

The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) held its annual INSARAG Steering Group (ISG) meeting on Tuesday 25 March 2025, 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) 2025, which brought together almost 2000 participants during the face-to-face week.

The ISG Meeting was chaired by **Ambassador Dominik Stillhart**, the 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 Ambassador Stillhart, **Mr. Ramesh Rajasingham**, Director of the Coordination Division and Head and Representative of OCHA Geneva, and **Ms. Sarah Muscroft**, Chief of the Response Support Branch. The event was facilitated by the INSARAG Secretariat with 81 participants attending in person and 59 participants attending online, representing 34 countries and 9 Organizations, plus observers. The list of participants is available at [Annex A](#).

During the 2025 ISG, the INSARAG network reach decisions on important topics such as the INSARAG Governance Review, ICMS funding model and Working Group recommendations. Furthermore, the Guidelines Review Working Group (GRG) presented their progress and time plan for the guidelines review, and the Search and Rescue in flood Response Working Group (SAR-FR WG) presented on their progress. INSARAG's first Gender analysis as well as progress on ICMS 3.0 was presented, a short update on the INSARAG Global Meeting in Brazil 2026 was provided. A special recognition was given to **Mr. Dewey Perks** who is retiring and will be greatly missed in the network.

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

Session 1: Opening Statements

Mr. Ramesh Rajasingham, Director of the Coordination Division and Head and Representative of OCHA Geneva, opened the session by welcoming participants and emphasizing the unique role of INSARAG in the humanitarian sector. He highlighted the contributions of Regional Chairs, the INSARAG network, and key stakeholders in shaping the organization's strategic direction and policies, acknowledging insights gained from the New Year Teleconference and the Team Leaders and Working Groups Meeting in Tunisia. Mr. Rajasingham underlined the importance of the HNPW as a vital platform for collaboration among humanitarian actors. Reaffirming OCHA's commitment to INSARAG, Mr. Rajasingham recognized the network's longstanding contributions to disaster response and emphasized the importance of localization and flexibility in future operations. He noted that as natural disasters increase in frequency and impact, INSARAG's role in saving lives becomes even more critical.

Ambassador Dominik Stillhart, INSARAG Global Chair, opened the session by reflecting on his first year in the role, emphasizing the growing complexity of disaster response due to climate change, ongoing conflicts, and shifts in the humanitarian system. He underscored the need for the network to remain adaptable and resilient while reinforcing local capacities and inclusivity to ensure that no community is left behind in times of crisis. He highlighted the upcoming 20th anniversary of the INSARAG External Classification/Reclassification (IEC/R) system in 2025, recognizing the contributions of classified teams and their role in strengthening international disaster response. He touched on the ongoing Governance Review, particularly Annex I, which outlines strategic priorities for INSARAG's future. Ambassador Stillhart acknowledged the challenges of reaching consensus on all thematic areas but stressed the importance of open and transparent discussions among Policy Focal Points. He posed questions on INSARAG's continued relevance and the implementation of recommendations from the external review, urging participants to engage in meaningful dialogue to shape the network's strategic direction. He concluded by expressing deep gratitude to Regional Chairs, Working Groups, the Secretariat, and partners for their dedication to INSARAG's mission.

Ms. Sarah Muscroft, Chief of the Response Support Branch of OCHA, highlighted the crucial role of INSARAG's members—Regional Chairs, Working Groups, and Policy Focal Points—in strengthening global disaster response. She emphasized the need for continuous adaptation in response to the increasing complexity of humanitarian crises, including the effects of climate change and evolving global challenges. Reflecting on INSARAG's broader impact, she reiterated the importance of localization, capacity-building, and preparedness at national and regional levels, ensuring that those closest to crises are empowered to respond effectively. She also celebrated 20 years of the INSARAG External Classification/Reclassification system, commending its role in maintaining high operational standards and fostering excellence. Ms. Muscroft concluded by calling for innovation and collaboration in humanitarian response, encouraging open dialogue and bold thinking to further INSARAG's mission of saving lives and enhancing coordination.

Session 2: Global Overview

Mr. Sebastian Rhodes Stampa, INSARAG Secretary and Chief of the Emergency Response Section at OCHA, reflected on INSARAG's enduring commitment to humanitarian response. He highlighted the network's unique capabilities, emphasizing its vital role in disaster response over the past 30 years.

Mr. Rhodes Stampa commended the outgoing Regional Chairs for their leadership in 2024. He also welcomed the incoming 2025 Regional Chairs: Lieutenant General Vladimír Vlček of the Czech Republic, serving as Regional Chair of the AEME Region; Mr. Shinya Iwata of Japan, serving as Regional Chair of the Asia-Pacific Region; and Mr. Wolnei Wolff and Minister José Solla of Brazil, serving as Co-Chairs of the Americas Region, noting that Mr. Wolff was unfortunately unable to attend the meeting.

Mr. Rhodes Stampa addressed the evolving humanitarian landscape, noting financial constraints impacting humanitarian operations globally. Despite these challenges, he stressed the resilience of multilateralism and INSARAG's unwavering commitment to supporting member states. He discussed the need to reassess the frequency and scale of Regional Meetings and exercises, recognizing both their growing size and logistical challenges. He proposed adjustments to ensure sustainability while maintaining engagement.

A key topic was the sustainability of the INSARAG Coordination Management System (ICMS), which plays a crucial role in enhancing coordination within the network. He referred to past communications and endorsements emphasizing a need for sustainable funding for Information Management. Moving forward, ICMS funding will be the collective responsibility of the entire INSARAG network. To ensure long-term sustainability, a concept note has been circulated, endorsed by the Global Chair, and discussed with all Regional Chairs. The funding model is that each team will cover the cost of 7,500 Euros for ICMS for a period of five years, with the option of annual payments. USAR.NL has offered to serve as Treasurer of these funds, as the Secretariat is unable to facilitate financial transactions. He stated that Policy Focal Points will receive a letter detailing the licensing fee, and the full concept note is available as a handout for ISG members. The network's endorsement of this funding mechanism was sought.

Mr. Rhodes Stampa proceeded to introduce the findings of INSARAG's first Gender Analysis, emphasizing the importance of inclusivity in humanitarian action. He encouraged further engagement in establishing an informal women's network to foster mentorship and knowledge-sharing, by asking all interested parties to contact the Secretariat.

Mr. Martijn Viersma, INSARAG Global Lead, a.i. continued with the Global Overview by recognizing the significant achievements of the past year, including the successful initiatives undertaken by the Working Groups and the broader INSARAG network.

Mr. Viersma shared the exciting news that INSARAG and UNDAC were awarded the prestigious UN Heroes Award during the UN Foundation Global Leadership Awards in New York in 2024, and commended the Information Management Working Group (IMWG) for receiving the 'Special Achievement in GIS 2024 Award' from the Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI), recognizing their innovative use of GIS technology in disaster response.

Members were reminded that the 2024 Annual Overview is available and Mr. Viersma extended congratulations to Azerbaijan for joining the network following a successful IEC process. Looking ahead, he emphasized the significance of the 20th Anniversary of the IEC/R Classification Process in 2025 and highlighted the upcoming joint event with WHO/EMT to celebrate this milestone. The Hungarian National Directorate General for Disaster Management was commended for its dedication in preparing a special publication on the 20th anniversary of the classification process.

Mr. Viersma also outlined the 2025 IEC/R schedule, noting that 12 IERs and three IECs are planned, with teams from Georgia, Oman and Thailand set to classify this year. He acknowledged the Netherlands' recent reclassification success in Portugal and extended best wishes to FRA-02 for their upcoming reclassification.

In closing, he expressed gratitude to all teams and classifiers for their commitment, highlighting the increasing participation of experienced and female classifiers.

The session continued with updates from the floor from representatives from INSARAG Working Groups and the European Union.

Mr. John Cawcutt, Co-Chair of the Guidelines Review Group (GRG), reported on the progress made toward launching the new INSARAG Guidelines in 2026. The GRG continues to integrate key recommendations from the Türkiye-Syria After-Action Review and the Governance Review into the new guidelines, ensuring

alignment with INSARAG's broader strategic framework. He emphasized that the publication method will be interactive, enhancing accessibility and usability for all INSARAG members.

Ms. Sólveig Thorvaldsdóttir, Co-Chair of the Training Working Group (TWG), highlighted the ongoing efforts to strengthen training programs in line with INSARAG's evolving needs. She noted the importance of capacity-building initiatives and collaboration with regional teams to refine training materials and methodologies. Finally, Solveig sought endorsement as Co-Chair for the TWG.

Ms. Whitney Veen, representing the Information Management Working Group (IMWG), presented updates on ICMS 3.0. She emphasized that the system enhancements are crucial for improving disaster response coordination. The IMWG continues to seek support for further development and integration of information management tools within the INSARAG network.

Mr. David Sochor and **Ms. Annika Call Eriksson**, Co-Chairs of the IEC/R Quality Assurance Working Group, reiterated the importance of the IEC/R classification process as a critical quality assurance tool. They emphasized the need for strong mentorship and compliance mechanisms to maintain high classification standards, ensuring teams are well-prepared for international deployments.

Mr. Sebastian Mocarquer, Co-Chair of the National Capacity Building Working Group (NCBWG), reflected on the group's efforts to support localization in disaster response. The NCBWG continues to implement its three-year plan, focusing on key elements such as national USAR frameworks, international assistance reception, and quality assurance mechanisms. He announced that an IRNAP training session is scheduled for September in Seoul, Republic of Korea, and encouraged participation from multiple regions to foster knowledge exchange.

Mr. Hector Fuentes, Co-Chair of the Medical Working Group (MWG), presented the group's key focus areas, particularly the role of medical interventions in USAR operations. He emphasized the critical need for delivering emergency medical care during extrication to prevent physiological deterioration in trapped victims. The MWG is actively working on raising awareness and implementing training programs to address these concerns.

Mr. Jeremy Stubbs, Co-Chair of the Search and Rescue in Flood Response Working Group (SAR-FR WG) provided insights into the groups ongoing work. They continue to focus on flexible response strategies and localization efforts, addressing the increasing impact of floods worldwide. Additionally, they have developed a Flood Response Capacity Building Reference, currently undergoing interagency consultation. He extended gratitude to their Working Group members and the INSARAG Secretariat for their ongoing support.

Mr. Marco Panigalli, Head of Unit, Civil Protection Emergency Response Capabilities, DG-ECHO, reiterated the European Commission's commitment to INSARAG and its role in enhancing global disaster response coordination. He highlighted the integration of INSARAG external reclassification processes within the EU MODEX framework, which provides realistic deployment exercises for USAR teams. Mr. Panigalli acknowledged the successful IER of the Dutch Heavy USAR Team in January 2025 and emphasized the continued collaboration between DG-ECHO and INSARAG in ensuring high-quality response capabilities within the European Civil Protection Pool.

Session 3: Report of Regional Workplans and Initiatives

During Session 3, the three Regional Chairs presented a report on the Regional Workplans and initiatives in the different regions.

Mr. Shinya Iwata, Regional Chair of the Asia Pacific, opened the session.

Strategic Objective 1: Quality Standards

Mr. Iwata announced that the Asia-Pacific (AP) Regional Meeting will take place in Japan in August 2025. An USAR Coordination Course is planned in Singapore. While there will be no Earthquake Response Exercise (ERE) in 2025 in the AP region, efforts are underway to identify a host country for 2026.

Strategic Objective 2: Localization

Mr. Iwata emphasized the region's commitment to supporting countries in enhancing domestic response capacity through IRNAP. Strengthening cooperation with Pacific Island countries remains a regional priority, supported by Australia and New Zealand.

Strategic Objective 3: Flexible Response

The region aims to foster internal dialogue on flexible response mechanisms to improve coordination and preparedness for complex emergencies.

Strategic Objective 4: Partnerships

Mr. Iwata highlighted ongoing efforts to expand regional partnerships, particularly with organizations like ASEAN, to improve operational capacity across the region.

During the 24 March informal Asia-Pacific meeting, three key decisions have been taken: Australia was confirmed as the 2026 Chair, the 2025 ERE was cancelled due to logistical challenges, and the Republic of Korea was endorsed to host the 2027 Team Leaders Meeting.

Lt Gen. Vladimír Vlček, the Regional Chair of the AEME, continued the presentation of the Regional Workplans and Initiatives for the AEME region.

Strategic Objective 1: Quality Standards

Lt Gen. Vlček thanked Tunisia for hosting the February 2025 Team Leaders Meeting and Working Group meetings. He acknowledged feedback received on the Governance Review and Guidelines update. Notable milestones included successful IERs (e.g., the Netherlands in Portugal) and leadership training in Qatar. For 2025, two teams will undergo IEC (including Oman, upgrading to Heavy), and seven will undertake IERs—some for the third time—demonstrating the region's strong tradition with INSARAG classifications.

The region will host an Earthquake Response Exercise (ERE) in South Africa (date to be confirmed) and continue close cooperation with the EU Civil Protection Mechanism. Exercises are planned in Austria, Croatia, Germany, and Poland, and canine teams are invited to a regional exercise later in the year.

Strategic Objective 2: Localization

The region continues to strengthen national USAR capabilities. Lt Gen. Vlček cited Romania's national exercise as an example of effective capacity-building and international cooperation.

Strategic Objective 3: Flexible Response

AEME supports enhanced cooperation with the EU Civil Protection Mechanism, particularly in building member state capacities for diverse operational contexts.

Strategic Objective 4: Partnerships

The region is committed to maintaining its partnership with the European Union. Lt Gen. Vlček welcomed the financial sustainability of ICMS for the next five years and stressed the need to think beyond the current cycle. He expressed confidence that the updated INSARAG Guidelines will be implemented in 2026 as planned.

Lt Gen. Vlček also announced that the AEME Regional Meeting will take place in Prague in October 2025. It will begin with Working Group meetings (4–5 October), followed by the AEME Regional Meeting and additional WG sessions. He noted the significance of this gathering, which may be one of the final opportunities for in-person WG collaboration before the Guidelines are finalized.

Lastly, **Min. José Solla**, Co-Chair of the Americas, presented the Regional Workplans and Initiatives for the Americas region.

Strategic Objective 1: Quality Standards

Min. Solla acknowledged the continued support for IEC and IER processes in Colombia and Ecuador and thanked Tunisia for hosting the February meetings. He also congratulated the Dutch team on their successful IER and Qatar for their leadership course.

Strategic Objective 2: Localization

Min. Solla noted the importance of localization, with Brazil supporting countries such as Guatemala, Honduras and Panama in their IRNAP processes. He announced the formation of a regional National Capacity Building Working Group, led by Chile, with an ambitious action plan for 2025. Canada will host an IRNAP leadership course in Calgary in April, while Brazil will deliver ICMS training in São Paulo later in the year.

Strategic Objective 3: Flexible Response

The Americas region continues to broaden its response capacity beyond earthquake scenarios. Min. Solla referenced severe flooding in southern Brazil and drought and forest fires in the Amazon region as recent challenges. He reported the establishment of a new Regional Working Group on flood response to enhance preparedness and coordination.

Strategic Objective 4: Partnerships

Min. Solla emphasized the role of partnerships in saving lives, highlighting ongoing bilateral and regional collaborations. He reiterated the need for collective action to overcome challenges and strengthen resilience across the Americas.

In conclusion, Min. Solla thanked the Global Chair, the INSARAG Secretariat, and the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. He reaffirmed the shared mission to save lives through cooperation, dialogue, and strengthened local response capacity.

Session 4: Governance Review – Global Position and Technical Recommendations

The INSARAG Governance Review Report was discussed and endorsed. Subsequently, the INSARAG Secretariat grouped the 52 recommendations together into three Annexes, of which Annex 1 covers eight Thematic Areas with 20 recommendations. After the 2024 ISG, all three Regional Groups have discussed

Annex 1 in the three respective Regional Meetings 2024, with the aim of developing a regional position on these areas. These Regional positions were consolidated and converted into a recommended Global Position for preliminary discussion during the New Year Teleconference (NYT) in January 2025. Further discussion was held after the NYT. During Session 4 the outcomes of Annex I of the INSARAG Governance Review and Annex II Technical Recommendations was presented.

Mr. Sebastian Rhodes Stampa presented the outcomes of Annex I of the INSARAG Governance Review. Mr. Rhodes Stampa proposed endorsement of unanimously agreed upon Thematic Areas and questions of Annex I:

- Thematic Area 1. Leadership and governance; question 1.1 and 1.2
- Thematic Area 3. Accountability and compliance; question 3.4
- Thematic Area 4. Global Meeting; question 4.1
- Thematic Area 5. Global Strategy 2026-2031; question 5.1
- Thematic Area 6. NGOs and Partners; question 6.1, question 6.2, and question 6.4

Mr. Rhodes Stampa suggested removing Thematic Area 4. Global Meeting; question 4.2 from the Governance Review as there are no 'newly established Regional Operational Meetings' as the question proposes. Thematic Area 6. NGOs and Partners; Question 6.3 was suggested to be endorsed with the addition of 'with National Focal Points in copy'. Thematic Area 8, Classification; Question 8.1 and 8.2 was suggested to be removed from the Governance Review and leave the decision on regional level with the Regional Chairs.

On Thematic Areas 2, Decision-Making Mandate, Thematic Area 3. Accountability and Compliance, and Thematic Area 7. Localization Mr. Rhodes Stampa suggested further discussions to be held face to face during the week of ISG with the Regional Chairs, chaired by the Global Chair and supported by the Secretariat, to understand the objective behind the regional positions and unpack the questions. From the discussions, support questions should be sent out to the Regional Chairs. A teleconference should then be held after the Regional Meetings, before the end of the year, to discuss the Thematic Areas. The objective is for Thematic Area 2, Decision-Making Mandate; 3. Accountability and Compliance and 7. Localization to seek endorsement at the 2026 ISG. All Thematic Areas and questions can be found under session 4 in [Annex B](#).

The second Annex of the INSARAG Governance Review, Annex II, covers Technical Recommendations which have been reviewed by the Working Groups, with oversight and support provided by the Guidelines Review Group. **Mr. Camille Michel**, Team Leader Representative (appointed at the 2025 Team Leader Meeting), presented the Technical Recommendations, Annex II of the Governance Review and the agreed upon position by Team Leaders during the 2025 Team Leaders Meeting in Tunisia. The recommendations were proposed to be endorsed according to the agreed upon positions. The Recommendations and agreed upon position as presented can be found under session 4 in [Annex B](#).

Session 5: ICMS 3.0 & Action Points from Team Leader Meeting 2025

Mr. Camille Michel, the Team Leader (TL) Representative to the ISG, opened the session by presenting the Action Points from the 2025 Team Leaders meeting in Tunisia. The TL Representative highlighted that

part of these action points is internal and need to be addressed by the teams, while others require endorsement during this meeting.

Regarding the Working Group Preparedness and Trainings, during the Team Leaders meeting in Tunisia consensus has been reached on several key initiatives:

- Developing an online directory for better information sharing to strengthen cross-border collaboration.
- Creating e-learning modules.
- Standardizing course structures.
- Organizing more quality control and closer collaboration between Working Groups, the Secretariat, and Host Nations.

Mr. Michel emphasized the importance of closer collaboration between Working Groups, the Secretariat, host nations, and team leaders, as noted by the Quality Assurance Working Group. He pointed out that team leaders should take more responsibility in the preparation of meetings, alongside the Working Groups. Mr. Michel conveyed the team leaders' need for more structural guidance, amendments, and clear objectives and outcomes. He also highlighted the importance of improving digital engagement, sharing best practices, and using interactive tools for meetings and courses.

Mr. Michel continued with the presentation of the various recommendations for endorsement divided by Working Groups.

On the Training Working Group, Mr. Michel presented the recommended update of team status on Virtual OSOCC and ICMS, noting that the monitoring status is removed. He mentioned the discussion about using the term "activated" instead of "deploying," but the term "deploying" had more consensus and awaits ISG confirmation. Mr. Michel also presented one of the recommendations from the Türkiye-Syria After-Action Review to amend the worksite triage methodology. He stated that the TWG seeks endorsement to carry out consultations with Team Leaders at the regional level and subsequently recommend changes to the GRG for inclusion in the Guidelines.

Regarding the National Capacity Building Working Group, Mr. Michel presented the recommendations from the 2023 Türkiye and Syria AAR on national capacity building and localization, as well as Strategic Objective N°2: Localization of the INSARAG Strategic Plan 2021-2026. The following topics are recommended for inclusion in Manual A:

- National USAR Coordination.
- Receiving international assistance and host nation support.
- Multi-hazard or modular options for national capacity building.

Mr. Michel presented the new structure of Manual A and its main contents, which received widespread support at the Team Leaders Meeting 2025:

- Rename Manual A to National Capacity Building.
- Medium USAR teams are suggested to have both technical and canine search capabilities.
- The colour code – orange from the IRNAP Checklist is to be eliminated.
- The INSARAG recognized national accreditation process to be valid for 10 years.

- The NAP Field Exercise is to be set at a minimum of 36 hours.
- Renaming the INSARAG First Responder Training 2.0, endorsed in 2023, to INSARAG Community-Based Response.

Lastly, Mr. Michel presented the Medical Working Group's recommendation for the notification of USAR medicine to an affected country, enabling the receiving country to know what medical capabilities incoming teams have.

Mr. Peter Wolff, Team Leader for the Information Management Working Group (IMWG), continued the presentation of session 5 introducing the recent updates regarding ICMS 3.0 as a mandatory tool for INSARAG.

Mr. Wolff highlighted the significant challenges faced in Türkiye, where the ICMS system was used by 210 teams on the ground, compared to the 15 teams during the development and training phases. The large number of teams and sectors in Türkiye led to conflicts with numbers and worksite IDs, necessitating improvements to the system. Mr. Wolff explained that the process to improve ICMS 3.0 began shortly after the Türkiye event, starting with the development of a concept note outlining the objectives and goals for the new version. This concept note is available for download on [INSARAG.org](https://insarag.org) ([here](#)), detailing the work plan for the next five years to enhance ICMS 3.0. The improvements to ICMS 3.0 include: simplification of data, more flexibility, lower data usage, terminology alignment, a tasking system for all teams and an improved user experience. Mr. Wolff emphasized the need for more flexibility in the coordination layers to address scalability issues. The new system will feature a flexible layout system, work areas, and sub-sectors.

The delivery of the system to the network is planned for the Team Leaders meeting in 2026, with full delivery by mid-2027.

ICMS 3.0 trainings will include both online and in-person courses, which will cover basic operations as well as hands-on sessions. The e-learning training will be a prerequisite for in-person training.

Mr. Wolff outlined the needs and challenges faced by the IMWG, which include having an all-in-one device for assessment, increasing technical capability among staff, having a sustainable funding model and stronger links with groups to align common areas of interest.

Mr. Wolff concluded by emphasizing the importance of collaboration and continuous improvement to enhance global disaster response coordination.

Session 6: Guidelines Review Working Group 2026 Status Report & Way Forward

Mr. John Cawcutt and **Mr. Martin Evers**, Co-Chairs of the Guidelines Review Working Group (GRG) presented on the current status of the Guidelines Review and the way forward. The GRG is looking at Guidelines and Guidance Notes. The 2026 Guidelines will be ready for approval at the 2026 Team Leaders Meeting and ISG and will be launched at the Global Meeting in Brazil. The inputs to the Guidelines are collected from the Strategic Agenda, the governance Review and Türkiye/Syria AAR, and the Working Groups.

The Working Groups have been very driven in providing recommendations and inputs. The Co-Chairs presented some of the inputs from the Working Groups. The GRG focused on six main areas for the review:

1. Identify, prioritise and analyse key issues for discussion during the current revision.
2. Qualify arising challenges, decisions and processes and reflect with the existing INSARAG guidelines.
3. Facilitate when issues cross over Working Group responsibility.
4. Deconflict items and ensure appropriate language.
5. Review changes to ensure comparability and synchronization.
6. Review clarity, accessibility and searchability of guideline format.

The GRG will begin to work on a first draft of the Guidelines after the 2025 ISG. The first draft will be sent to the regions to seek endorsement during the three Regional Meetings 2025, and from there to the Team Leaders Meeting 2026, before seeking endorsement at the 2026 ISG.

Session 7: New INSARAG Developments for ISG Guidance

During the first half of session 7, **Min. José Solla**, Co-Chair of the Americas, announced that Brazil will host the fourth INSARAG Global Meeting in 2026. This event, held every five years, brings together the network's key stakeholders for crucial discussions and collaboration. The exact location will be announced soon. Brazil will handle transport arrangements from the airport to the hotels and meeting venues. During the session, an online tool (Slido.com) was used to gather feedback on meeting themes, ensuring the discussions will be impactful. The result from Slido can be found in [Annex C](#).

During the second half of session 7, the Co-Chairs of the Search and Rescue in Flood Response Working Group (SAR-FR WG) **Mr. Jeremy Stubbs**, **Mr. Russ Gauden** and **Min. José Solla** presented the SAR-FR WG's progress. They introduced the newly developed flood response directory available on the INSARAG website. The presentation emphasized the group's alignment with the 2021-26 INSARAG Strategic Plan, focusing on flexible response and localization. The directory available on the INSARAG website ([here](#)) aims to enhance international cooperation and support by highlighting flood response capabilities and standards. The group also discussed the importance of capacity building and adapting to increasing water-related emergencies. The Working Group continues to develop Capacity Building Technical Reference Notes, which will guide Member States in developing flood response capabilities. The presentation was concluded with a request for the ISG to endorse an extension of the Search and Rescue in Flood Response Working Group until 2026 ISG.

Session 8: Closing Session

Member State Announcements

The Russian Federation announced that an ICMS course will take place in Moscow from 7 to 14 April with participants from all three regions, three trainers and 45 trainees. The Russian Federation proposed to hold an Earthquake Response Exercise in Russia in 2026.

Thailand is preparing for their IEC scheduled in November 2025 and extended an invitation to all participants to observe the IEC in Thailand.

The Netherlands announced they will start to build a hurricane response capacity this year. The Netherlands also announced their willingness to organize a USAR coordination course in 2026 and will defer to Regional Chairs to co-ordinate it.

The United Kingdom offered international delegates courses in the UK. The courses will be shared with the INSARAG community. The courses are, for example, an international operations course, including safety and security.

The Republic of Korea announced that they will be hosting a USAR Coordination Course in June, dates are not decided, and registration will open shortly.

Israel proposed the next Working Groups meeting will consult with countries wishing to contribute. Regarding ICMS, Israel would like to increase the technology of Israel within the system. Furthermore, Israel offered to contribute to advanced systems that can identify bodies in huge floodings and muds.

Singapore announced that they are organizing an INSARAG USAR capability exchange, a technical workshop, from 17 to 19 November 2025. Singapore also invited teams to the Singapore Global firefighter paramedic Challenge. Furthermore, the INSARAG community was invited to attend Singapore international disaster and emergency management expo (SIDEX) 2025, from 19 to 21 November.

Pakistan announced, remotely through the meeting chat, that they will be hosting an International Rescue Challenge in October 2025, and a United Nations International Volunteer Day CERTs Challenge in December 2025.

Recognition of Mr. Dewy Perks

As Mr. Dewey Perks – the USA Operational Focal Point and Co-Chair of the Training Working Group – is retiring, Mr. Rhodes Stampa acknowledged the long commitment and influence Mr. Perks has had on the INSARAG Community. Mr. Perks has brought much passion to the network and will be strongly missed. In the absence of Mr. Perks, the recognition of his work received applause in the plenary.

Endorsements

Ambassador Dominik Stillhart opened the discussion to agree on key decisions. After discussions in the plenary, the following decisions were endorsed during the meeting:

1. Working Groups – The ISG acknowledged the Working Groups commitment and devotion to advancing the INSARAG Guidelines and Methodology, and endorsed their Action Points as presented during the ISG.

1a. National Capacity Building Working Group: The ISG endorsed the addition of three topics to Manual A and proposed changes to the existing content, as presented by the National Capacity Working Group. The ISG endorsed the renaming of manual A to “National Capacity Building” and a new structure of the manual as proposed by the WG, and the renaming of INSARAG First Responder Training 2.0 to INSARAG community-based Response. Furthermore, the ISG endorsed the proposed development of new Guidance Notes during 2026 and 2027.

1b. Medical Working Group: The ISG endorses that the Secretariat informs affected countries of the services (including Medical) provided by incoming INSARAG classified teams. The ISG also endorses the Medical Working Groups review of guidelines and checklist, which is now to be further progressed by the Guidelines Review Working Group.

1c. Search and Rescue in Flood Response Working Group: The ISG endorsed the extension of the Search and Rescue in Flood Response Working Group until the 2026 ISG.

1d. Training Working Group: the ISG endorsed the Training Working Group to proceed consultations with Team Leaders to recommend changes to the Worksite Triage Methodology. Furthermore, the proposed changes to Team status on ICMS and Virtual OSOCC were endorsed. The ISG also endorsed the appointment of Ms. Sólveig Thorvaldsdóttir as new Co-Chair for the Training Working Group.

1e. Information Management Working Group: The ISG acknowledges the need for a new model of funding to ensure continued development and operational effectiveness for ICMS 3.0 and, in principle, endorses the presented funding proposal. The funding proposal includes each team covering the cost of a five-year ICMS use for EUR 7,500, or EUR 1,500 yearly for five years, covering access, maintenance, training, and support. The INSARAG Secretariat will provide a detailed breakdown of the funding proposal including a Q&A Factsheet. In addition, the concrete payment procedures should be flexible to meet the needs of each Member State. Following discussion and given the urgency to ensure a sustainable funding source and lack of alternatives, the ISG moved ahead with the proposal appealing for the solidarity of the network to contribute.

2. Governance Review – The ISG acknowledged the long process of the Governance Review that has now reached a conclusion on several areas of Annex I, and on all recommendations of Annex II.

2a. Policy Recommendations, Annex I: The ISG endorsed the outcome of the INSARAG Governance Review, Annex 1 as presented during ISG Session 4 Governance Review. Accordingly, three Thematic Areas will be further discussed and presented for endorsement at the ISG 2026.

2b. Technical Recommendations, Annex II: The ISG endorsed the technical recommendation, Annex II, in accordance with the positions taken during the Team Leaders meeting in Tunis 2025, and as presented during Session 4 at the ISG. The ISG acknowledged the commitment and active contributions that the INSARAG network and partners have put into these recommendations.

Closing Remarks

Ambassador Dominik Stillhart expressed his gratitude for the collective efforts and dedication shown by the members throughout the year. He highlighted the importance of the robust discussions held, particularly on key topics such as ICMS and the Governance Review. These discussions underscored the network's strength and commitment to continuous improvement. The Global Chair emphasized that INSARAG is an apolitical humanitarian network of professionals with the single objective of saving lives. The strength of the network lies in professionals discussing openly and transparently, working together across borders, united by a common mission. Ambassador Stillhart concluded by thanking the

participants, Regional Chairs, Focal Points, Working Groups, colleagues and friends from OCHA, as well as the meeting organisers.

Mr. Sebastian Rhodes Stampa highlighted that the INSARAG network remains steadfast in the commitment to the humanitarian cause, despite new challenges. Disasters are increasing while the capacity to deal with them are decreasing. INSARAG will serve people while there is a capacity to do so and will continue, even when the capacity has run out. The tireless work of the network will ensure effective response to escalating demands. To conclude, Mr. Rhodes Stampa extended thanks to all participants for their dedication, to the Global Chair for his determination and ambition of reaching excellence for INSARAG, to the Secretariat and colleagues.

List of Annexes

Annex A - [Participants list](#)

Annex B - [ISG 2025 PowerPoint](#)

Annex C – [Slido results](#)

Handouts for the 2025 ISG can be found on INSARAG.org: [INSARAG Steering Group \(ISG\) Meeting 2025 – Handouts – INSARAG](#)

Drafted by the INSARAG Secretariat in consultation with the ISG Global Chair, Regional Chairs and Policy Focal Points.