

The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) held its annual INSARAG Steering Group (ISG) meeting on Tuesday, May 7, 2024, at the CICG in Geneva, Switzerland. The meeting was conducted both in person and online, with the participation of Global, Regional, and Working Group (WG) Chairs, National Focal Points, and the INSARAG Secretariat. This event was part of the Humanitarian Networks and Partnerships Weeks (HNPW) 2024, which brought together over 2,000 participants. During the in-person week, 53 humanitarian networks and partnerships organized 320 sessions addressing thematic and cross-cutting issues related to humanitarian preparedness and response.

The ISG Meeting was chaired by Ambassador Dominik Stillhart, the new INSARAG Global Chair and Deputy Director General of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation, Head of the Humanitarian Aid Department and Head of the Swiss Humanitarian Aid Unit. The ISG participants were greeted by Mr. Ramesh Rajasingham, Director of the Coordination Division, OCHA Geneva, Ms. Sarah Muscroft, Chief of the Response Support Branch, and Sebastian Rhodes Stampa, the INSARAG Secretary and Chief of the Emergency Response Section. The event was facilitated by the INSARAG Secretariat and recorded 173 participants in person and 20 participants online, representing 45 countries and 10 organizations, plus observers. The list of registered participants is available at [Annex A](#)

During the meeting, breakout groups were organized to discuss the main recommendations provided in the Governance Review report.

The full ISG PowerPoint Presentation is available at [Annex B](#)

Session 1: Opening Statements and Launch of the Türkiye and Syria AAR Comprehensive Report

Opening Statements

Mr. Ramesh Rajasingham, the Director of the Coordination Division and Head and Representative of OCHA Geneva, opened the session by highlighting the significance of the meeting in shaping INSARAG’s strategic direction. He emphasized the pivotal role of regional chairs in providing insights crucial for policy formulation. Reflecting on the Türkiye-Syria Report and recent meetings, he stressed the day’s discussions would be guided by their outcomes, recommendations, and action plans, marking a defining moment for INSARAG’s growth. He praised the Türkiye-Syria response as a model of multilateral cooperation and thanked Ambassador Manuel Bessler for his decisive yet compassionate and experienced leadership. Mr. Rajasingham underscored the importance of localization and quality assurance within the network, acknowledging Mr. Bessler’s championing of these efforts. He warmly welcomed Ambassador Dominik Stillhart, noting his leadership and experience in the humanitarian field, and work on the frontline with the International Committee of the Red Cross, and emphasized the need for capacity building and leadership from localized perspectives.

Ambassador Manuel Bessler, the outgoing Global Chair, began by stressing the importance of moving forward while maintaining dedication and commitment. He highlighted INSARAG’s unique position as the only humanitarian platform with standards and certifications, emphasizing the importance of staying true to its mandate. Ambassador Bessler cautioned

against political entanglements, urging members to focus on relevant discussions and avoid deploying unqualified teams without proper readiness or resources. Moreover, he stressed the importance of involving NGOs as equal partners, provided they meet INSARAG’s standards. He underscored quality assurance as paramount, warning against spreading tasks too widely, which could compromise standards. Ambassador Bessler concluded by thanking members and encouraging them to maintain their exemplary work.

Ms. Sarah Muscroft, Chief of the Response Support Branch at OCHA, expressed pride in hosting the INSARAG Secretariat, highlighting its impressive growth over the past three decades. She recalled witnessing INSARAG’s dedication during the 2010 Haiti earthquake response, emphasizing the network’s commitment to saving lives in crises. Ms. Muscroft described INSARAG as a “fellowship transcending borders”, characterized by close camaraderie and support for search and rescue expertise worldwide. She praised INSARAG’s embodiment of collaboration, solidarity, and voluntary service, highlighting its role in showcasing the best of humanity. Looking to the future, Ms. Muscroft stressed the importance of continually enhancing local emergency response efficiency and effectiveness through adaptation and localization of INSARAG’s coordination and methodology. She commended INSARAG’s external classification system, noting its growth to 57 classified teams globally and emphasizing the importance of maintaining standards while expanding.

Mr. Sebastian Rhodes Stampa, Chief of the Emergency Response Section at OCHA, and INSARAG Secretary, commended the outgoing Chair for his excellent leadership and welcomed Ambassador Stillhart, expressing confidence in his operational expertise and dedication. He highlighted the crucial role of INSARAG members, including Working Groups, Guidelines Review Teams, and Team Leaders, in driving the network’s success. Mr. Rhodes Stampa stressed the continuous improvement of INSARAG’s operations, advocating for the transfer of lessons, technology, and innovation across regions. Reflecting on the Türkiye-Syria After-Action Review Report and Governance Review Report, he emphasized the importance of learning from both successes and challenges. Mr. Rhodes Stampa acknowledged existing challenges, particularly regarding the functionality of IEC&R globally and ensuring equal access for all teams, regardless of resources. He concluded by stating that no challenge is insurmountable and expressed confidence in the network’s ability to address issues systematically and achieve improvement.

Ambassador Dominik Stillhart, Deputy Director General of the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation and incoming INSARAG Global Chair, expressed gratitude for the privilege of leading INSARAG and emphasized the importance of keeping politics out of the network’s operations, highlighting the collective responsibility to focus on making a difference on the ground. He underscored the solidarity displayed during the Türkiye-Syria response and stressed the need to learn from crises, particularly in prioritizing coordination as per the After-Action Review Report. Ambassador Stillhart reaffirmed INSARAG’s commitment to high-quality standards and local capacity building, especially considering the impact of climate change on disaster response dynamics. He recognized the opportunity presented by the Governance Review process to enhance inclusivity and responsiveness. Ambassador Stillhart acknowledged the diverse discussions and challenges facing INSARAG, spanning from governance review to localization, quality assurance, partnerships, and flexible response. Pledging to act as a facilitator in addressing these issues collectively, he concluded by stressing the significance of upholding INSARAG’s core values and collaborative decision-making to shape its future trajectory.

Launch of the INSARAG Türkiye/Syria After-Action Review Report

Ms. Stefania Trassari, the Master of Ceremony from the INSARAG Secretariat, introduced the Türkiye-Syria After-Action Review (AAR) Report, describing the devastating earthquakes that struck both countries on 6 February 2023. She then invited the Counsellor, Permanent Mission of Türkiye to the United Nations to officially launch the Türkiye and Syria AAR comprehensive report.

Mr. Ahmet Doğan, Counsellor at the Permanent Mission of Türkiye to the United Nations, addressed the session on behalf of Ambassador Begeç and the Türkiye Disaster and Emergency Management Authority (AFAD). He described the 2023 earthquakes as one of the nation's most destructive disasters, testing the resilience of its people, infrastructure, and response systems, with significant material loss and damage estimated at USD 103.6 billion. Emphasizing the imperative of immediate humanitarian response and recovery, Türkiye initiated needs assessments with the motto "Leave no one behind and build back better". Collaborating with United Nations Development Programme, World Bank, and the European Union, they prepared the "Türkiye Earthquake Response and Recovery Assessment Report," focusing on rebuilding with disaster resilience, energy efficiency, and cultural preservation in mind. Mr. Doğan praised the unprecedented international response and highlighted the importance of building local capacities and expertise in disaster response, stressing the role of INSARAG as a platform for global solidarity and national preparedness. Türkiye pledged to continue sharing its knowledge within the spirit of solidarity, expressing gratitude to donors, OCHA, and the UN for their assistance in the response efforts.

The INSARAG Türkiye/Syria After-Action Review Report is available on the [Annex C](#)

The Secretariat thanked Qatar for hosting the global INSARAG After Action Review meeting in October 2023, and for printing 300 copies of the AAR Report distributed at the ISG.

Session 2: Global Overview Updates, Highlights from the New Year Teleconference, IEC/R Analysis, IER in MODEX, and Team Leaders' Meeting Outcomes

Global Overview Updates - Highlights from the New Year Teleconference

Mr. Winston Chang, INSARAG Global Lead at OCHA, started by acknowledging the good work performed by the Working Groups and the successful recent Team Leaders & Working Groups Meeting held in Brazil. During the meeting, consultations were made on the implementation of the recommendations of the Türkiye and Syria After-Action Review. He reminded members of the network that the [Annual Overview 2023](#) is available on the INSARAG website, as well as the [Calendar 2024](#).

Mr. Chang highlighted the outcomes of the New Year Teleconference in January and emphasized that regional workplans are well aligned with the four strategic objectives in the [INSARAG's Strategic Plan 2021- 2026](#).

Mr. Chang expressed gratitude to the 2023 outgoing Regional Chairs from Qatar, Argentina, and New Zealand, and welcomed the 2024 Regional Chairs from Romania, Pakistan, and Ecuador. He further highlighted the importance of quality preparedness for effective response, the implementation of recommendations from the After-Action Review of the Türkiye-Syria earthquakes, and INSARAG’s ongoing commitment to improving future responses, ensuring that INSARAG remains fit for purpose.

IEC/R Analysis

Ms. Natallia Hurko, from the INSARAG Secretariat, highlighted that the pandemic had caused a backlog in classifications, which the team was still addressing. Following the significant response to the earthquakes in Türkiye-Syria, there was an increased interest from new countries and teams in joining the network, leading to an anticipated high demand for IECs in the coming years. In 2023, there were seven re-classifications involving teams from Czechia (CZE-01), the Russian Federation (RUS-02), Hungary (HUN-02), the Republic of Korea (KOR-01), two Spanish teams (ESP-01, ESP-02) and the United Kingdom (GBR-01). For 2024, one IEC and nine IERs are expected, although one team might postpone, pending an official response. Ms. Hurko mentioned the outcomes of the call for classifiers in 2024, where 145 applications were received from 31 teams and the International Search and Rescue Dog Organization (IRO). A total of 33 teams, or 58% of respondents, participated in the call. An additional 21% (12 teams) nominated their classifiers after the call upon the Secretariat’s request, while another 21% (12 teams) did not offer support to the IEC/R system for 2024. Notably, four of these teams had never submitted applications for classifiers since joining the network. Overall, 81% of countries supported the IEC/R system, while 19% (eight countries) did not.

The 2024 roster includes 177 classifiers, with the rescue function being the most popular and the medical function the least. Gender representation is at 9% for women, a figure Ms. Hurko hoped would increase despite some countries lacking female colleagues in their teams. The Secretariat continually strives to assign female classifiers for every IEC/R, though it is not always feasible. Regarding the level of expertise, 65% of classifiers were experienced, while 35% were “in training”. There was a high demand for classifiers in training, but spots were limited. Looking ahead, the preliminary IEC/R schedule projected that if there were 18 teams in 2025, with 12 classifiers assigned per team, 216 classifiers would be needed. A key issue raised was managing the growing number of teams with the limited pool of experienced classifiers. To address this, starting next year, three-four classifiers are set to be nominated per team.

Mr. Winston Chang stressed several concerning developments regarding the IEC/R process, as earlier outlined. He noted an exponential increase in IERs, indicative of growing demand and workload. He proposed that if a team does not submit classifiers their IERs would be withheld, underlining the necessity for the contribution of the classified teams to sustain the system.

Moreover, Mr. Chang highlighted the inability to deliver the IEC/R leadership course due to a scarcity of suitable participants, reflecting potential challenges in assembling qualified experts. The Secretariat issued an appeal stressing the imperative to ensure the system’s durability and quality, emphasizing the importance of consistent and predictable quality standards. He urged collaborative efforts to uphold these standards, underscoring the need

for sustained support from capable experts and recognition of the experts for future roles in the IEC/R.

IER in a MODEX

Mr. Vlad Petre, Desk Officer for Training Exercise from the Directorate General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations, reported on the EU MODEX program. He highlighted that the program allows participating teams to self-assess their readiness before actual deployment. A certification process has been established for various capacities, such as forest fires and flood response. However, for Urban USAR teams, the EU recognizes only the INSARAG classification. Consequently, the exercises have been tailored so that MODEX serves as a platform for the reclassification of USAR capacities. Mr. Petre underscored the importance of the initiative and encouraging engagement with the program and thanked the joint work with OCHA and the INSARAG Secretariat.

Team Leaders Meeting’s ISG Recommendations

Mr. Winston Chang highlighted the important support provided by Brazil in organizing the Working Groups Meeting and the Team Leaders (TL) Meeting in April, in Belo Horizonte on very short notice. A short video was presented to emphasize this achievement.

Ms. Ana Maria Rebaza, from the INSARAG Secretariat, presented the outcomes of the 2024 Team Leaders Meeting held in Brazil. The Team Leaders Group thanked the Government of Brazil for hosting the meeting and the Working Groups for presenting their updates and proposals. The Team Leaders Group welcomed the offer of Tunisia hosting the meeting in 2025 and acknowledged the offer of China to host the meeting in 2026. It welcomed the Türkiye and Syria AAR Comprehensive Report and committed to support its implementation plan. It also supported extension of the launch of the INSARAG Guidelines from 2025 to 2026.

The Working Group co-chairs commented on the statements that were backed as outcomes by the Team Leaders Group (the statements are included in the ISG Meeting PowerPoint presentation).

Mr. Martin Evers, Guidelines Review Group (GRG) co-chair reported that the Team Leaders group had supported the launch of the new guidelines in 2026, aiming for approval by the ISG. This decision was made to ensure that the After-Action Review for Türkiye and Syria, along with the Governance review recommendations, could be integrated in coordination with other working groups. An updated roadmap was presented, and it was highlighted that the publication method for the guidelines would be more interactive.

Ms. Annika Coll, IEC/R Quality Assurance co-chair, emphasized the importance of the IEC/R process as a crucial tool for quality assurance, supporting the reviews conducted by the IEC/R & Quality Assurance WG within the GRG process, as outlined in Volume II, Manual C. She also urged INSARAG Focal Points to respond to the call for new members in the working group. Reflecting on the conclusions of the Türkiye and Syria After Action Review and the Governance review, she highlighted that the working group would focus on enhancing compliance and the quality of classifiers and mentors for the IEC and IER.

Mr. Peter Wolff, Information Management Working Group (IMWG) co-chair, indicated that the ICMS system performed well during the Türkiye and Syria response, despite challenges related to the scale of operations. The co-chair emphasized the need to upgrade to ICMS version 3.0 and called for network support for the improvement strategy and plan. It was noted that this launch would align with the GRC's timeline. IMWG also seeks support to continue developing and integrating information systems into the INSARAG network. The group requested funding of 250,000 euro over five years to enable the development of these systems, with endorsements from the working group chairs and the TL group. This support would allow the IMWG to advance and develop ICMS and other information management functions to meet recommendations from the Türkiye AAR. The IMWG committed to producing a five-year strategy and work plans to facilitate this work, noting that current licenses would expire on 31 December 2024.

Additionally, the INSARAG Secretariat and ISG participants congratulated the IMWG on receiving the Special Achievement in GIS 2024 award from ESRI.

Mr. Anthony Macintyre, Medical Working Group co-chair, pointed out that during the Türkiye and Syria AAR discussions, there was a very intense focus on crush syndrome. Individuals who do not receive medical care during the extrication process often have poor outcomes, potentially even dying. The WG is therefore focusing on enhancing extensive awareness of this situation through an awareness campaign. What needs to be endorsed in the ISG is that the delivery of emergency medical care to patients and trapped in collapsed structures prior to and during extrication is critical to preventing physiologic deterioration or death. Therefore, USAR medicine is to be considered an essential humanitarian activity.

Mr. Sebastian Mocarquer, National Capacity Building Working Group (NCBWG) co-chair reflected on the establishment of the NCB WG, which was approved by INSARAG in the ISG, indicating a strong network interest in the localization agenda. The WG has ensured alignment of its terms of reference with recommendations from the Türkiye/Syria AAR. A comprehensive three-year plan was agreed upon, with the first year focusing on Manual A as a key capacity-building aspect. Subsequent years were earmarked for addressing other elements such as national USAR framework, international assistance reception, host national support, and national quality assurance. Furthermore, it was announced that a training session for IRNAP experts for the Asia Pacific region has been scheduled in Seoul, South Korea, from 2-5 September, with participation from other regions encouraged to facilitate knowledge exchange and course development.

Mr. Jeremy Stubbs and Mr. Russ Gauden, the co-chair of the Search and Rescue in Flood Response Working Group reported that the network was supporting the group's activities, which included 19 participants. He acknowledged Mr. Jose Solla, the co-chair involved in Brazil's flooding response. The group aimed to address three key areas: developing a directory, identifying standards across three regions, and creating a technical reference note on capacity building. The initial in-person meeting took place in April, followed by online work starting with a survey that gathered 45 responses from 25 countries. Participation in the group's efforts was optional for member countries.

Mr. Dewey Perks, Training Working Group chair, reported that the group, currently composed of six members with two from each region, plans to increase membership to three members per region. He noted that a Leadership course scheduled earlier in the year had to be postponed due to a lack of qualified candidates, emphasizing the need to carefully consider

the requirements. In the meantime, the TWG decided to organize webinars to provide updates and address questions.

Sessions 3 – Governance Review Report

Amb. Dominik Stillhart, INSARAG Global Chair, commended the consultants for their work on the report, emphasizing its value in addressing key issues for the network's future. He acknowledged the high number of recommendations and stressed the importance of careful reading of the document. He also invited members to engage in a frank and transparent discussion on the crucial issues highlighted in the report.

Mr. Sebastian Rhodes Stampa, INSARAG Secretary, highlighted the opportunity for a meaningful discussion, noting that the report was very well drafted. The latest governance review had been conducted in 2013, and the Secretary emphasized the need for a scheduled process to discuss the recommendations. The feedback from ISG participants was deemed crucial for this process.

Lt. General Inam Haider Malik, Chairman of Pakistan's National Disaster Management Agency and Asia Pacific regional chair, fully endorsed the Türkiye and Syria AAR Report, emphasizing the critical importance of teams having pre-knowledge of susceptible regional areas. He highlighted the advantage of leveraging technology to enhance preparedness and response efforts. Additionally, the Chair stressed the necessity for teams to develop contingency plans for areas prone to future disasters and exercises. Pakistan offered to host some of the regional meetings, which will further facilitate the sharing of vital information and strategies among the teams.

Mr. Jorge Carrillo, Risk Management Secretary of Ecuador and Americas regional chair, agreed with the need to have more INSARAG classified teams in the Americas region. He emphasized the importance of establishing a clear distinction between policy and operational levels within the network's structure. Furthermore, he advocated for better gender balance and greater inclusion within INSARAG, recognizing the value of diverse perspectives in disaster response. Additionally, the Chair highlighted the growing need to address hydro-meteorological events.

Mr. Marius Dogeanu, Head of the Directorate General for Civil Protection and Ministry of Internal Affairs of Romania and AEME regional chair, expressed gratitude to consultants for their valuable contributions to the future of INSARAG through their dedicated efforts on the governance review. While acknowledging the high number of recommendations, he emphasized the importance of improving without unnecessary changes. He highlighted that much work done by the European Commission could benefit the network and suggested that successful regional achievements could be mirrored in other areas. He stressed the need to maintain earthquake response capacity and found the report timely for discussion in the Working Group and regions. He also called for reinforcement of the Secretariat and emphasized that all recommendations, originating from the network, should be implemented with a spirit of collaboration, resilience, and solidarity.

Ms. Jo de Serrano, INSARAG Consultant for the Governance Review Report, presented the background and methodology of the review. The team of consultants comprised Mr. Patricio Fuentes from the Americas region, and Ms. Cheng Hong from the Asia Pacific region, who

had to retire from the consultation. They revised 96 documents and circulated a 75-question survey that had 31% response rates.

Ms. De Serrano presented the recommendations grouped in several topics such as: Localization, Complex emergencies, Climate change, Global chair, Focal Points criteria, tenure and ToRs, OCHA support, Accountability and Compliance, Values Norms and Humanitarian Principles, Decision-making, Network structure, NGOs, among others.

She highlighted achievements in localization with room for improvement and noted the need to address the number of ISG participants. Ms. De Serrano emphasized the necessity of developing capacities for complex emergencies and addressing climate change challenges within INSARAG. Recommendations included balancing soft and hard penalties for compliance, reinforcing the secretariat's support, and adopting the UN definition of consensus. Additionally, she proposed optimizing the network structure and outlined a comprehensive global strategy involving policy discourse, a theory of change, a transparent implementation roadmap, and a five-year plan for securing donor support.

Session 4 & 5 – Breakout consultations on Governance Review Report Recommendations

The meeting room was split into three quadrants, with individual breakout groups divided by thematic area. Each breakout rotation lasted 45 minutes, allowing for all ISG members to participate in each group. The groups were facilitated by experienced working group co-Chairs and the Secretariat team below.

Group 1: Network structures; standards or guidelines; definition of consensus

Facilitator: Lucien Jaggi

Support : Clement Kalonga

Group 2: NGOs; training; meeting modalities; accountability & compliance

Facilitator: Patricio Fuentes

Support: Ana Maria Rebaza

Group 3: Global strategy and theory of change; secretariat staffing; global meeting

Facilitator: Jo de Serrano

Support: Haruka Ezaki

Outcomes from the breakout sessions led to the decisions in Session 6 on the way forward for the Governance review.

Session 6 – Consultations on Ongoing Issues

Türkiye and Syria AAR Implementation roadmap

Ms. Solveig Thorvaldsdottir and **Ms. Carolina Miranda Futuro** reported on the intervention on the AAR implementation roadmap, which consisted of a briefing on the progress that the

INSARAG working groups and the Secretariat have made to advance on the recommendations laid out in the AAR technical report. Compiling discussions made up until the Team Leaders meeting in Brazil in April 2024, each of the working group's methodologies to implement AAR recommendations was presented, as well as an enumeration of the core issues assigned to each group by the report. The presentation described the AAR-influenced projects each working group and the secretariat will pursue. A timeline indicating the final deadline for each project's implementation was also presented. All in all, the presentation demonstrated how the INSARAG network has worked to take AAR recommendations off paper and transform them into real changes to INSARAG's guidelines, training practices, advocacy efforts and other activities.

Response to Complex Emergencies

Mr. Sebastian Rhodes Stampa, the ongoing discussions on INSARAG's position in complex emergencies are explained in the AAR report chapter 3.4.1 page 49. Members are welcome to share their experiences in the upcoming regional and technical working group meetings.

Search and Rescue in Flood Response

Mr. Jeremy Stubbs and Mr. Russell Gauden, co-chairs of the SAR-FR WG, reported that the Working Group, comprising 19 members across the three regions, engaged in separate regional consultations before convening collectively for the first time in Brazil. The co-chairs outlined the WG's timeline, aiming to finalize the VOSOCC Directory by July 2024 and to begin discussions on specific standards within each agency, considering localization and regional support. Survey results indicated that 18 participating nations are ready to respond internationally, with an additional 20 considering it. The timeline of the WG proposes to complete the Technical Reference Note by January 2025. The first output is the development of a VOSOCC Directory to identify flood response-capable INSARAG-classified and national teams on a voluntary opt-in basis, supported by Team Leaders through a Team Profile Sheet, and the endorsement of the National Focal point. The Technical Reference Note will acknowledge existing national standards without prescribing new ones, to reference methods and address United Nations Resolution 78/199 on enhancing international cooperation in human rights.

INSARAG Coordination Management System v3.0

Mr. Peter Wolff, Information Management Working Group co-chair, highlighted that during the meeting in Qatar, participants expressed concerns about the data collection process encountered during the Türkiye-Syria response, highlighting the need for a more flexible system. He emphasized the barriers posed by form-based data collection, especially on mobile devices, and the necessity for a quick-capture system with minimal text input. He also addressed the issue of coordination scalability, noting the challenge of managing approximately 200 teams in Türkiye, far beyond the 10-15 teams the system was originally designed to handle.

Additionally, the plan to de-link sectors from worksite IDs was discussed to adapt to the evolving nature of incidents. Other outcomes included the integration of satellite AI, drones, and social media for information gathering, and the expanded role of the IMWG in incident support and information management. The WG chairs set forth a timeline for the

implementation of ICMS 3.0, with a series of consultations and briefings planned through 2026.

The strategy for 2024-2029 was outlined, including needs analysis, work plans, and funding requirements, emphasizing the necessity for external support and professional services to enhance information management systems. The endorsement of co-chairs and team leaders to seek funding within the network was also secured.

Session 7 – Closing Session

Announcement by member states

- Pakistan invited participants to the International Rescue Challenge 2024 and highlighted emergency response programs.
- Singapore invited attendees to visit their exhibition booth which detailed SCDF's IRNAP journey and extended invitations to the INSARAG community to attend the “Singapore-International Disaster Emergency Management Expo»” (SIDEX) in November 2025 and the INSARAG External Reclassification (IER) in August 2025.
- Thailand shared a two-year IEC activity plan, inviting participation in November 2025.
- The Russian Federation announced the reclassification of RUS-01 Heavy Team in Moscow for June 2024 and raised concerns about gender policies in the Governance Review.
- The Republic of Korea's National Fire Agency committed to barrier-free disaster response, emphasized partnerships, and announced hosting the UNDAC Induction Course.
- Romania invited all working groups to a regional meeting in Bucharest from 2-3 October 2024.
- Tunisia presented an invitation to the AEME IER exercise. They will showcase an earthquake response exercise via an introductory video.

Summary of Decisions for Endorsement

Ambassador Dominik Stillhart opened the discussion to agree on the key ISG decisions.

The following decisions were approved:

1. Global INSARAG Leadership – the ISG puts on record its deepest appreciation to the contributions and devotion of the former Global Chair and Ambassador, Manuel Bessler since 2015. **The ISG welcomes Ambassador Dominik Stillhart as the INSARAG Global Chair from 2024.**

2. Türkiye/Syria AAR Comprehensive Report and Implementation Plan – the ISG welcomes the Network’s commitment and active contributions to the Türkiye/Syria AAR Comprehensive Report. The ISG acknowledges the generous contributions from Qatar towards hosting the INSARAG Global USAR AAR and printing of the report. **The ISG endorses the AAR implementation roadmap** and seeks the strong commitment and support of the INSARAG network and partners, in order to strengthen the coordination and effectiveness of USAR assistance for the next response.

3. Working Groups—the ISG acknowledges the Working Group's commitment and devotion to advancing the INSARAG Guidelines and methodology and **endorses their workplans and statements made at the ISG 2024.**

3a. Review of INSARAG Guidelines: The ISG endorses the extension of the launch of the INSARAG Guidelines from version 2025 to **version 2026** to take into account the AAR implementation of recommendations.

3b. Information Management Working Group: ISG endorses the IMWG plan to produce a five-year strategy and work plans to facilitate the development and integration of information systems into the INSARAG network. **The Secretariat will seek donor support.**

3c. Medical Working Group: ISG endorses Medical WG recommendation informed by recent Türkiye and Syria earthquake crush syndrome experiences that the delivery of emergency medical care to patients entrapped in collapsed structures prior to and during extrication is critical to prevent physiologic deterioration or death. **The ISG endorses USAR medicine, and the application of crush syndrome treatment by USAR teams as an integral part of USAR operations and is an essential humanitarian activity.**

3d. IEC/R Quality Assurance WG: The ISG encourages qualified members to join the pool for classifiers to increase the numbers and diversity of the roster. **Teams who do not offer classifiers will not be considered for an IER.**

3e. Search and Rescue Flood Response WG: ISG welcomes the SRFRWG analysis of the flood response survey, **the ISG endorses the initiative to put together a flood response Directory Team Profile** and the plan to develop a Technical Reference Note on flood response.

3f. National Capacity Building WG: TL Group welcomed NCBWG ToRs and purpose. Türkiye/Syria AAR significantly influenced scope of work and expected outcomes. A detailed three-year plan was presented to TLs, who acknowledged the IRNAP training course in Seoul from 2-5 September 2024. NCBWG presented the outline of 4 main chapters in Manual A: Building USAR Response Capability, National USAR Framework, Receiving International Assistance and National Quality Assurance.

3g. Training Working Group: The WG is looking for qualified WG members to join the cohort with equal representation from each region. The TWG plans to run an IEC/R Leadership course later in the year with strengthened emphasis on pre-requisite standards being maintained. UC trainer webinars detailing the revised program will be held regionally to support time zones and localization.

4. INSARAG Governance Review – The ISG welcomes the INSARAG Governance Review Report and its 52 recommendations, analyzed from the feedback and contributions of the global INSARAG network and partners. The ISG thanks China, Switzerland, the UK and the United States for their support towards the consultancies supporting the process.

Next steps on the INSARAG Governance Review:

The global Chair, following consultations with the Regional Chairs from Asia Pacific (Pakistan), Africa, Europe and the Middle East (Romania), and the Americas (Ecuador), along

with the INSARAG Secretariat, unanimously agreed to prioritize 10 to 15 recommendations. Given the limited resources in the network, managing all 52 recommendations at once was not feasible. This decision was considered a reasonable step forward to address the key recommendations of the report.

- i. **Secretariat prioritizes 10-15 Recommendations (by the end of June) and shares with the Global, Regional and WG Chairs:** The ISG tasked the Secretariat to identify 10 to 15 recommendations out of the 52 recommendations in the next 3 months. Relevant recommendations could be grouped thematically. Technical related recommendations would be shared with the relevant Working Groups for consideration. By July 2024, the Global and Regional and Working Group chairs will agree on what the 10 – 15 key recommendations should be.
- ii. **Regional Level:** Regional Chairs will be responsible for consulting within their regions and by the end of the year, provide feedback to the Secretariat on the list of key recommendations to take forward, working from the list of recommendations proposed by the global chair.
- iii. **Global Level: Extended New Year Teleconference (NYT) of the global, regional and WG Chairs (January 2025) - “Global Position” decisions and recommendations moving forward.** The Secretariat will then present these to the ISG to discuss on a global position on the recommendations at the New Year Call (NYC) in January 2025, and table them for endorsement at the ISG in March 2025.
- iv. **ISG 2025 – Endorse the implementation plan.**

Closing Statements

Mr. Sebastian Rhodes Stampa expressed gratitude for the participants’ support and acknowledged the challenges faced by the Secretariat within resource constraints. He emphasized the uniqueness of INSARAG and noted increasing interest from countries to join or expand their role, highlighting the importance of preparedness in the face of an increasingly complex hazard environment. Mr. Rhodes Stampa extended his appreciation to all involved in making the event possible.

Ambassador Dominik Stillhart conveyed heartfelt gratitude to the participants for their active engagement and extended special thanks to the Secretariat for their efforts in organizing the event. He reiterated the privilege of serving as the global chair and expressed a strong commitment to enhancing and strengthening the network. Ambassador Stillhart emphasized the importance of nurturing INSARAG’s value and capacity, expressing eagerness to work collaboratively in the coming years. He highlighted key outcomes of the meeting, including the AAR Implementation Roadmap and recommendations from the Governance Review, and stressed the need for adaptation to changing environments to ensure the network’s continued relevance. Finally, Ambassador Stillhart underscored the value of networking opportunities provided by the event.

List of Annexes

List of Participants	Annex A
Full ISG Master PowerPoint	Annex B
Türkiye/Syria AAR Comprehensive Report	Annex C

All related documents are available at <https://www.insarag.org/global-structures/steering-group/handouts-for-the-2024-insarag-steering-group-isg-meeting/>

Drafted by the INSARAG Secretariat in consultation with the ISG Global, Regional and WG Chairs.