

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The INSARAG community hold exercises yearly in countries around the world, seeking to strengthen a country's response capacity to a major earthquake disaster and to enhance its ability to work with international partners and agencies during the initial humanitarian phase of any emergency. By doing so, INSARAG also created an opportunity for international USAR teams to practice their skills in an international setting and get to know each other. Having a space to meet, compare notes, and create new ideas strengthens the overall capacity of INSARAG.

As part of the implementation of the GA Resolution 57/150 on "Strengthening the effectiveness and coordination of urban search and rescue assistance", INSARAG formalized these events into multi-stakeholder training exercises to, not only strengthen national response, but also to promote and practice coordination methods in common with other disaster response networks and partners.

The event is an important step in a country's roadmap of preparedness for large-scale sudden onset disasters that involve support from the international community. It is viewed as a direct continuation of other important activities and will itself lead to further follow-up actions that will help to reduce the country's vulnerability.

### 2. EVENT OBJECTIVES

The overall goal of the exercise is to practice and strengthen emergency preparedness and response coordination between national and international actors in support of a disaster affected country, and coordination between international actors to strengthen their capacity to support a disaster affected country.

This goal is met through the organisers achieving a number of event objectives; four of which are universal for all parties being exercised, and three of which are specific for national and international stakeholders respectively.

#### Universal Objectives

1. To *take* effective and efficient coordination of life saving actions and decisions in response to a large- scale sudden onset disaster.
2. To *explore* the interfaces and synergies between national and international coordination mechanisms and response teams.
3. To *practice* the coordination methods, tools and practices of INSARAG and other partnership networks, adapted to a national response context.
4. To *promote* networking and peer learning between representatives of collaborating organisations.

#### Additional Objectives for National Stakeholders

1. To *strengthen* national ability to assess capacity and vulnerability due to overwhelming emergencies.
2. To *review* contingency plans for deploying national assets and for requesting, accepting and coordinating international humanitarian assistance.

3. To *train* personnel on national coordination mechanisms and on those used by international counterparts.

### Additional Objectives for International Stakeholders

1. To construct flexible response coordination mechanisms within a specific country context.
2. To *apply* procedures for the alert, mobilization, arrival, field integration, and demobilization. #3. To *engage* with relevant partners and networks from the broader humanitarian system.

When preparing an ERE, the event planners will expand on these event objectives by adjusting them to the national context, exercise specific goals, and the type of actors participating in the exercise. Additionally, a set of learning outcomes are created to drive the specific content of the exercise activities.

## 4. TARGET AUDIENCE and PARTICIPANT PRE REQUISITES

In principle, participants can be people of any relevant department, operational partner, and network consistent with the realities of an affected country during the initial phase of an earthquake response. For planning purposes, participants categorised according to the functions involved in the response, i.e., into Functional Areas (as opposed to geographical areas), rather than the institutions that staff them. This will allow for flexible expansion and contraction of the training audience according to the national context, without requiring significant overhaul of the exercise structure if different actors are involved. Within each Functional Area there are multiple types of actors.

The following Functional Areas are recommended, which may need to be adapted as befits the operational realities of the hosting country:

| Functional Areas (or Groups)                     | Actors and entities (examples) | Participating Teams                                                                                                                                         |
|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1: National response coordination entities.      | NDMA, LEMA, MoH                | These are the actual teams that are participating in the exercise (e.g., USAR teams and MED from different countries or municipalities, UNDAC team members) |
| 2: National response teams / responders.         | USAR teams, medical teams,     |                                                                                                                                                             |
| 3: International response coordination entities. | OSOCC, UCC, RDC, SCC, EMTCC    |                                                                                                                                                             |
| 4: International response teams / responders.    | USAR teams, medical teams,     |                                                                                                                                                             |
| 5: Humanitarian partner coordination entities    | HCT                            |                                                                                                                                                             |

In practice, the total number of participants is limited by the logistical constraints of the hosting entity as well as the size and capability of the exercise control (EXCON) team available. Exercise planners decide the total ideal target number of participants and request participation nominations accordingly.

Selection criteria are an important tool for establishing a minimum baseline of expertise and need to be defined prior to the invitation and selection process. Qualifications and experience for nominated individuals are specified for each Functional Area and, in some cases, completion of preliminary training programmes, such as elearning or national-level disaster response exercises, or specified through an assessment of knowledge and skills.

## 6. METHODOLOGY

The event concept involves a scalable and flexible structure, allowing it to be delivered in settings where resources and capacity may vary. The main structure involves a 5-day training event. The first two are in-class presentations and workshops. The latter 3 are an on-site 'command-post' exercise, involving management and decision-making elements of the national disaster response actors, the USAR coordination mechanisms, and the international humanitarian community. It does not require field-based simulation activities such as using operational equipment or carrying out practical rescue procedures.

The fundamental components of the event structure are:

|                                 |                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Off-site pre-event preparations | Individual reading, familiarisation with basic operational mandates and other preparatory activities during the weeks leading up to the exercise event.                 |
| On-site pre-exercise Sessions   | Awareness briefings and workshop-style sessions where participants engage in further familiarisation training prior to exercise of own and other functional areas.      |
| Exercise timeline Phase         | Participants work in teams, drawing on their collective knowledge and experiences to find effective solutions to set tasks, while coordinating with other stakeholders. |
| Final debrief                   | Participants review their overall learning, look ahead to next steps and complete feedback evaluation on the exercise event as a whole.                                 |

The exercise scenario is focused on the initial ten days of a sudden-onset emergency, typically an earthquake, that results in collapsed structures and subsequent humanitarian consequences within an urban environment. The disaster is of a scale that overwhelms local and national response capacity, resulting in a request for – and deployment of – international assistance. Representatives of coordination entities, response teams, and other relevant networks work together in support of national leadership to complete tasks in a chronological sequence that should align with the realities and response plans of an affected country. The scenario ends after the acute live-saving phase, leaving the participants to plan either demobilization or further response activities.

## 8. EVENT DURATION

The ER Course will ideally be conducted over 4 full days.

Please contact [insarag@un.org](mailto:insarag@un.org) for further information.