter 3.5) for guidance. Volume 2 provides information on the key elements required and the resource composition of a light, medium and a heavy USAR team. The suggested number of deployed personnel for a light team is 17-20, a medium team is minimum 42 while a heavy team is minimum 63. Staff redundancy planning to ensure minimum staff/dogs availability for deployment is a ratio of 2:1 for each position.

INSARAG USAR teams must consist of five key components, management, search, rescue, logistics and medical. The INSARAG Guidelines refer to three levels of capacity, i.e. light, medium and heavy.

Team type	Duration	No. of sites	Technical capability	Medical capability
Light	12 hours / 5 days (minimum)	1	Physical- and technical search, rigging and lifting. If dog search is integrated, no minimal number of dogs is required.	Treat team members, dogs and victims
Medium	24 hours / 7 days (minimum)	1	Physical- and technical search, rigging and lifting and cutting structural steel. If dog search is integrated, no minimal number of dogs is required.	Treat team members, dogs and victims
Heavy	24 hours / 10 days (minimum)	2 (simultaneously)	Physical-, technical- and dog search (minimum 4 dogs), rigging, lifting and cutting structural steel	Treat team members, dogs and victims

Table 1: Classified USAR team capacity levels. Refer also to Volume 2, Chapter 3.5.

2.4.1 Light USAR Teams

A light USAR team comprises the five components required by the INSARAG Guidelines, i.e. management, logistics, search, rescue and medical. Light USAR teams can conduct search and rescue operations in collapsed or failed structures of wood and/or unreinforced masonry construction, including structures reinforced with steel mesh. They must also conduct rigging and lifting operations. A light USAR team:

- Must be adequately staffed and resourced to allow for 12-hour operations at one site (not necessarily the same site; the sites may change) for a minimum five days
- Is required to have the capability of physical- and technical search
- Dog search is NOT mandatory. If dog search is applied, the number of dogs used, is according to the team's decision
- Is required to have the technical capability to cut construction material used in light structures
- Must be able to ensure medical care of its team members (including dogs if present) as well as entrapped victims

- Is required to support international coordination (RDC/UCC) with a minimum of one trained staff
- Must be capable conducting USAR operations to ASR level 3 and be integrated into the standard INSARAG coordination and reporting mechanisms

2.4.2 Medium USAR Teams

A medium USAR team comprises the five components required by the INSARAG Guidelines, i.e. management, logistics, search, rescue and medical. Medium USAR teams can conduct technical search and rescue operations in collapsed or failed structures of heavy wood and/or reinforced masonry construction, including structures reinforced with structural steel. They must also conduct rigging and lifting operations. A medium team:

- Must be adequately staffed and resourced to allow for 24-hour operations at one site (not necessarily the same site; the sites may change) for a minimum of seven days
- Is required to have the capability of physical- and technical search
- Dog search is NOT mandatory. If dog search is applied, the number of dogs used, is according to the team's decision
- Is required to have the technical capability to cut and delayer structural building material typically used for construction in multi-storey structures
- Must be able to ensure medical care of its team members (including dogs) as well as entrapped victims
- Is required to support international coordination (RDC/UCC) with a minimum of two trained staff
- Must be capable conducting USAR operations to ASR level 4 and be integrated into the standard INSARAG coordination and reporting mechanisms

2.4.3 Heavy USAR Teams

A heavy USAR team comprises the five components required by the INSARAG Guidelines, i.e.: management, logistics, search, rescue and medical. Heavy USAR teams have the operational capability for complex technical search and rescue operations in collapsed or failed structures that require the ability to cut, break and breach steel reinforced concrete structures, as well as delayer these structures using lifting and rigging techniques. A heavy team:

- Must be adequately staffed and resourced to allow for 24-hour operations at two separate worksites simultaneously for a minimum of ten days
- Is required to have the capability of dog search (minimum 4 dogs), physical- and technical search
- Must be able to ensure medical care of its team members (including dogs) as well as entrapped patients
- Is required to support international coordination (RDC/UCC) with a minimum of four trained staff
- Is required to have the technical capability to cut and delayer structural building material typically used for construction in multi-storey structures
- Must be capable conducting USAR operations to ASR level 4 and be integrated into the standard INSARAG coordination and reporting mechanisms

2.4.4 Nomination of USAR Teams for IEC/R

A government or sponsoring organisation through its INSARAG Policy Focal Point may consider nominating its USAR team for the INSARAG Classification/Re-Classification process.

2.5 IEC/R Assessment

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

2.5.1 Response Capability

The response capability assessment, including the decision-making role of the sponsoring organisation or government, will assess a USAR team's ability to monitor for sudden-onset disasters, receive notification of a breaking emergency, mobilise its resources and respond internationally in a timely manner. It will also assess a USAR team's ability to establish an RDC/UCC if it is the first arriving international USAR team to assist the LEMA to receive international assistance. Refer to the USAR Coordination Handbook.

USAR teams need to demonstrate self-sufficiency for the duration of the IEC/R exercise. It is however acknowledged that teams will require assistance with procurement of fuel, timber, water and a secure location to establish their Base of Operations (BoO). Most teams will also require transport upon arrival in the affected country.

2.5.2 Technical Capacity

During an IEC/R the USAR team's technical capacity will be assessed as to how it performs USAR operations. This assessment will differ depending on whether a team is attempting a light, medium or heavy classification.

USAR teams are required to demonstrate proficiency using its full USAR technical capacity (skills and equipment) during a constantly evolving realistic structural collapse exercise of at least 36-hour duration. →The exercise duration is to be announced to the IEC/R cadre in advance.

It is designed in a manner that challenges the USAR team's ability to operate effectively in simulated "real life" mission and timeline required for the desired level of classification.

For both, the response capability and technical capacity, the assigned IEC/R classifiers use the IEC/R checklist to conduct the assessment and classification. Refer to Appendix 4.3: IEC/R Checklist in the Guidance Appendices on www.insarag.org.

2.6 Reasons for Reclassification (IER)

2.6.1 Expiration of Classification Period

The ISG has determined the need for IER after five years. Should a USAR team not be able to reclassify at the fifth-year mark for valid reasons announced by their respective INSARAG Policy and Operational Focal Point, the INSARAG Secretariat may approve an extension, on a case-by-case basis.

2.6.2 Change in USAR Team Structure

The classification awarded is applicable to the USAR team structure evaluated. If there has been any structural change in the configuration of the team, the responsibility is on the INSARAG Operational Focal Point to immediately inform the INSARAG Secretariat.

The INSARAG Secretariat will facilitate a review of the structural change to determine whether it impacts the USAR team's classification. If it is determined that the structural change has had a negative effect on the classification, the INSARAG Secretariat will inform the USAR team and its sponsoring organisation if a reclassification (IER) or classification (IEC) is required. The INSARAG Secretariat will consult with the INSARAG global chair and advise the USAR team on whether it can retain its current classification pending the reclassification.

2.6.3 Change in Classification Level

This occurs when a team migrates from one classification level, e.g. light to medium, medium to heavy. Ideally, USAR teams should aim to undergo this classification review at the five-year mark. If a team would like to migrate from one level to a lower level an IER is sufficient. However, if a USAR team would like to migrate from e.g. light to medium/heavy or medium to heavy a full IEC process is required. Within the five-year period, they are required to submit a written request to the INSARAG Secretariat.

2.7 IEC/R Cost

As teams are expected to conduct an annual USAR exercise which should be included in their annual budget planning as agreed with their sponsoring organisation, there will be additional cost associated to the delivery of the IEC/R process (refer to Volume 1: Policy).

The cost of the IEC/R classifiers representatives is covered by their respective sponsoring organisation or government, while the INSARAG Secretariat covers its own costs.

The IEC/R host will determine whether observers will be invited to the IEC/R. Any expenses and services provided by the IEC/R host will be explained in the announcements leading up to the event. The announcement should contain a programme for the observers visit.

2.8 Joint IEC/Rs

If two USAR teams elect to conduct a combined IEC/R exercise, they are required to submit a written request to the INSARAG Secretariat seeking approval. If approval is given, the USAR teams are required to prepare and submit separate documentation, including the Exercise Plan and Exercise Timeline. It is very important for the USAR teams (and its mentors) to start discussions early with the IEC/R classifier team leaders and the INSARAG Secretariat.

Conducting joint exercises require clear planning and documentation, including:

- Is the location suitable to host two or more USAR teams?
- Is there one EXCON?
- How will the RDC be staffed and maintained?
- How will the UCC be staffed and maintained?
- Is there one cast of role players?
- Is there adequate support-staff to keep both exercises running?
- Do the USAR teams have the same sponsoring organisation?



Figure 1: Conclusion of a joint IER

2.9 Directory of USAR Teams

Upon successful completion of an IEC/R, the USAR team will be recorded in the USAR directory on www.insarag.org. This directory is managed by the INSARAG Secretariat.

2.10 How to Contact the INSARAG Secretariat

The function of the INSARAG Secretariat is provided by the Response Support Branch (RSB) of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). The INSARAG Secretariat can be contacted at:

*United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
Response Support Branch (RSB)
Emergency Response Section (ERS)
UN OCHA
INSARAG Secretariat
Palais des Nations
CH 1211, Geneva 10, Switzerland
Email: insarag@un.org*

3 IEC/R Stakeholders

There are several stakeholders, all of which are integral to a USAR team being able to successfully undergo an IEC/R (see figure 2).

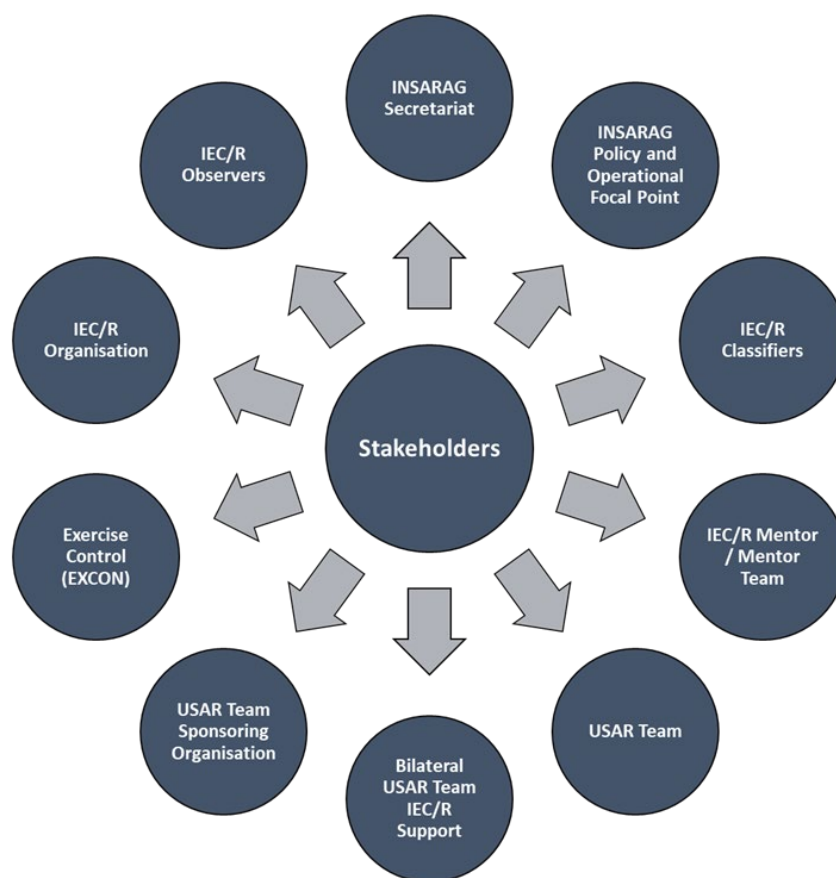


Figure 2: Stakeholders in an IEC/R.

3.1 INSARAG Secretariat

The INSARAG Secretariat serves as an objective facilitator during an IEC/R process. The INSARAG Secretariat representative will either be an employee of OCHA's RSB or an individual assigned by the INSARAG Secretariat.

The INSARAG Secretariat will engage with the USAR team minimum two years prior to a provisional IEC/R date being established. This timeline is required to ensure that all milestones are met and that gaps can be easily identified and positively resolved. The monitoring system will have three parts: application and mentor assessment, review, and finalisation (IEC/R exercise).

The Secretariat works with all relevant stakeholders from the beginning of the process, and facilitates timely discussions and consultations and recommends relevant support that the USAR team requires during the entire process of an IEC/R.

Once the team has met all preparatory arrangements and objectives to the full satisfaction of key stakeholders – that is, the IEC/R classifiers, the mentor, and the INSARAG Secretariat – the Secretariat will then confirm that the IEC/R exercise will take place at the designated date.

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

- Ensure that the process is based on the minimum requirements as determined by the INSARAG Guidelines (Volume 4)
- Ensure the IEC/R classifiers do not attempt to use the IEC/R as an opportunity to promote their home country's methodologies as the preferred way of operation
- Perform the role of mediator/arbitrator between the IEC/R classifiers, the USAR team and its IEC/R mentor or its focal points should the need arise

Refer to appendix 4.1 for the Terms of Reference (ToRs) of IEC/R stakeholders.

3.2 INSARAG Policy, Operational and Team Focal Points

The INSARAG Policy and/or Operational Focal Point serve as the primary point of contact for the INSARAG Secretariat, international responders and government for the INSARAG Secretariat regarding matters of policy and/or operations. Accordingly, the INSARAG Policy Focal Point has to approve any request from a USAR team, whether it is a government or non-governmental organisation (NGO) team, to undergo an IEC/R.

The INSARAG Team Focal Point is the liaison of the (aspiring) classified USAR team with the INSARAG Operational Focal Point.

For further details regarding the INSARAG Policy and Operational Focal Points, see Volume 1: Policy.

3.3 IEC/R Classifiers

The INSARAG Secretariat maintains a yearly database of suitable IEC/R classifiers that are selected, proposed and supported by their sponsoring organisation through their respective INSARAG Team, Operational, and Policy Focal Points. The INSARAG Secretariat utilises this pool of IEC/R classifiers to select the classifier cadre for a specific IEC/R.

Nominees for IEC/R classifier position must attend prior as an IEC/R classifier-in-training.

Nominees for IEC/R classifier team leader or deputy team leader position must attend the IEC/R Leadership Course. Nominations for this course are to be done by the INSARAG Policy Focal Point to the INSARAG Secretariat. The INSARAG Secretariat confirms the final selection of participants for any given course.

An IEC/R classifier team is made up by the INSARAG Secretariat from the above-mentioned database and approved by their respective INSARAG Policy and Operational Focal Points. The IEC/R classifier cadre members provide the required skills to evaluate the various components of a USAR team, as described in the ToR for IEC/R stakeholders, see appendix 4.1.

The IEC/R Quality Assurance Working Group can support the INSARAG Secretariat in reviewing IEC/R cadres for upcoming IEC/Rs. The final responsibility remains with the INSARAG Secretariat.

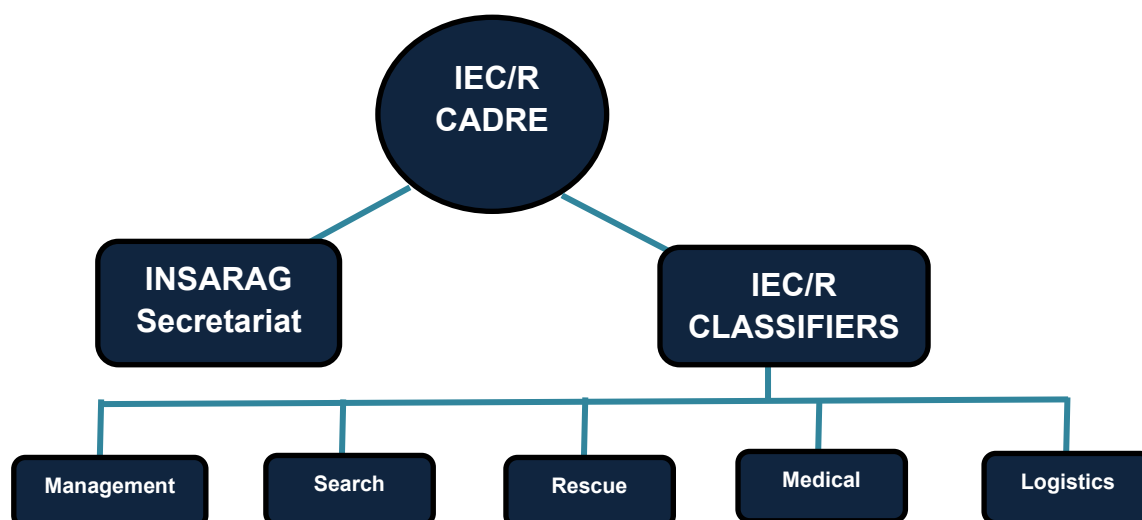


Figure 13: IEC/R cadres' technical expertise in evaluating a USAR team.

The minimum numbers of IEC/R classifiers suggested for an IEC/R exercise is as follows:

- Light INSARAG classification – seven IEC/R classifiers:
 - Team Leader x 1
 - Management / Deputy Team Leader x 1
 - Logistics x 1
 - Search x 1
 - Rescue x 1
 - Medical x 1
 - Classifier-in-training x 1
- Medium INSARAG classification – nine IEC/R classifiers:
 - Team Leader x 1
 - Management / Deputy Team Leader x 1
 - Logistics x 1
 - Search x 1
 - Rescue x 2
 - Medical x 1
 - Classifier-in-training x 2
- Heavy INSARAG classification – ten IEC/R classifiers:
 - Team Leader x 1
 - Management / Deputy Team Leader x 1
 - Logistics x 1
 - Search x 1
 - Rescue x 3
 - Medical x 1
 - Classifier-in-training x 2

However, the final IEC/R classifier composition will be decided after consultation with the designated IEC/R classifier team leader.

The INSARAG Secretariat will, where possible, include an IEC/R deputy team leader to be mentored as a future IEC/R classifier team leader. It is imperative that at least one member of

the IEC/R classifier team be UC-qualified (minimum level UC Course, preferably UC ToT Course). These numbers can be augmented if needed.

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

As peers within the INSARAG community, IEC/R classifiers are expected to uphold the principles and minimum standards established by INSARAG and described in the INSARAG Guidelines.

IEC/R classifiers need to remain objective and conduct the classification according to the INSARAG minimum standards. It is important that IEC/R classifiers do not attempt to promote or enforce their home country's methodology during an IEC/R, as they are representing the global INSARAG network.

The IEC/R classifier cadre will acknowledge that USAR teams operate using their national standards to achieve the common objectives found in the IEC/R checklist. Nevertheless, minimum standards for international deployment, as described in the INSARAG Guidelines, must be respected by the USAR team and the IEC/R classifier cadre. Consultations between EXCON, mentor, other relevant stakeholders, and the IEC/R classifier team leader or deputy team leader may be conducted when needed.

The IEC/R classifiers are required to ensure that USAR operations are conducted safely and therefore cannot disregard or overlook a violation of generally accepted safe practice. If a safety concern arises, the IEC/R classifiers will temporarily stop the activity, discuss the matter with the IEC/R mentor, site controller/safety officer or INSARAG Team Focal Point and if needed the INSARAG Secretariat Representative until it can be continued in a safe manner. An IEC/R classifier should not stop an activity, unless there is a direct threat of injury or worse.

The IEC/R classifier cadre may complete their IEC/R evaluation before the USAR teams' exercise is finished. Since this is the USAR team's annual exercise, the IEC/R classifier cadre does not have the ability to stop the exercise at this point, since it would interfere with the training objectives of the USAR team.

3.4 Selection and Evaluation of IEC/R Classifiers

Candidates who meet the criteria are required to obtain approval from their national INSARAG Policy, Operational and Team Focal Points to make themselves available to the INSARAG Secretariat as IEC/R classifiers. This pre-approval is important as all the costs associated with the IEC/R classifiers are the responsibility of their sponsoring organisation.

Once approval has been received, the candidate is required to complete the IEC/R classifier application form and return it to the INSARAG Secretariat through the INSARAG Focal Points.

The INSARAG Secretariat will then review the application. If accepted, the candidate and INSARAG Operational and Team Focal Points will be notified in writing and the individual will be added to the roster of IEC/R classifiers. The selection of IEC/R classifiers is based on, among others, the following:

- Continuing commitment in INSARAG activities and availability; the INSARAG Operational and Team Focal Points will be required to commit to supporting the availability of their IEC/R classifiers
- Confirmed financial support from sponsoring organisation for participation in the IEC/R process
- Successful fulfilment and retention of the appropriate ToR requirements (Appendix 4.1).
- Participation in relevant IEC/R training and other INSARAG activities

IEC/R classifier sponsors and the individual IEC/R classifiers must be aware that to remain active as an IEC/R classifier, they are required to maintain a close relationship with the INSARAG network through participation in classifications, meetings, exercises and other INSARAG-related USAR activities.

The IEC/R Quality Assurance WG supports the INSARAG Secretariat in reviewing classifiers applications for the admission in the roster of IEC/R classifiers. The final responsibility remains with the INSARAG Secretariat.

An IEC/R cadre is comprised of the following positions:

- IEC/R Classifier Team Leader
 - Must be member of an INSARAG classified USAR team
 - Must have been an IEC/R deputy team leader and have been on three or more IEC/Rs
 - Must have successfully accomplished the INSARAG Leadership Course
- IEC/R Classifier Deputy Team Leader
 - Must be member of an INSARAG classified USAR team
 - Must have been an IEC/R classifier, a member of an EXCON, have been on two or more IEC/Rs
 - Must have successfully accomplished the INSARAG Leadership Course
- IEC/R Classifier Management
 - Must be member of an INSARAG classified USAR team
 - Must have been a member of USAR team management and have been on one IEC/R as classifier-in-training
 - Must have accomplished the INSARAG UC Training (proficient use in ICMS included)
- IEC/R Classifiers Search, Logistics, Medical, Rescue
 - Must be member of an INSARAG classified USAR team
 - Must be a subject matter expert for the nominated function and have been on one IEC/R as classifier-in-training.
- IEC/R Classifier in Training
 - Must be member of an INSARAG classified USAR team
 - Must meet the requirements for the position according to the appropriate ToR requirements (Appendix 4.1).
- INSARAG Secretariat Representative
 - Must be a staff member of RSB or member of an INSARAG classified USAR team and have been an IEC/R classifier team leader on four or more IEC/Rs
 - Must have accomplished the INSARAG Leadership Course

Members of IEC/R Cadre **must** be from another organization and member state than the Mentor and/or the team undergoing (re)classification.

It is strongly suggested not to have more than two Classifier from the same country within the same IEC/R Cadre

Exceptions can be granted by the INSARAG Secretariat, based upon experience. Consultation in this matter with the Quality Assurance Working Group is strongly advised.

It should be noted that INSARAG provides training for only IEC/R team leaders/deputy team leaders, mentors, and secretariat representatives. It is the responsibility of the sponsoring agency to ensure that those nominees for IEC/R classifiers are fully prepared for the assignment. Classifiers in training are expected to remain a classifier for at least 5 years. Their sponsoring organisations are to encourage and support this.

It should also be noted that it is the responsibility of the IEC/R team leader to evaluate the performance of their IEC/R classifiers and report the results to the INSARAG Secretariat. The INSARAG Secretariat forwards these findings to the respective INSARAG Focal Points.

The USAR team undergoing an IEC/R also can evaluate the performance of its IEC/R classifier team.

Those IEC/R classifiers who do not meet the appropriate ToR (Appendix 4.1). for the position will be removed from the roster of IEC/R classifiers by the INSARAG Secretariat and will not be added back until the INSARAG Policy, Operational, and Team Focal Points submit in writing how the individual's performance was improved. If removed from the roster, an individual will return to IEC/R classifier-in-training status and be re-evaluated.

3.5 IEC/R Mentor and mentoring Team

To lessen the potential of a USAR team being unsuccessful in its attempt to gain IEC/R Classification, the ISG unanimously endorsed that it is compulsory for USAR teams wanting to undergo an IEC/R to engage a mentor or mentoring team. It is required that the mentor does not come from the organisation or the country undertaking an IEC/R. This will open opportunities of learning from a different perspective as well as expanding knowledge of how other USAR teams operate (peer-to-peer). The mentor has the responsibility to provide an independent, unbiased recommendation to the USAR team and INSARAG Secretariat whether the IEC/R exercise should go ahead as planned or whether it should be postponed.

The details on the mentor ToRs are found in Appendix 4.1. Individuals interested in becoming a mentor are required to complete the IEC/R mentor application form and submit this to the INSARAG Secretariat for consideration. The INSARAG Policy and Operational Focal Points of both the country of origin from the mentor and the team being mentored ought to be notified by the INSARAG Secretariat about the selection of a mentor.

Exceptions can be granted by the INSARAG Secretariat, based upon experience. Consultation in this matter with the Quality Assurance Working Group is strongly advised.

Refer to Guidance Appendices of Volume 4 on www.insarag.org.

There are essentially two routes available to a USAR team regarding the engagement of an IEC/R mentor, i.e. bilateral USAR team support and/or an external consultant. There may be instances where a USAR team may elect to use a combination of both examples. However, it should be well realised that the IEC/R process is set up as a peer-to-peer review.

When requested, the INSARAG Secretariat can provide contact details for qualified mentors that have coached other successfully classified USAR teams, and/or have submitted a mentor application. The team's relationship with their identified mentor is arranged bilaterally.

3.5.1 Bilateral USAR Team IEC/R Mentorship

This occurs when the USAR team engages the assistance of a classified USAR team. It is however a prerequisite that the USAR team providing the mentoring has successfully undergone an IEC/R at minimum the same level of classification being sought by the team undergoing the IEC/R. It is accepted that a USAR team classified at the heavy level can mentor either another heavy USAR team or one seeking light or medium level classification. As example, a USAR team classified at the medium level cannot mentor a team seeking heavy classification.

When a USAR team chooses this support mechanism, it is important that one person from the classified USAR team be named as the mentor, while understanding that other staff and elements of that team will be used for the mentoring process. Having a single point of contact ensures reliable contact and dialogue with the INSARAG Secretariat as well as the USAR team seeking classification. Exceptions can be discussed with the INSARAG Secretariat case by case.

The nature of this engagement involving costs and time allocation will be determined and mutually agreed by the respective organisations. The INSARAG Secretariat is not a party to these discussions and decisions.

3.5.2 External Consultancy for IEC/R Mentorship

This occurs when the USAR team engages the assistance of an external consultant. This should be an individual or organisation with the relevant INSARAG knowledge and skills suitable for the given task. It must be noted that it may not be easy to identify an external consultant that possesses the expertise to be able to provide actual and adequate in-depth advice on all the five major components of USAR. If this is the case, this mentor should be able to seek out the assistance required to fill these gaps.

This external consultant should have successfully concluded the INSARAG Leadership Course.

The nature of this engagement involving costs and time allocation will be determined and mutually agreed between the USAR team and the consultant. The INSARAG Secretariat is not a party to these discussions and decisions.

3.6 Mentors' Responsibilities

The mentor takes on a significant responsibility when providing these services (see Appendix 4.1). The commitment required should not be underestimated, as it may be significant, depending on the degree of readiness of the USAR team in question. The mentor will play a

major role in providing the INSARAG Secretariat information about the status of the USAR team and its ability to successfully undergo INSARAG classification/reclassification.

The mentor supports the USAR team's project officer/coordinator for the IEC/R and is responsible for assessing the response capability and technical capacity of the USAR team.

During the IEC/R process the position of the mentor will have a crucial role by supporting the IEC/R classifier cadre, the EXCON and the USAR team.

Before the IEC/R exercise, the mentor is responsible, together with the IEC/R classifier team leader and the INSARAG Team Focal Point for the pre-greening process. The pre-greening process is only applicable for INSARAG External Reclassifications.

3.7 IEC/R Observers

Teams undergoing IEC/R exercises are encouraged to accept observers from USAR teams preparing to undergo an IEC/R. The INSARAG Secretariat may make suggestions to the USAR team about inclusion of observers.

It is the responsibility of the USAR team/sponsoring organisation undergoing IEC/R to determine if they support an observers' programme during its IEC/R exercise. The observer programme should be explained on the VOSOCC and operational and administrative instructions when referencing the IEC/R exercise so that potential observers are aware of the level of engagement/observation they can expect.

The USAR team/sponsoring organisation will also determine how many observers they will support. The USAR team/sponsoring organisation are encouraged to issue specific invitations giving priority to those teams preparing to undergo an IEC/R. If translation is required, it is the responsibility of the observers.

The observers will be advised that they have been invited to observe and not make comment about the process, the outcome of the process, or to interfere with either the USAR team being classified, or the IEC/R classifiers. All coordination must be done through the observer coordinator.

It is the responsibility of the host organisation, not the IEC/R classifier team leader, to manage the observer delegation throughout the exercise.

4 USAR Team Sponsoring Organisation

The USAR team's sponsoring organisation are responsible for ensuring that the USAR team fully understands the INSARAG methodology and that the USAR team meets the INSARAG minimum standard for USAR operations.

Some of the key issues the sponsoring organisation are responsible for include:

- If the USAR team is comprised of multiple organisations, it ensures inter-organisational agreements are in place.
- Ensures there is funding available for preparation (training and equipment), delivery of an annual full FIELDEX of minimum 36-hour duration, ongoing skill training, participation in INSARAG regional and global activities, providing trained staff for USAR coordination mechanisms, immunisations and vaccines, and is available for international deployment.
- Ensures there are agreements in place with transport providers (ground and air) that will enable the team to depart rapidly
- Ensures all required insurance policies for team members, including evacuation insurance, are in place unless it has the facilities, capabilities or agreements that would expeditiously evacuate a USAR member when required
- As decided by the ISG 2024, USAR teams/sponsoring organisations must provide 3-5 IEC/R classifiers in 5 years prior to its own IER, otherwise the USAR team will not be admitted to the IER.

5 USAR Team

5.1 Government USAR Team

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

A government USAR team requires approval of the INSARAG Policy and Operational Focal Points to undergo an IEC/R.

5.2 NGO USAR Team

Depending on the country's policy, NGO USAR teams can respond autonomously and do not require the approval of its government to deploy. An NGO USAR team, however, needs to be endorsed by that country's INSARAG Policy Focal Point after consultation with the INSARAG Operational Focal Point, if that team is planning for an IEC/R. Once an NGO is classified by INSARAG, however, it should deploy when requested by the affected country only, and not spontaneously.

5.3 Combined Government/NGO USAR Teams

These are USAR teams that comprise a combination of both government (single or multiple organisations) and NGO organisations. A combined government/NGO USAR team requires approval of the national INSARAG Policy Focal Point after consultation with the INSARAG Operational Focal Point to undergo an IEC/R. Once a combined team is classified by INSARAG, however, it should deploy when requested by the affected country only, and not spontaneously.

5.4 USAR Teams Composed of Multiple Organisations

The INSARAG IEC/R classification awarded is only applicable to the USAR team, including all its component organisations, being classified. If the USAR team is composed of several independent organisations (e.g. government organisations and NGOs that respond together as a combined team) the IEC/R classification awarded is applicable to that combination of organisations only. If any single component of the classified team does not respond with the rest of the team, the IEC/R classification is not applicable, and the team is not to use the INSARAG classification identification while deployed.

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

An INSARAG IEC/R classification cannot be transferred. Any independent organisation that obtained INSARAG IEC/R classification as part of a composite team and subsequently leaves that composite team is not permitted to promote itself as being INSARAG classified.

6 Exercise Control (EXCON)

The EXCON plays a most important role in ensuring the USAR team is successful in its IEC/R exercise. The EXCON will be comprised of the most experienced and trained members from its own and partner organisation. The EXCON team members must be dedicated to the EXCON function and cannot be assigned additional roles of responsibility during the IEC/R exercise. The EXCON is responsible to create the scenario, to allow tactical decision making of the USAR team throughout the exercise and to manage all needed injects, prepare and manage worksites, and other pertinent information. It is also required to input information to the VOSOCC and ICMS during all phases of the exercise.

The EXCON is responsible for designing the field exercise (FIELDEX; 36-hour full field exercise) FIELDEX to ensure it is constantly evolving over a minimum of a continuous 36-hour period, and that the scenarios will enable the IEC/R classifiers to observe all the operational and administrative requirements of the IEC/R checklist. Therefore the IEC/R checklist (Appendix 4.3) is always the fundament for the preparation of the worksites. This FIELDEX needs to incorporate all aspects of an international disaster response from the breaking emergency through to demobilisation and return to home base.

It is important that the scenario reflects, as close as possible, the “real life” situation a team is likely to encounter and are developed in such a way that will challenge the team’s operational and administrative expertise, skills and equipment to a level that is commensurate with the level of classification being sought. Therefore, it is important that as well the social and humanitarian conditions and needs of the environment after the disaster are also presented and placed as injects into the exercise. It is important to understand that the exercise is not a skill-set demonstration; meaning that static displays of, e.g., steel cutting, concrete breaking, shoring, heavy-lifting are not acceptable.

For medical portions of the scenarios, appropriate USAR medical expertise should be involved in the development and delivery of confined space victim scenarios. Injects should evolve based on the care provided by the team to ensure realism.

The EXCON is to prevent the USAR team from becoming aware of the details of the scenario and the specific evolutions in the build-up to the IEC/R exercise to retain an element of realism and surprise, as would be the case in a real situation. It is however important to provide information to the team, as the scenario starts and then continues, so the team has sufficient information to develop and implement a Plan of Action.

The head of the EXCON is required to liaise with the USAR team’s stakeholders (INSARAG Operational Focal Point, INSARAG Team Focal Point) to ensure all the IEC/R requirements will be met and that the IEC/R exercise follows the prescribed timeline.

The EXCON is responsible to ensure sufficient technical and tactical tasks and contingency plans are prepared if a rescue activity needs to be repeated and be fully in control of the exercise grounds and driving the FIELDEX through to its conclusion.

EXCON is comprised of the most experienced and trained members of the USAR team, and the success or failure of a USAR team depends on its expertise. Each must have a strong knowledge of internal team policy as well as be trained in the INSARAG methodology. Members need to willingly accept an assignment to EXCON, understand the complexity of the

requirement, and have the experience needed to design a plan that meets each of the items on the IEC/R checklist in the confines of a minimum 36-hour exercise.

Joint IEC/R activity (Chapter 2, paragraph 8) will consist of joint EXCON teams from all organisations respectively and have sufficient influence to direct the exercise activity in line with the requirements of their classification.

In any case of need, the mentor supports EXCON in preparing the IEC/R exercise.

Refer to the EU-MODEX-IER Manual on www.insarag.org for additional information.

7 IEC/R Application Process

Once a USAR team and its sponsoring organisation have agreed to undergo the IEC/R, it is required to apply to the INSARAG Secretariat.

The application process starts minimum two-years before the envisaged IEC/R exercise. The IEC/R Two-Year Planning Timeline (see Appendix 4.2) provides an outline of a timeframe that a USAR team must adhere to regarding its IEC/R preparations.

Before a USAR team can consider an application for an IEC/R, it must demonstrate its involvement with INSARAG. This requires that during its development, a prospective USAR team planning for an IEC/R will participate in its annual regional meetings, EREs/SIMEX, and/or other INSARAG activities including registration in the USAR directory. As decided by ISG 2024, the USAR team/sponsoring organisations has to provide minimum 3-5 IEC/R appropriate classifiers in 5 years prior to its own IER, otherwise the USAR team will not be admitted to the IER.

The USAR team will also need to discuss the selection of its IEC/R mentor with the INSARAG Secretariat.

Regardless of whether a USAR team is an official government team, an NGO or combination government/NGO team, it requires the formal acknowledgement of the INSARAG Policy Focal Point of that country to be eligible to undergo an IEC/R.

Application Phases are as follows:

- Phase 1 begins with the application latest 24 months prior to the planned IEC/R date including the Abbreviated Portfolio of Evidence (A-PoE, see 7.1 for further information).
- Phase 2 begins with the submission of the Comprehensive Portfolio of Evidence (C-PoE) no later than 12 months prior to the IEC/R date (see 8.2 for further information)

Once chosen, the IEC/R mentor will perform an assessment of the capacity and capability of the USAR team to ensure it is prepared to start the IEC/R process. Refer to the assessment report Appendix 4.8 and 4.11.

The Phase 1 application for an IEC/R consists of:

- Written application by the government's INSARAG Policy Focal Point to the INSARAG Secretariat stating that the USAR team would voluntarily like to undergo an IEC/R
- Abbreviated Portfolio of Evidence (A-PoE)
- Report from the mentor that affirms the team schedule of preparation activities will result in the USAR team being administratively and operationally ready, within the two-year period

The requirements for this application are as follows:

- This application must be submitted to the INSARAG Secretariat latest two years prior to the desired date. It is important to note that there are no exceptions allowed to this two-year preparation period since history indicates it takes minimum two-years for a team to prepare for an IEC/R.
- The application must be completed in English.

Upon receipt of the IEC/R Application Package, 1.) written application, 2.) A-PoE and 3.) IEC/R mentor's report, the INSARAG Secretariat will evaluate whether the USAR team is prepared to meet the standards required for the IEC/R within the available timeline. If the INSARAG Secretariat is satisfied with the IEC/R Application Package, it will:

- Within 14 days inform the INSARAG Policy Focal Point in writing that the team's application package is accepted
- Allocate a provisional IEC/R exercise date
- Enter the IEC/R into the schedule of upcoming IEC/Rs

If IEC/R application package does not meet the INSARAG minimum standards, the INSARAG Secretariat will inform the INSARAG Policy, Operational and Team Focal Point, and IEC/R mentor within 14 days in writing, of the identified areas of concern.

- The USAR team will be able to reapply by submitting a revised IEC/R A-PoE and IEC/R mentor's assessment report, once the identified areas of concern have been resolved. Please refer to Appendix 4.7 under the tabs of the Guidance Appendices at www.insarag.org for more information.

7.1 Abbreviated Portfolio of Evidence (A-PoE)

The A-PoE must be submitted by all teams applying for an IEC or IER. The contents of the A-PoE are included in the IEC/R application phase 1. The A-PoE, completed in English, is required to provide documented evidence that demonstrates the USAR team has been developed in accordance with the INSARAG Guidelines and has adopted the INSARAG methodology. A current IEC/R mentor assessment report is to be included in the A-PoE using Appendix 4.7: mentor's Report.

The IEC/R Quality Assurance WG supports the INSARAG Secretariat in reviewing and assessing the application documentations and advises the INSARAG Secretariat how to proceed further in the application process. The final responsibility remains with the INSARAG Secretariat.

8 IEC/R Evaluation Process

The USAR team in consultation with its mentor needs to develop a strategic plan to address any administrative or operational gaps identified during the mentor's assessment. The implementation of this strategic plan needs to be undertaken against realistic timelines.

If a negative determination is made at any point during the IEC/R process, the INSARAG Policy and Operational Focal Point in consultation with the mentor will immediately notify the INSARAG Secretariat in writing. The mentor is also expected to submit a written report to the INSARAG Secretariat documenting why the timeline will not be met. An alternative date will be determined by the INSARAG Secretariat in consultation with the USAR team and its mentor.

8.1 Comprehensive Portfolio of Evidence (C-PoE)

8.1.1 Submission of the C-PoE

The C-PoE, using the IEC/R Application Phase 2, must be submitted to the INSARAG Secretariat at the 12-month point of the two-year timeline. A current mentor assessment report is to be included. The requirements pertaining to the submission of the C-PoE are as follows:

- Prior to its submission the C-PoE it must be reviewed by the INSARAG Operational Focal Point, and mentor.

Any questions raised by the INSARAG Secretariat and/or the IEC/R classifier cadre during the review of the C-PoE will be directed to the USAR team and its INSARAG Operational Focal Point, and mentor. A deadline for response will be established when the question(s) is raised. If required, USAR teams can contact the INSARAG Secretariat for examples of a C-PoE. Refer to Appendix 4.9 under the Guidelines Appendices on www.insarag.org for more information.

8.1.2 Contents of the C-PoE

The application must be completed in English. Any documents that cannot be translated into English (i.e. training programme) are to be accompanied by an English summary of contents.

As a minimum, the following documents will be submitted in English:

- Explanation of annual training programme
- Organogram of the USAR team for response
- Organogram of the USAR team's programme management for administrative duties
- Exercise plan and scenario
- USAR team personnel manifest
- Logistics manifest
- Shippers' Dangerous Goods Declaration
- Detailed evidence of activation procedure
- Evidence of repatriation procedure

It must be noted that the INSARAG Secretariat and/or the IEC/R classifier team leader may request additional information.

If required, USAR teams can contact the INSARAG Secretariat for examples of the C-PoE.

8.1.3 Review of the C-PoE

The INSARAG Secretariat will forward the C-PoE to the selected IEC/R classifier team leader. The IEC/R classifier team leader will coordinate a detailed review of the C-PoE with IEC/R classifier cadre within 45-days of receipt. If required, the IEC/R classifier team leader will conduct interviews with relevant members of the USAR team, the mentor and INSARAG Operational Focal Point. There may be a request for additional documentation in support of the C-PoE or request that some documents be translated into English.

Based upon the documentation found in the C-PoE, the IEC/R classifiers will recommend whether to proceed or to postpone the IEC/R exercise. This is to be finalised at least six months ahead of the provisionally scheduled date for the IEC/R exercise.

If some clarification is required, then the IEC/R classifier team leader can communicate with the mentor and INSARAG Operational Focal Point.

8.1.4 Pre-Greening for an IER

Pre-Greening is called the process prior to an IER, where the IER classifier team leader, the Team Focal Point and the mentor discuss, and come to a consensus, what elements of the relevant checklist (Points 1-6) will be observed and classified during the IER exercise or to be demonstrated, presented, and/or explained prior to the IER exercise. This is one of the key responsibilities of a mentor and the IER classifier team leader.

8.2 IEC/R Exercise (FIELDEX)

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

- During the FIELDEX, the USAR team will deploy in the role of the first arriving USAR team
- The IEC/R classifier cadre will need to observe the USAR team's performance during a constantly evolving minimum 36-hour IEC/R exercise. The IEC/R exercise is to be conducted as follows:
- The first 6 hours are used for the response capability evaluation which includes:
 - Alert and Activation - all alert and activation processes should be demonstrated during the exercise. A PowerPoint presentation or the like is not accepted to replace this demonstration.
 - Recall of the USAR team
 - Pre-deployment medical screening
 - Pre-deployment logistics check
 - Pre-deployment personal equipment issue
 - Pre-deployment briefings
 - Departure customs and immigration
 - Getting to the point that the USAR team is ready to "board the aircraft."

In some cases, USAR teams have used training grounds in neighbouring countries or jurisdictions that require considerable driving time. It is important to note that this period is not a part of the FIELDEX, so in essence "the clock stops." The clock restarts when the USAR team arrives at its simulated border crossing point, where the USAR team has one hour to

complete border-crossing activities. No matter the time of this travel, the USAR team is required to immediately continue the exercise without a technical break.

The remaining minimum 30 hours are used for the operational capacity evaluation which includes:

- Immigration and handling at Point of Entry
- Meeting with airport authorities to establish RDC
- Establishment and operation of the RDC. The RDC will be operational for minimally two hours:
 - Use the VOSOCC and ICMS, to give location of the RDC
 - Establish communications with the LEMA (light and medium teams would not be expected to establish the RDC and UCC simultaneously).
 - Receive unregistered incoming teams and give first situation update
- Meeting with LEMA to receive a situation update, what should include UCC and BoO locations and further tasking
- Establish UCC according to USAR Coordination Handbook and run it throughout the FIELDDEX (light and medium teams would not be expected to establish the RDC and UCC simultaneously):
 - Use the VOSOCC and ICMS, to publish location of the UCC
 - Meet with LEMA to acquire local objectives
 - Establish communications with the RDC
 - Perform analysis of incoming international USAR teams classification/capacity for assignment to meet LEMA objectives
 - Conduct at least two USAR team coordination meetings
 - Conduct two meetings with LEMA
- Establish BoO and start team management:
 - USAR team management actions
 - Action plans (to be developed over the exercise period)
 - Safety plan (to be developed over the exercise period)
 - Resupply plan (to be developed over the exercise period)
 - Transportation plan (to be developed over the exercise period)
 - Assembly point
 - Evacuation procedures
 - Demobilisation planning processes and developing a demobilisation plan
- Start USAR operation:
 - Conduct ASR operations
 - Work sites must be separated by distance, requiring separate logistics and staffing
 - For light team IEC/R, a stand-down period will be injected at the end of the first work period that lasts 12-16 hours. It will then recommence operations for the second work period.



Figure 4: Team undergoing the IEC/R Exercise

- The technical phase of the exercise is required to be conducted at a venue that provides realistic props commensurate with the level of classification being sought.
- The technical scenarios should resemble real-life situations likely to be encountered during actual emergencies.
- The degree of technical complexity must be commensurable with the level of classification being sought.
- The technical scenarios must enable the USAR team to apply all the technical skills required by the IEC/R checklist.
- If the USAR team is undertaking a heavy classification, the EXCON needs to ensure there are two separate worksites with props commensurate with the technical requirements. Separate worksites are defined as any worksite that requires separate logistical support.
- The EXCON is required to introduce “injects” that enable the USAR team to implement its redundancy plan for personnel (crew rotations) and equipment
- To ensure self-sufficiency, the EXCON is required to ensure the USAR team is restricted to the equipment cache with which they would deploy internationally. During the IEC/R exercise, no equipment from external sources may be utilised except for a crane to demonstrate proper rigging and heavy-lifting capability.
- The EXCON team should instruct role players to speak English, when possible, so that the interaction between the USAR team and the role players can be properly evaluated by the IEC/R classifier cadre; if this is difficult, the USAR team is required to supply translators to the IEC/R classifier cadre. English is required to be used at the RDC, UCC and when interacting with LEMA.



Figure 5: Team practicing a Height Rescue operation during IEC/R exercise.

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

For the FIELDDEX it is most likely that the USAR team will deploy to the venue by road. The IEC/R classifier cadre will still assess the air transport plan, as presented in the C-PoE, if this is the means of transport used for international deployment. A demonstration of road transportation at the IEC/R exercise will not be accepted.

Note: As part of the preparatory process, discussions around the scenario and expected USAR operations, including the type of challenges of the IEC/R exercise site, must be discussed at an early stage between the mentor, the EXCON, IEC/R classifier team leader and the INSARAG Team Focal Point. This will allow time for modifications and ensure that the team will be well challenged to meet the requirements of the IEC/R process and the possibility to exceed them.

8.2.1 Alert and Mobilisation

This includes application of the VOSOCC:

- Notification of a breaking emergency
- Monitoring of situation
- Ability to place the USAR team on standby
- Request for international assistance
- Approval for international deployment
- Activation of USAR team

Activation: this includes, but is not limited to:

- Arrival of the team members at designated Point of Assembly
- Pre-deployment medical screening of personnel and dogs:

- Pre-deployment briefing
- Pre-deployment logistics check
- Equipment loading
- Arrival of the USAR team at the designated Point of Departure:
 - Departure customs
 - Loading requirements for aircraft including Shippers' Declaration of Dangerous Goods
 - Departure immigration



Figure 6: RDC and UCC established during an operation.

8.2.2 Arrival in the Affected Country

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Arrival in the affected country:
 - Arrival immigration
 - Arrival customs
 - Meeting with airport authorities
 - Establishing and operating the RDC and later the UCC
 - Meeting with LEMA
 - Set up of the BoO

Note: One of the key elements the IEC/R classifiers will measure is the USAR team's ability to communicate between the BoO and the worksites, and how it coordinates equipment staging between the BoO and the worksites. Therefore, for the FIELDEX, the BoO should be established in a location that is not within walking distance of the worksites. As the BoO is an essential part of the operation it cannot be pre-greened.

- USAR teams should also consider the size of their BoO footprint in anticipation of other arriving USAR teams.



Figure 7: A Team's Base of Operations/BoO.

8.2.3 USAR Operations

This includes activities clearly identified on the IEC/R checklist, including, but not limited to:

- ASR2 work site triage assessment
- Worksite prioritisation and assignment by UCC
- Use of INSARAG Marking and Signalling system
- ASR3, ASR4, coordination, and medical activities commensurable with the level of classification being sought

8.2.4 Demobilisation

This includes but is not limited to:

- LEMA declares end of rescue phase
- Production of handover documentation
- Demobilisation including the planning process and development of a demobilisation plan

9 IEC/R Programme

9.1 IEC/R Programme

The IEC/R is a peer-review amongst USAR practitioners and both, the USAR team, their mentor, and IEC/R classifier cadre mutually benefit and learn from the experience. The IEC/R classifiers cadre evaluate a USAR team to ensure it has met all criteria required by the INSARAG Guidelines and that the USAR team fulfils the current INSARAG minimum standard for USAR preparedness and response.

The IEC/R checklist (light, medium, heavy), based on the INSARAG Guidelines, has been developed by the INSARAG network, and it has been approved for use by the ISG. It is used by EXCON to prepare the IEC/R exercise, by the USAR team to prepare for the IEC/R exercise and by the IEC/R classifier cadre during an IEC/R exercise to ensure that the IEC/R exercise is conducted in a professional and objective manner. It is essential that USAR teams use INSARAG Guidelines, Volume 4 when planning and delivering its required annual FIELDEX.

Issues regarding the IEC/R process (Volume 4, Checklist and related appendices) should be addressed to the IEC/R Quality Assurance WG via the INSARAG Secretariat.

The ISG has endorsed and expects each team seeking IEC/R to deliver an annual FIELDEX of minimum 36-hour duration. This is a quality control measure used to ensure that a USAR team trains regularly to remain prepared for response. Once a team has selected a mentor for either its IEC/R, the mentor should attend at least one FIELDEX to be able to provide a complete analysis stating that the USAR team is ready for its IEC/R (mentor's report). The USAR team is required to submit together with the A-PoE a pre-IEC/R self-assessment checklist and a first mentor's report to the INSARAG Secretariat; failure to do so could delay or deny an IEC/R. Please refer to appendix 4.7 and 4.9 in the guidance appendices at www.insarag.org for more information.

For an IEC/R, the USAR team is expected to conduct its FIELDEX using the IEC/R checklist as a planning aid; each item found on the checklist will be incorporated into the exercise scenario.

The USAR team is required to successfully complete each item on the IEC/R checklist. The IEC/R classifier cadre will record which assessment method was used (documentation, observation and/or interview) and provide an evaluation of the IEC/R exercise (IEC/R checklist) and extensive advisory note at the end of the IEC/R activity.

Absolute Markers for a Successful IEC/R

In an IEC/R, the USAR team is required to deliver, produce, or provide the following:

TEAM MANAGEMENT

1. Maintain command and control of the USAR team.
2. Produce in writing and ensure:
 - a. Plan of Action
 - b. Safety and security plan
 - c. Transportation plan
 - d. Situation reports

- e. Sanitation and hygiene
- f. Required INSARAG information and documents
- 3. Establish and/or support a RDC, UCC, and/or SCC
- 4. Attend UCC/SCC briefings
- 5. Use ICMS

SEARCH

- 1. Maintain command and control of the search element
- 2. Ensure the safety and security plan is in place and understood
- 3. Provide input into the Plan of Action
- 4. Conduct ASR of assigned area; report findings to team management
- 5. Select and properly use search tools:
 - a. Physical search – required for any level of USAR teams
 - b. Dog search – optional for light or medium; required for heavy
 - c. Technical search – optical and acoustic, required for any level of USAR teams

RESCUE

- 1. Maintain command and control of the rescue element
- 2. Ensure the safety and security plan is in place for all operations and implemented
- 3. Provide input into the Plan of Action
- 4. Conduct rescue operations:
 - a. Breaking, breaching and cutting:
 - i. Concrete: dirty
 - ii. Concrete: clean
 - iii. Structural steel
 - iv. Timber
 - v. Metal plate
- 5. Shoring:
 - a. Cribbing
 - b. Window/door stabilisation
 - c. Vertical stabilisation
 - d. Diagonal stabilisation
 - e. Horizontal stabilisation
 - f. Continuous monitoring of shoring/cribbing systems
- 6. Rope Work:
 - a. Assess the situation and produce a plan of action prior to commencement of rope operations
 - b. Ensure the safety plan is in place and understood
 - c. Conduct a vertical raising and lowering operation
 - d. Construct a system that allows for the movement of a victim from a high point laterally to a safe point below
- 7. Confined/restricted space:
 - a. Safely conduct search and rescue operations in confined/restricted spaces
- 8. Lifting and moving:
 - a. Conduct lifting and moving operations to gain access to a victim
 - b. Ensure the safety plan is in place and understood
 - c. The use of a crane is mandatory

MEDICAL

The USAR team must have the ability to provide medical care for its members (including dogs) and victims encountered while on mission. This includes a pre-deployment medical screening of all members (including dogs), and daily medical health and welfare checks while on mission.

1. Maintain command and control of the Medical element.
2. Ensure the Safety Plan is in place and understood.
3. Provide input into the Plan of Action.
4. Patient Assessment and Monitoring.
5. The USAR team:
 - a. Must assess and monitor each patient while under its control.
 - b. Must evacuate each patient in a safe manner from the rubble.
 - c. Provide input to the Victim Extrication Form.
 - d. Complete a Patient Treatment Form.
6. Lifesaving Interventions:
 - a. The USAR team must demonstrate the ability to manage ABC-functions such as airway control, ventilatory support and haemorrhage control.
7. Patient Management:
 - a. The USAR team must demonstrate the ability to provide vascular access, fluid therapy, effective analgesia, and antibiotic administration and protection from environment, including considerations for Crush Syndrome and burns.
8. Patient Stabilisation:
 - a. The USAR team must demonstrate the ability to immobilise, splint and support suspected fractures.
9. Patient Extrication:
 - a. The USAR team must demonstrate planning and packaging for safe extrication including considerations for clinical and environmental conditions.
10. The USAR team must perform a Field Amputation and Dismemberment* (* may not be applicable to light USAR teams) in a confined/restricted space.

LOGISTICS

1. Maintain command and control of the Logistics element.
2. Ensure the Safety and Security Plan is in place and understood.
3. Provide input into the Plan of Action.
4. BoO Management:
 - a. Evacuation Plan.
 - b. Waste Disposal Plan.
 - c. Decontamination Corridor (Clean & Dirty).
 - d. Toilet and shower maintenance.
 - e. Tool and equipment staging and repair.
 - f. Establish fuel and smoking locations.
 - g. Development of a Resupply Plan.
 - h. Placement of fire extinguishers and smoke detectors.
 - i. Placement for dogs.
5. Electrical supply.
6. Water supply.

For Details refer to the IEC/R Checklist

Day 0

All IEC/R cadre are to arrive in the designated city on Day 0, preferably not later than 17.00 hours. The organisers should consider that some IEC/R cadre may be traveling long distances. Because of this, arrival airports should be serviced by most major airlines to lessen travel cost as well as provide better connections for flights. While non-stop flights are the best option, organisers are encouraged to choose an airport that can be reached by not more than one connecting flight.

The IEC/R classifier team leader will schedule a brief meeting in the evening of Day 0 to make introductions and provide a short overview of how the IEC/R exercise will be managed. Since this is an informal meeting, the organiser does not need to arrange for formal meeting space, unless it can be done at no expense.

The following is an IEC/R classifiers and Stakeholders Meeting example (Agenda):

1. Self-Introduction:
 - a. IEC/R classifier cadre: Capacity, deployment experience, INSARAG training, role and responsibility with own USAR team.
2. Expectation of classifiers:
 - a. INSARAG Guidelines (INSARAG minimum standards), Objective view / Peer Review
 - b. Goal and objectives of this Mission.
3. Rules of Engagement:
 - a. With USAR team, stakeholders including EXCON, Observers, Conflict Resolution.
 - b. Understanding that IEC/R classifier cadre will always be present during the IEC/R exercise.
 - c. Understanding that the FIELDEX conducted as part of the team's annual exercise.
4. Work Style:
 - a. Establish a work schedule and rotation.
 - b. Buddy system/work shift.
 - c. Review IEC/R Checklist and verify each functions responsibility.
 - d. Regular IEC/R classifier cadre meetings to discuss progress.
 - e. Regular meetings with USAR team stakeholders, especially the mentor.
 - f. Steps to take if something needs to be repeated.
 - g. Safety plan.
5. Final products and reporting to the INSARAG Team Focal Point and INSARAG Secretariat:
 - a. Determine the timing, audience, and delivery.
6. Logistics:
 - a. Lodging and telephone list, and meal schedule.
 - b. Request hardcopy of materials needed from the INSARAG Team Focal Point or mentor.

- c. Ensure vehicles are available, and that driver(s) contact information is known.
- 7. Stakeholder Meeting:
 - a. Ensure IEC/R classification Team is introduced to the stakeholders.
 - b. Review IEC/R Checklist if necessary.
 - c. Will there be a VIP and/or media visit?
 - d. What the IEC/R classifier cadre should be aware of (do's and don't-s).

Day 1

The USAR team and its sponsoring organisation will need to arrange, at their cost, a meeting space for the IEC/R cadre on Day 1, which will be used during the entire IEC/R exercise. As an example, the space can be at the host hotel or in the headquarters of the USAR team undergoing the IEC/R exercise. The space should be separate from other undertakings involved with the process, so the IEC/R cadre has privacy to openly discuss issues and do its reporting and documentation. The space requires:

- Tables and chairs for the IEC/R cadre, as well as extras for the mentor and INSARAG Team Focal Point for when they are needed to provide input.
- Wireless Internet access.
- Access to light refreshments (coffee, tea, water).
- Access to toilet facilities.
- LED projector (beamer) with a connection cord long enough to facilitate moving the cord to multiple positions. If there is not a blank wall, a projection screen will be needed.
- Electrical power strips and extension cords to ensure all IEC/R cadre have electrical access.
- Access to a printer.
- Paper tablets for note taking, pens, stapler and other office supplies.
- Minimally one, and preferably two vehicles dedicated to the IEC/R cadre (with drivers) to be available 24/7.
- If needed support with communication equipment.
- Minimally two copies of the C-PoE.

It is typical that a USAR team undergoing an IEC/R provides a presentation about its team that allows explanation of the details found in its C-PoE. In this instance, the USAR team is reminded to focus its presentation on its capacity and capability to deploy a USAR team abroad, more so than on its national position or other modules it may have as a resource (water purification, medical and so on). It is not to say these elements are not a source of national influence or are less important, it is to say that the focus of the IEC/R process is on international USAR deployment. For a team undergoing an IER the briefing must highlight the significant events of the past 5 years and include the corrective actions recorded in the former Advisory Notes.

It should be noted that since the IEC/R classifiers have at least six months to review the C-PoE, questions by them should be minimal during this presentation.

The IEC/R classifiers will need to be free until 10.00 hours AM on Day 1 to tend to its internal needs. With the advent of pre-IEC/R teleconferences, coupled with the advanced naming of

the IEC/R cadre, most of Day 1 has now been streamlined to having more time for discussion, as well as inspection.

From 10.00 hours AM the following will need to be arranged:

Administrative briefing and inspection:

- The intent is for an IEC/R to cover Checklist Line Items 1-9 through discussion (asking/answering questions), observation (of the submitted C-PoE or actions seen) and inspection (such as warehousing facility, training records, and maintenance reports).
- Interviews will be conducted with the INSARAG Policy/Operational Focal Points to review governmental responsibilities and commitments.
- A review of medical screening procedures for both people and dogs which will require the presence of the USAR team's Medical Director and Chief Veterinarian.
- Interviews on how functional training is conducted (initial and continuing) for all USAR team members including search dogs.
- A discussion on recruitment and retention of USAR team members including search dogs.
- A discussion on how the USAR team makes provides for food, water, medications, and controlled drugs.
- The Checklist will be reviewed with the IEC/R classifiers, the Operational Focal Point, mentor, EXCON Director and INSARAG Team Focal Point, and the INSARAG Secretariat Representative to ensure all understand how the exercise will be conducted.

Site inspections:

- An inspection of the USAR team's warehouse including load plans for air and ground transportation and International Air Transport Association requirements.
- The IEC/R cadre will inspect the IEC/R exercise site to ensure it meets the needs of the IEC/R being sought. This includes possible reserve sites. The IEC/R classifier team leader will explain necessary changes if any are required. Once the site has been re-inspected and approved, the IEC/R cadre will make no other changes.
- The EXCON will need to provide transport to the various locations requiring inspection. IEC/R cadre may be required to split up during this process; the organisers are to ensure that there is dedicated transport available for each group.
- If the distance between the Homebase (mobilisation) and the Worksites is too large, Day 1 and the Mobilisation can be monitored by a live stream. This has to be agreed with all the IEC/R Stakeholders.
- After Day 1 inspection by the IEC/R classifier cadre, the USAR team may load its tool and equipment cache to be ready for transportation on Day 2.

Note: The IEC/R classifier team leader will consult his IEC/R classifiers and, depending on the situation, and with flexibility, will delegate suitable members to conduct the above activities simultaneously.

- IEC/R cadre's interaction with Observer Groups is usually limited due its focus being on the exercise activities. It is suggested though, that time is built into the exercise

schedule that allows the IEC/R cadre, the INSARAG Team Focal Point and the mentor to meet with the Observer Group during the exercise. This allows an opportunity to explain first what the USAR team has done to prepare and how the IEC/R cadre works.

- During the minimum 36-hour exercise, the IEC/R classifier team leader will meet numerous times with the INSARAG Team Focal Point and mentor to discuss the status of the process. The purpose is to inform the INSARAG Team Focal Point of which items have been seen and whether there are items that might need to be repeated.
- The IEC/R classifier team leader will immediately consult with the INSARAG Secretariat Representative and the mentor, should an area of ambiguity or concern arise during the exercise. The INSARAG Secretariat Representative will decide if a formal meeting is needed to resolve the matter.

Day 2-3

The number of actual days scheduled for the field portion of the IEC/R exercise will vary and can be adjusted if approved by the INSARAG Secretariat, in consultation with the IEC/R classifier team leader. It should be remembered however that the IEC/R cadre in most instances have travelled many kilometres across numerous time zones. With that in mind, it is suggested that, when possible, the IEC/R exercise not start at the end of Day 1, thus giving the IEC/R cadre time to acclimate to time and change of environment.

The IEC/R scenario/exercise format is clearly defined as a continuous 36-hour (minimum) constantly evolving scenario-based USAR exercise. This means that the IEC/R cadre expects to observe initial search operations being done (ASR 2), with an analysis of needs leading to the immediate request for rescue support including hazardous environment assessments, structural triage and victim extrication with medical support. “Continuous” requires that the worksite is never left unattended until the last victim is removed; meaning that a synchronised approach starting with victim detection through victim removal is required. The intent is to allow the IEC/R cadre the opportunity to observe how the USAR team, undergoing the process operates as a Team and not as individual functions. A systematic approach to tactical operations allows the USAR team to fully demonstrate its response capability and capacity.

The IEC/R cadre must arrive at a location in advance of the USAR team; this is to ensure it is in place to observe initial portions of the exercise as they unfold.

The same is true during tactical operations, meaning that if a shoring operation is needed, the IEC/R classifiers may observe the set-up. They will return at intervals to observe the operation through its completion. The IEC/R cadre must ensure it is aware of the exercise timeline and will in most instances not interfere with that schedule. That said, it is the responsibility of the IEC/R classifiers to be certain that it is in place to observe critical portions of the exercise such as rigging and lifting, technical search, and complex medical procedures. The IEC/R cadre must be aware of the impact caused if a USAR team is required to reset a scenario because there was no one from the IEC/R cadre present when it was being conducted. The IEC/R classifier team leader and the mentor will closely coordinate timings to lessen the probability of the IEC/R cadre not being in the correct place at the correct time.

The first six hours of the FIELDEX are used for the Response Capability evaluation. It should be noted that the IEC/R cadre requires these actions to be taken as if it were an actual

deployment. The IEC/R cadre also understands that during portions of these activities the USAR team's native language will be used rather than English, which is permissible. The IEC/R cadre will need an overview (in English) but does not require direct translation.

The IEC/R cadre understand that it is very difficult to compress logistics requirements to meet the confines of a 36-hour (minimum) exercise. With that certain flexibility will be accepted in this phase including:

- While not preferred, the use of portable toilets and alternate showers is permissible for the BoO. The USAR team will still need to build-out its latrine area and shower facility (including providing water to the shower and hand-washing stations) in its footprint for inspection by the IEC/R cadre.
 - For IEC/R exercise, the USAR team is required to produce potable water for priority use in the Decontamination Corridor (Clean-Dirty).
- Due to the expense and certain national requirements, the USAR team does not need to take the full complement of its medical pharmacy to the field. The IEC/R cadre will inspect the entire medical cache (including pharmacy) during Day 1 activities.
- The USAR team undergoing IEC/R does need however to have adequate medicines and medical supplies to treat real emergencies. The USAR team will also need to have adequate medicines and medical supplies to "treat" patients during the exercise. By this, along with the needed bandaging, splinting, etc., the IEC/R cadre will expect to see an oxygen mask applied to a patient if the situation calls for this treatment. In the same view, an intravenous catheter (IV) will need to be placed with an IV solution connected to it, if that treatment is required. The IEC/R cadre cannot accept verbalisation of medical treatment; it must see it.
- Due to spoilage and resupply expense, the USAR team is not required to take its complete food and water complement to the field. The IEC/R classifier cadre will inspect this element during Day 1 activities to ensure the USAR team has adequate capacity for the classification being sought.
- The USAR team is required however to have adequate food and water on hand to tend to the team members for the duration of the exercise.

End of Day 3

As the exercise draws near its endpoint on Day 3, the IEC/R classifier team leader should be in a position to inform the INSARAG Secretariat Representative whether the USAR team will be successful. While it is understood that pre-planned celebrations or ceremonies are discouraged, the INSARAG Secretariat Representative may elect to inform the organisers unofficially that the USAR team has been successful (or not) in gaining or maintaining its classification.

At this time the IEC/R classifier cadre must reconvene to prepare its debriefing (IEC/R Checklist and draft of the advisory notes) to the USAR team and compile its report. This process is not to be underestimated and at least 5 hours must be counted. In the IEC/R exercise planning this timeslot has to be respected.

If time allows at this point, the IEC/R classifier team leader may schedule a debriefing (IEC/R Checklist and draft of the Advisory Notes) with the USAR team management to review its

findings. This meeting must be scheduled for at least one hour! If there is not sufficient time, this debriefing must take place Day 4; the IEC/R classifier team leader and the INSARAG Sec Rep determine when this action will be completed.

Day 4

For the debriefing, enough time has to be planned, at least one hour, better two. The debriefing has to include the observations and validations including the explanations and must be presented with the completed IEC/R Checklist. A first draft of the Advisory Notes must be presented as well

Should there be issues that require discussion on the final remarks arising from the IEC/R classifiers, these should be resolved and agreed prior to the departure of the IEC/R classifier cadre.

IEC/R classifier cadre members will be free to return to their home base on the afternoon of Day 4 or on Day 5 when travel arrangements can be confirmed.

Most USAR teams would like to include a closing ceremony into the programme, attended by governmental officials and the local media. The INSARAG Secretariat and IEC/R cadre have no role to play in these ceremonies and may not be able to attend.

10 IEC/R Reporting

Upon completion of the IEC/R, the IEC/R classifier cadre will provide the USAR team with a written debriefing of the findings (including IEC/R checklist and Advisory Notes) and the INSARAG Secretariat may announce the overall result the Team has achieved. The detailed findings will be recorded in the IEC/R Report, the template for which is available in IEC/R Report Template. The IEC/R classifier team leader will have maximum 14 days to provide the INSARAG Secretariat the signed final report including the Advisory Notes. For more information refer to appendix 4.10: *IEC/R Report Template* in the section Guidance Appendices on www.insarag.org.

The INSARAG Secretariat will provide the final report to the USAR team and its sponsoring organisation within maximum 14 days of the completion of the IEC/R. If the USAR team has been successful, the INSARAG Secretariat will update the USAR directory with the classification/reclassification the team has achieved.

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

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

The Advisory Notes will include an explanation of items marked yellow and best practices.

It is advised, that the USAR team has an After Action Review Process including Lessons Learned.

10.1 IEC/R Checklist

The IEC/R checklist clearly specifies the different requirements depending on the category of the team, including a column with the specific requirements for each of them (light, medium and heavy).

Refer to appendix 4.3: *IEC/R Checklist* in the section Guidance Appendices on www.insarag.org.

10.1.1 Colour Coding

For better visualisation and awareness of the teams’ IEC/R exercise results, the colour coding is an important instrument

- Green will indicate that a team is above the INSARAG minimum standards for USAR Operations.

- Yellow will indicate that a team has met the INSARAG minimum standards for USAR Operations.
 - Items coded Yellow will indicate recommended measures that a team can improve its administrative, training, and equipment processes and procedures.
- Red will indicate that a team did not meet the INSARAG minimum standards for USAR Operations:
 - Items coded Red will indicate where a team must improve its administrative, training, and equipment processes and procedures.
 - If this is an IEC, the team will not be classified and the below applies:
 - If this is an IER, the teams' current classification level is suspended and the below applies:
 - The role and responsibility of the mentor and National Operations Focal Point continue if a team receives a Red during a classification or reclassification
 - A Corrective Action Plan that includes actions that will be taken to raise the Red to Yellow must be submitted to the INSARAG Secretariat and IER classifier team leader for consideration within 30-days of the end of the IER.
 - The team will have 180-days to implement its Corrective Action Plan.
 - The mentor and INSARAG Operations Focal Point will submit a report to the INSARAG Secretariat and IEC/R classifier team leader documenting how improvements were made.
 - If the INSARAG Secretariat and IER classifier team leader agree that cited improvements now meet the INSARAG minimum standards for USAR Operations, the team will be considered as classified or reclassified.
 - If the INSARAG Secretariat and IEC/R classifier team leader are not satisfied that the INSARAG minimum standards for USAR Operations has been met, the team will not be classified or reclassified.

10.2 IEC/R Appeals Process

The INSARAG Secretariat strives to ensure that an objective and unbiased IEC/R process is conducted. If the USAR team feels it was treated unfairly, it does have the ability to appeal to the INSARAG Secretariat. It is important to note that a situation like this could arise in any of the three phases of the IEC/R process (application and mentor assignment, review and finalisation (IEC/R exercise)).

Should the USAR team have documentation and reasoning that it was treated unfairly, its national INSARAG Policy Focal Point should immediately contact the INSARAG Secretariat. If the situation cannot be resolved at that level, the INSARAG Secretariat will refer the matter to the INSARAG Global Chair for resolution.

The INSARAG Secretariat will act as the mediator between the IEC/R cadre, the USAR team, its IEC/R mentor and/or its national INSARAG Focal Points in the event of any dispute.

11 Classified USAR Team Response Reporting Requirement

11.1 IEC/R Certificate

Following successful completion of the IEC/R, the USAR team will be issued a certificate at an appropriate INSARAG event.

11.2 IEC/R Patch

Following successful completion of the IEC/R, the USAR team will be provided an electronic copy of the artwork of the IEC/R patch/decal by the INSARAG Secretariat as shown in Volume 1 under section 5.3.

11.3 Directory of Classified USAR Teams

The classified USAR team is required to submit an updated USAR directory form to the INSARAG Secretariat when it undergoes change, particularly amongst its INSARAG Focal Points. The INSARAG Secretariat will then update the directory accordingly. For more information refer to appendix 4.4: *USAR Directory Application Form* under the section Guidance Appendices on www.insarag.org.

11.4 RDC and UCC Banners

The USAR team will be issued an official UN banner for the RDC and UCC if it meets the current INSARAG minimum standard.

12 Obligations of Classified USAR Teams

A USAR team can deploy in a lighter capacity than classified.

If a heavy Team responds as a medium or light Team (or a medium Team responds as a light Team), this has to be prepared and declared in the PoE and when deploying, announced on the VOSOCC, its USAR team fact sheet and on any other relevant documents or forms.

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

- Have access to and be able to work with ICMS.
- Deploy to at least one international incident or participate regularly in INSARAG Regional Earthquake Simulation Exercises.
- USAR teams are expected to respond in the configuration in which it was classified. The exception is when at the request of the affected country the heavy team elects to respond as a medium or light team (or medium responds as light). If a team responds at a capacity less than its classification, the following applies:
 - The USAR team Management has a responsibility to clearly declare its response capacity on the VOSOCC and modify their USAR team fact sheet accordingly.
 - The USAR team is required to remove or cover over its IEC/R Patch to avoid confusion in the affected country (unless a heavy team will be responding in a medium team configuration). This provision also applies when a USAR team deploys as other than a USAR teams, meaning it deploys only parts of its team (as example search, or medical, or communications).
 - The INSARAG Secretariat will request a written report from the INSARAG Policy/Operational Focal Point as to why the team did not respond according to its classification (unless a heavy Team responded in a medium team configuration). This report will then be tabled for review at the next ISG Meeting.
- When responding to international disasters, the USAR team has to comply with INSARAG methodology and minimum standards.
- Conduct an annual simulated USAR response FIELDDEX.
- The USAR team, its Focal Points and/or representatives of its sponsoring organisation are required to be active participants in annual INSARAG activities:
 - USAR Team Leaders Meeting.
 - INSARAG Regional Group Meetings.
 - Earthquake Simulation (SIMEX) Response Exercises.
- Support the IEC/R process
 - Provide minimum 3-5 IEC/R appropriate classifiers in five years.
 - Willingly share information with other USAR teams that are developing a response capacity.
 - Arrange bilateral assistance to other teams requiring mentors.
 - Willingly share information with other INSARAG USAR teams that are preparing for a classification.
 - The INSARAG Policy/Operational Focal Point is required to immediately inform the INSARAG Secretariat of any changes within the USAR team and its support

framework that may fundamentally affect its capacity to function at its classified level. Based on a review of the structural changes within the USAR team, the INSARAG Secretariat may determine that they are required to undergo a new classification (IEC) or reclassification (IER).

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

Non-adherence to the obligations of classified USAR teams will also negatively impact on a USAR team's reclassification, meaning it may not be scheduled for an IER (see INSARAG Guidelines Volume 2).

Regarding capacity building/development, classified USAR teams are strongly encouraged to assist their own national and NGO teams and that of other countries to develop USAR capacities at the national level to INSARAG standards.

13 Conclusion

INSARAG External Classification and Reclassification (IEC/R) – “Guarantee of Effective and Professional International Assistance”.

Numerous Urban Search and Rescue Teams have successfully undergone IEC/R since it started in 2005, while many others have shown keen interest or are preparing their USAR teams for upcoming IEC/Rs. This process has since facilitated capacity building and ensured minimum standards and the matching of capabilities to needs and priorities. IEC/R process is a unique instrument of Quality Assurance. Classified USAR teams are well recognised by the INSARAG patch that they have most recently proven to be a professional value-adding resource to earthquake affected countries, in the immediate aftermath of disasters.

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

In a world in which disaster response is becoming more complex, INSARAG has provided a commendable model to the rest of the humanitarian community demonstrating how the IEC/R continues to provide a global level strategic approach. The IEC/R ensures that there are well qualified and professional teams all around the world in every region and, specifically, close to disaster-prone areas, ready to respond at a moment's notice and working together to coordinate and operate according to INSARAG Methodology and minimum 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.

Volume 4, External Classification/Reclassification (IEC/R) describes the IEC/R process and is based on the experiences and feedback from experienced IEC/R classifiers, mentors and classified USAR teams, and aims to be a valuable guideline to all USAR teams globally as it carefully outlines requirements and expectations from governments, USAR teams, NGOs, IEC/R mentors and IEC/R classifiers.

It is developed by the INSARAG community, serves as the reference guide for all USAR teams preparing to undergo an IEC/R. It is envisaged that by adopting and applying the information herein, a USAR team will improve its chances of success. The IEC/R Volume 4 also serves to define the current INSARAG minimum USAR operational standards.

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

The latest information on IEC/R events and activities is available on the VOSOCC or the INSARAG website, www.insarag.org. If there are any queries or comments arising from this IEC/R Volume 4, you are requested to contact the INSARAG Secretariat at insarag@un.org.

Appendices

Overview of relevant Guidance Appendices to Volume 4, hosted on www.insarag.org.

Appendix 4.1: Terms of Reference IEC/R Cadre

Appendix 4.2: The IEC/R two-year Planning Timeline

Appendix 4.3: IEC/R Checklist

Appendix 4.4: USAR Directory Application Form

Appendix 4.5: IEC/R Classifier Application Form

Appendix 4.6: IEC/R Mentor Application Form

Appendix 4.7: A-PoE Template

Appendix 4.8: IEC/R Mentor Assessment Report

Appendix 4.9: C-PoE Template

Appendix 4.10: IEC/R Report Template

Appendix 4.11: IEC/R Self-Assessment Checklist