



INSARAG Guidelines 2026

Appendix 1.1: Terms of Reference for INSARAG Focal Points

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Abbreviations

BoO	Base of Operations
ERS	Emergency Response Section
EMT	Emergency Medical Team
GDACS	Global Disaster Awareness and Coordination System
GRG	Guidelines Review Group
HNPW	Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Week
HNS	Host Nation Support
IEC	INSARAG External Classification
IER	INSARAG External Reclassification
IMTST	Information Management Technical Support Team
IRNAP	INSARAG-Recognised National Accreditation Process
INSARAG	The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group
ISG	INSARAG Steering Group
LEMA	Local Emergency Management Authority
NAP	National Accreditation Process
NGOs	Non-governmental organisations
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OSOCC	On-Site Operations Coordination Centre
RDC	Reception and Departure Centre
RSB	Response Support Branch
UCC	USAR Coordination Cell
USAR	Urban Search and Rescue
UN	United Nations
UNDAC	United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination
VOSOCC	Virtual On-Site Operations Coordination Centre

1 Terms of Reference for INSARAG Focal Points

The responsibilities of INSARAG Focal Points can be described as ensuring the efficient information exchange and validation at the appropriate levels in the preparedness and response phases on USAR matters, including capacity building, trainings, policy matters, emergency alerts, requests or acceptance of assistance, mobilisation and provision of international assistance. The INSARAG Policy, Operational and Team Focal Points are expected to communicate between each other to advise and share information about strategy / policy objectives and the financial commitment to USAR (on national level). Frequent (online) meetings shall be used as a means of information sharing between INSARAG Policy, Operational and Team Focal Points once a year.

The responsibilities can be categorised as follows:

1. **INSARAG Policy Focal Point:** Ensure the promotion of INSARAG Guidelines and methodology within the member state and contribute to the continued policy development.
2. **INSARAG Operational Focal Point:** Coordinate the internal information exchange of their own member state with INSARAG during emergencies and strengthen the preparedness both for national and international response.
3. **INSARAG Team Focal Point:** ensures the adherence of their USAR team to INSARAG methodology and minimum standards.

There are also certain administrative responsibilities, such as serving as a point-of-contact between the national government and the INSARAG network, including the Secretariat, the Regional and the Steering Groups. If appropriate, the responsibilities of the INSARAG Policy and Operational Focal Points may also be carried out by the same person.

The eligibility of any of the Focal Points should be confirmed to the secretariat by a relevant document issued by the responsible authority of the Member State.

Responsibilities: Policy Focal Point

- Are exclusively mandated by their member state to make policy/financial impact decisions during meetings based on either their own direct authority or through prior ministerial/high level approval of budgets, USAR strategy, etc.
- Act as point of contact on INSARAG policy matters of the government to the INSARAG network, including the Secretariat in OCHA, the respective Regional Group and Chair as well as the ISG and the Global Chair
- Act as point-of-contact for all national USAR teams – including NGO teams – on INSARAG matters and be able to endorse the application of national USAR teams for IEC/Rs upon the advice of the INSARAG Operational Focal Point.
- Ensure the promotion and implementation of INSARAG Guidelines and methodology as part of the national disaster management plan and for the national and international response of the member state's USAR teams as defined in UN General Assembly Resolution 57/150 of 16 December 2002 on Strengthening the Effectiveness and Coordination of International USAR Assistance."
- Ensure that relevant information is communicated in a timely manner in times of emergencies to the INSARAG network through the INSARAG Secretariat and/or the

relevant channels (i.e. the VOSOCC), including on request or acceptance of international assistance.

- Represent or ensure representation of the own member state at meetings of the respective INSARAG Regional Group, and if applicable the ISG.
- Attend induction session organised by the INSARAG Secretariat.

Responsibilities: INSARAG Operational Focal Point

- Act as point-of-contact on INSARAG operational matters for national USAR teams within the member state and promote the capacity building of the teams and national disaster management structure in line with INSARAG Guidelines and methodology, including the preparation for the establishment of RDC and OSOCC when required.
- When affected by an emergency of international significance within the own member state, act as counterpart to the INSARAG Secretariat/OCHA and provide relevant information updates for the international operation in regular intervals to the INSARAG network on the VOSOCC.
- When responding to an emergency in a third country, act as counterpart to the INSARAG Secretariat/OCHA and provide relevant information updates on the own member state's planned or implemented response in regular intervals to the INSARAG network on the VOSOCC/OSOCC.
- Advises the INSARAG Policy Focal Point on endorsement of applications of national USAR teams wanting to undergo IEC/Rs.
- Attend induction session organised by the INSARAG Secretariat.

Responsibilities: INSARAG Team Focal Point

- Act as point-of-contact on INSARAG operational matters for their USAR team. They are the contact to their INSARAG Policy and Operational Focal Points, to the regional Chair as well to the INSARAG Secretariat.
- They are responsible to promote and ensure the INSARAG methodology and minimal standards in preparedness and response within their team.
- They are responsible to update the USAR directory of their teams.
- Attend induction session organised by the INSARAG Secretariat.