

OSOCC Guidelines

**OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF
HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS
(OCHA)**

OSOCC Guidelines

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1. Introduction

The International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) was established in 1991 and has, amongst other things, developed INSARAG Guidelines, which describe a concept for an On-Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSOCC) intended to improve coordination of international assistance in support of the Government of an affected country. The United Nations General Assembly Resolution 57/150 of 16 December 2002 “Strengthening the Effectiveness and Coordination of International Urban Search and Rescue Assistance” (USAR) endorsed the INSARAG Guidelines and stresses the importance of member states to follow the INSARAG Guidelines for coordination of international USAR assistance.

The OSOCC concept was originally developed by INSARAG and the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), to assist affected countries in coordinating international search and rescue efforts following an earthquake. However, the emergency management principles of the OSOCC concept make it a valuable tool in any sudden-onset disaster involving international relief resources. Over the last decade the OSOCC concept has been effectively utilized during numerous disasters including floods, hurricanes, tsunamis as well as complex emergencies.

The OSOCC Guidelines provide guidance to an UNDAC team and/or other organizations that are the first to arrive at the site of a disaster and required to establish a coordination structure. The coordination structure should be designed to assist the Government of the affected country with coordination and facilitation of international humanitarian assistance. The guidelines have been developed by OCHA’s Field Coordination Support Section (FCSS), which serves as the permanent INSARAG Secretariat, in cooperation with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) system and experts from international USAR-teams.

The OSOCC concept has been widely recognized as an applicable tool for coordination of international humanitarian operations. It has been utilized by several international organizations/partnerships when responding to emergencies and is routinely incorporated into simulated international disaster response training exercises. OCHA, as custodian of the concept, coordinates and regularly presents OSOCC and INSARAG exercises in addition to providing training for staff assigned to support an OSOCC.

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2. OSOCC Concept

2.1 OSOCC Scope

The OSOCC concept is intended as a rapid response tool that works in close cooperation with the affected country's Local Emergency Management Authority (LEMA). To optimise its effectiveness, it should be initiated in the immediate aftermath of a disaster requiring international assistance ideally before, or simultaneously with, the arrival of international relief resources. It is expected that an OSOCC in some form would be operational during the relief phase of an emergency until the Government of the affected country together with UN agencies and NGOs can resume the responsibility of coordination of international resources.

An OSOCC may, in many respects, resemble Incident Command Centres commonly used at a national level where structures and procedures for incident command and control are clearly defined. However, instead of taking on a command role, the role of the OSOCC is to work in close liaison with LEMA and is intended to facilitate cooperation with, and coordination of, international humanitarian assistance. It is also intended to serve as a platform for information exchange between the LEMA and various relief providers in a disaster receiving international assistance.

An OSOCC has three primary objectives:

1. To act as a link between international responders and the Government of the affected country
2. To provide a system for coordinating and facilitating the activities of international relief efforts at the site of a disaster; notably in the case of an earthquake where the coordination of many international USAR teams is critical to ensure optimal rescue efforts
3. To provide a platform for cooperation, coordination and information management amongst the international humanitarian agencies

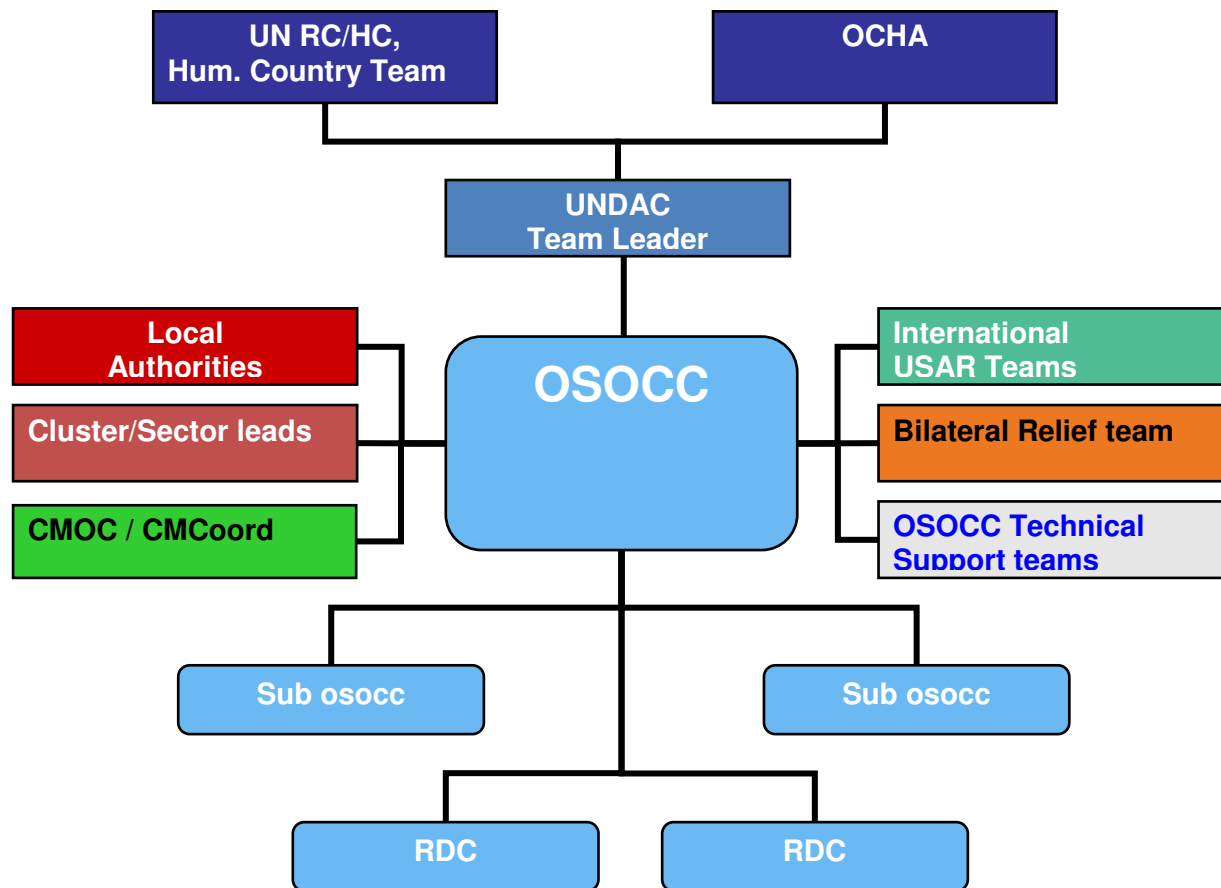
Although an OSOCC is a tool intended for the immediate relief phase of a disaster, e.g., the USAR-response following an earthquake, it should be established with enough flexibility and foresight to adjust to the magnitude and complexity of a disaster. When an OSOCC becomes fully engaged in the coordination of international humanitarian response, its role and activities may be extended to meet the changing requirements dictated by an evolving situation.

As a consequence of a longer term humanitarian response, an OSOCC may form the foundation of an OCHA Field Office when the initial UNDAC deployment ends. A strategy for handover of OSOCC responsibilities should be developed at the earliest possible opportunity. This includes identification of who to hand over to as well as establishing a time-line for transition of tasks. It is important to note that a proper handover strategy may be gradually implemented over the course of the mission and should not all occur at the end of the mission.

The OSOCC may need to expand in specific areas within its functional or structural responsibilities to meet additional operational demands. An OSOCC, together with other stakeholders, should facilitate the development of a Humanitarian Relief Plan and introduce systems and procedures to sustain a more prolonged commitment. Key partners in developing these products should involve the Government of the

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affected country, the United Nations Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator (RC/HC), and/or the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) if established. The illustration below shows how the OSOCC interrelates with other entities.



To meet these needs, an OSOCC may require additional resources and expertise to manage the special requirements of the emergency situation. These requirements may be related to providing support for sectoral response through the Cluster Approach (see Annex C, The Cluster Approach) or to expand support in such areas as information management, ICT and logistics.

2.2 OSOCC Meeting Management

An OSOCC is first and foremost a physical location where the stakeholders can come together and share information. It should be designed as a centre where information can be obtained, processed, visualized and easily shared with the humanitarian community.

An OSOCC should facilitate information sharing, but also undertake a pro-active role in promoting joint decision-making. Ad-hoc meetings are often carried out by necessity in the first days of a sudden-onset disaster, but scheduled meetings should be formalised as soon as possible. Coordination through facilitation involves bringing people together in order to reach agreement on how to cooperate. An OSOCC should initiate a structured meeting-form by providing facilitation, leadership, and a meeting venue.

Meetings may vary from a large general coordination meeting that brings together a multitude of various players, down to one-on-one meetings focusing on a particular issue. Based on the situation, an OSOCC should identify how meetings should be

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prioritized, who should participate, who should take the lead and how they should be managed. For example, in the immediate period following an earthquake, meetings between USAR team leaders might have a high priority and later into the relief phase, meetings may be divided by sectors of humanitarian activity, e.g., Shelter, Health, Food Security, etc. and chaired by the designated Sector/Cluster Lead. Regardless of meeting type and phase of the disaster, an OSOCC should support the meeting process through initiation, planning, facilitation and follow up.

2.3 OSOCC Information Management

A structured system for information management is a key component for an OSOCC to facilitate decision making. The purpose of information management is to provide accurate information in a timely manner, in the appropriate format, with necessary accuracy to those who need it. This includes collection, collation, analysis and dissemination of a variety of information management products including situation reports, assessment reports, contact-lists, maps, matrixes of relief items and/or priority needs. During the initial phase of an emergency, the information may be scarce, ambiguous, contradictory and assumptive. Establishing a well functioning information management system is a vital part of an OSOCC and ensures a steady flow of reliable information. This gives both organizations on the ground and the donor community the required information to respond accordingly.

Information management is a continuous process where all stages must be taken in to consideration. The process can be divided into three stages:

- **Input** – Information and data may come by sector of humanitarian activity or reported by geographical area. It may come in various formats including meeting minutes, briefings, reports, report forms, ICT tools, etc. The quality of information management products provided by an OSOCC is affected by the quality of the information it is founded on. Therefore one should carefully evaluate how and what information comes to the OSOCC. If gaps and/or discrepancies are discovered one should consider what corrective actions should be taken to improve the information flow to the OSOCC.
- **Throughput** – The information has to be processed by the OSOCC through collation and analysis before it is presented in various formats. Processed information provides a good tool for managerial decisions and the OSOCC has to establish internal processes for comparison and verification of the information before it is distributed.
- **Output** – Various stakeholders will need differing forms of information. High level decision makers need processed and analyzed information from a more strategic level while actors on the ground may need displayed, structured and specific information to plan their activities. The OSOCC should have systems for issuing summarized situation reports, but also determine ways of displaying the detailed information the reporting is founded on.

Within the Information Management cell of an OSOCC it should be prioritized to establish a well functioning system for internal information flow in the OSOCC. One may soon experience an overwhelming amount of incoming information and ensuring that the right OSOCC function has access to updated information is of vital importance.

An OSOCC should be able to utilize various tools to support the information management process. ICT tools like computers, internet-connectivity, and satellite phones should be available and used to proactively receive and disseminate

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information. Both actors in the field and other stakeholders like donors and desk officers will need information made available in a timely manner through electronic means. However, an OSOCC should also be able to present information in such a way that visitors can easily grasp and get an overview of it. Maps and tables/matrixes showing detailed information should be made available and displayed in the OSOCC.

2.4 OSOCC Services

An OSOCC should be prepared to provide a wide range of services to the humanitarian community. It must arrange and provide a venue for meetings, process and display information, and serve as a focal point for operational, logistical and administrative matters. In an emergency situation, these are all services the various actors will need to solve their tasks and an OSOCC should be the location where these could be found. As part of the effort of identifying the needs of others it will become clearer what an OSOCC should seek to accomplish and also easier to encourage organizations to participate in the coordination process.

Typical examples of services an OSOCC may provide are:

- Briefing on situation, needs, priorities, operations, etc.
- Identification of national counterparts and how to establish regular liaison with them
- Information on local procedures regarding customs, immigration, and access to affected areas
- Facilitation and administrative support for meetings, agenda preparation, selection of venue
- Provision of information management products such as maps, contact information, commodity tracking and who-what-where information
- Coordination of logistical/administrative matters such as transportation, fuel, Base of Operations, warehousing, access to water and power
- Guidance on cultural issues, safety and security, and media
- Provision of ICT-solutions

2.5 OSOCC Location

The OSOCC location plays an important role in the coordination process. Its establishment is a priority, but its location should be carefully planned. The location must be readily visible and accessible to all who would benefit from its services. Failure to meet these criteria could lead to organizations falling outside the coordination process.

The location of the OSOCC should ideally be in close proximity to the disaster site, LEMA as well as other agencies/organizations providing humanitarian assistance as this will facilitate cooperation and information exchange. The location will to some extent, depend on the situation. In an earthquake, the OSOCC is best situated centrally on-site, but in a widespread flood situation, it might be best to find an easily accessible location just outside the affected areas.

2.6 OSOCC Staffing

Management staff for the OSOCC should come from the UNDAC team, supplemented by staff from OCHA, OSOCC Support Staff, UN agencies, International Organizations, USAR teams, and NGOs.

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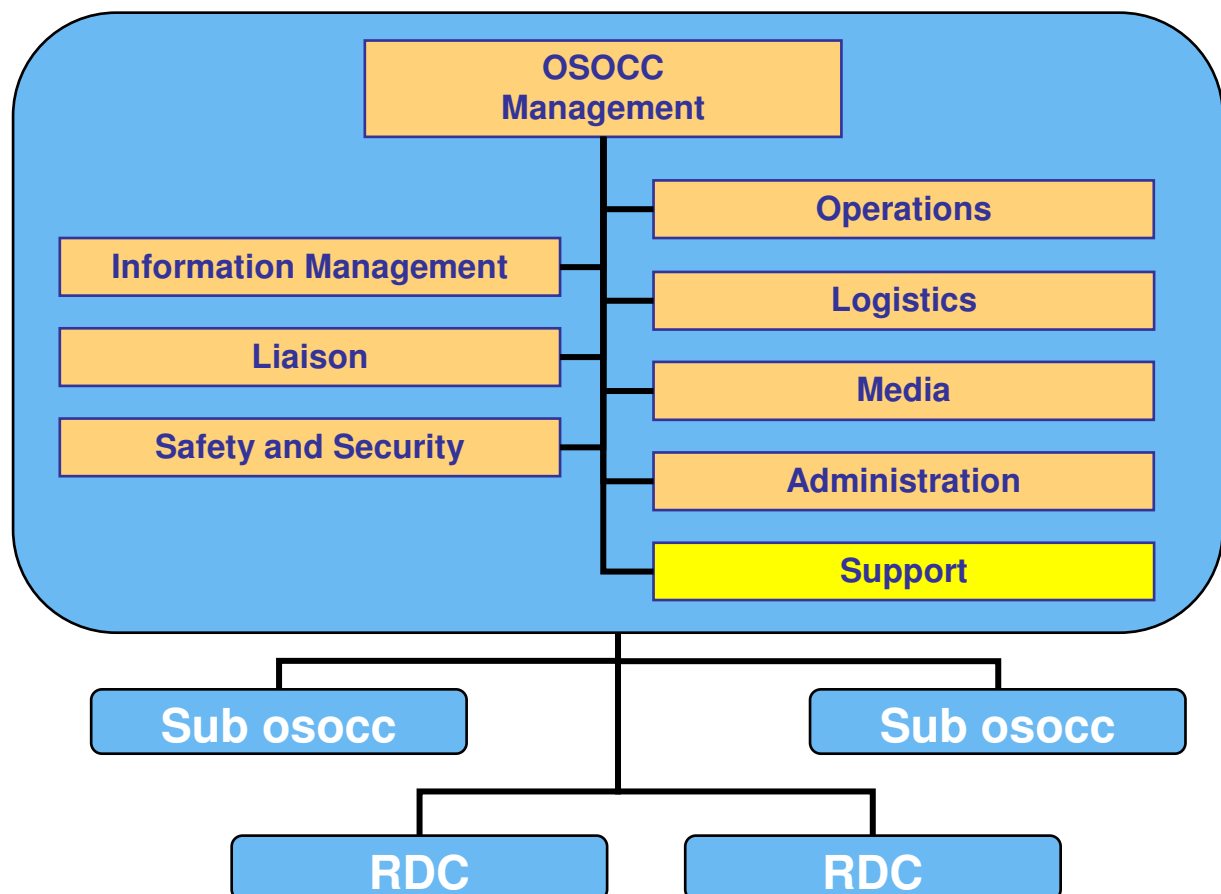
Each international relief team should identify a team member to act as an OSOCC liaison to ensure that all teams participate in the coordination process. These liaisons may be seconded to the OSOCC and work within the Operations cell in coordination of the disaster response. The INSARAG Guidelines require USAR teams to support an OSOCC with staff as necessary. Similarly, USAR teams are expected to establish and operate a provisional OSOCC/RDC, see point 3, if they arrive in the affected country ahead of an UNDAC team.

The number of staff needed to fulfil OSOCC functions will depend on the volume and complexity of activities at the OSOCC together with the number of work periods per day that the OSOCC will be functioning. The workload will usually require a 24-7 commitment. Therefore, when considering the number of individuals needed from relief teams to provide additional staff for the OSOCC, a minimum of two work shifts to cover 24 hours should be established. This could mean a doubling of the number of individuals filling different OSOCC functions.

Staffing of the OSOCC should be complemented with additional qualified staff as they become available. The agreement and willingness to commit personnel and equipment to an OSOCC may be a significant undertaking for a relief team. It is crucial that, as more international relief teams arrive, they are requested to support the personnel and equipment needs of the OSOCC.

2.7 OSOCC Structure

The size and functions of the OSOCC will vary according to the scale of the disaster. However, its basic structure is described here, but should be modified to suit the requirements of the situation.



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In disasters over a widespread area there might be a need to establish one or several sub-OSOCC(s). This is done when it is not possible for the OSOCC to coordinate and oversee operations in more remote and less accessible areas. A sub-OSOCC is a separate entity that works under supervision from the OSOCC. When it is established, terms of reference clarifying its main objectives, expected outcomes, and reporting lines should be provided. It should receive directions and guidance from the OSOCC, but creates its own links with LEMA and other humanitarian partners locally. The structure of a sub-OSOCC should follow the same set up as the main OSOCC as required.

The OSOCC may be structured into eight functional elements and one support cell. This is a generic structure and it is important to note that not all functions may be needed in every emergency. Depending on the magnitude of the event, situational demands and available resources, some functions may be managed simultaneously by one person or be irrelevant. In other situations some functions may require more than one person. For example, during USAR-response the Operations cell should be comprised of representatives from the USAR teams that can prioritize tasks and assign USAR teams accordingly.

All OSOCC staff should have a clear understanding of their specific role and expected outputs. However, all OSOCC staff should also have an understanding of the tasks of other functional elements and how each person's activities relate to others. It is essential to dedicate sufficient time for the planning of the OSOCC set-up. The roles, tasks, and expected results of its members and interaction between its members have to be clearly defined.

When an OSOCC is operated by an UNDAC team the UNDAC Team Leader should not be appointed OSOCC Manager, but undertake tasks on a more strategic level. The role as OSOCC Manager should normally be filled by the UNDAC Deputy Team Leader.

Definition of the various functions' are listed below. A checklist for each function is found in Annex B.

- **OSOCC Manager** - Develop an overall work plan for the OSOCC, allocate tasks, and supervise the work of the functional elements. In cooperation with the UNDAC Team Leader, the Management cell should facilitate the organization of resources to enhance the effectiveness of the OSOCC.
- **OSOCC Operations** - Maintain an overview of ongoing relief activities and facilitate the development of a Humanitarian Relief Plan in cooperation with LEMA and international relief actors, e.g., Cluster Leads.
- **OSOCC Information Management** – Collect, collate, analyse and disseminate information received from outside sources (RDC, assessment reports, situation reports, media, etc.) by consolidating it into the appropriate output formats for distribution to stakeholders, e.g., situation reports, databases, charts, etc. The Information Management cell works in close cooperation with all other functional elements.
- **OSOCC Logistics** - Provide logistics support to the OSOCC, and establish links with other relief organizations and the Logistics Cluster when established.
- **OSOCC Liaison** - Establish and maintain formal information exchange procedures between the OSOCC and other international coordination bodies and undertake Civil Military Coordination (CMCoord) functions as needed.

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- **OSOCC Media** - Coordinate all external relations, monitor media, and prepare media fact sheet about OSOCC activities as well as situation updates for public distribution.
- **OSOCC Safety & Security** - Monitor the safety and security situation, exchange regular information with the UN Designated Official (DO) for security and security officers from other relief actors, including the UN DSS Chief Security Advisor, and establish safety and security procedures for the OSOCC.
- **OSOCC Administration** – Organize the administration of the OSOCC and ensure that internal procedures for the day-to-day running of the OSOCC are established and maintained.

3. Reception Departure Centre (RDC)

3.1 RDC Concept

In many disasters there is a need to establish a Reception Departure Centre (RDC) as a part of the OSOCC. The RDC should be located at the arrival point of international relief teams and items in order to facilitate and coordinate their arrival and further deployment to the disaster site. The primary responsibility of the RDC is to register teams, provide a briefing of the latest information, direct them to the OSOCC and pass processed information of incoming teams to the OSOCC in order to facilitate the operational planning in the OSOCC.

A sudden large influx of relief teams and relief items to arrival ports in the affected country is a natural consequence of international response to a sudden onset disaster. The ports in question may be rapidly overwhelmed by this and additional resources may be needed to provide the necessary surge capacity.

An RDC will function as a coordinating body for the international relief traffic and is intended to support the airport authorities with these activities. The RDC may be the first point of contact for relief teams when arriving in the affected country and, therefore the RDC must be prepared to facilitate the same basic services to that expected of an OSOCC. Situational updates, operational information, logistical support and facilitation of immigration/customs procedures for staff, equipment and humanitarian aid are some of the services that will be expected by an RDC.

When establishing an RDC, links with key components operating the airport is vital. There are several entities at an airport that will be involved in handling incoming relief teams and items and all of them must be informed of the roles and responsibilities of the RDC to ensure cooperation. These entities may include airport management (facility and operations), security, immigration, customs, air traffic control, ground traffic control, ground handling facilitators, and, possibly, military representatives at the airport (particularly if the airport is a Military/Civilian complex). It should be made clear that the RDC is there to support the airport authorities with the handling of the incoming relief traffic in a phase that may become chaotic due to the rapid influx of large numbers of responders and volumes of aid. An RDC is intended to augment an OSOCC, but the same principles governing the establishment and running of an OSOCC are relevant for an RDC. A checklist for the establishment of an RDC is found in Annex D.

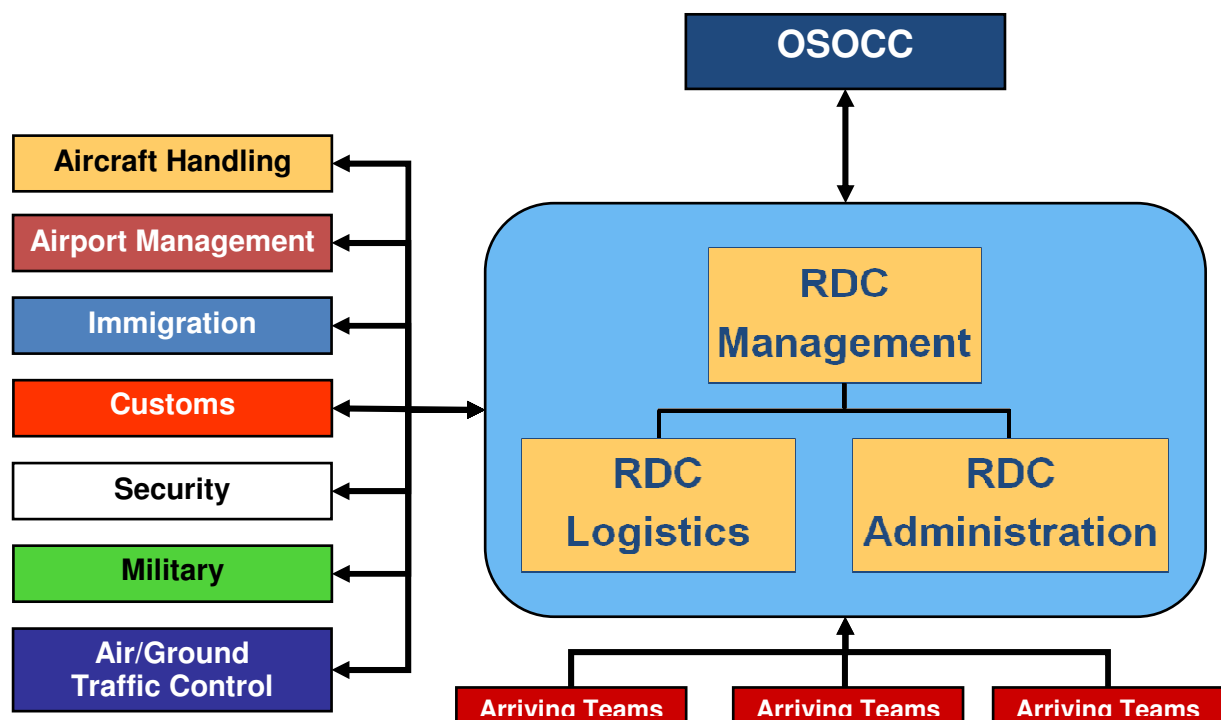
A priority for the RDC is to ensure a well functioning system for information flow between the OSOCC and the RDC. In the initial phase of a sudden onset disaster,

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the situation may change rapidly and information between the OSOCC and RDC must be exchanged accordingly. Incoming teams will expect updated information and the OSOCC will need information about incoming teams/shipments to prepare the arrival of these at the disaster site.

The RDC is especially important in earthquake situations due to the arrival of large numbers of international USAR teams. In accordance with the INSARAG Guidelines the first arriving USAR teams are responsible for setting up and staffing a provisional RDC until the UNDAC team arrives and takes over the responsibility of running the RDC. When the USAR-response is terminated by the Government of the affected country, the RDC turns into a Departure Centre facilitating the return of the USAR teams to their home base.

An RDC is a tool intended for the initial phase following a sudden onset disaster and its services may be terminated once this period is over or national authorities with the support of international organizations are able to resume coordination of the additional traffic created by the international humanitarian operation. The illustration below shows the basic structure and functions of the RDC and their interaction with typical airport entities.



3.2 RDC functions

An RDC may be structured into three functional elements. Staffing for these should come from the UNDAC team with additional support from liaison-staff from incoming teams.

RDC Manager

- Supervise set-up and operation of the RDC
- Liaise with responsible authorities and provide information about the purpose and capacity of the RDC by providing assistance to airport authorities in processing arriving international relief teams to facilitate rapid deployment to the disaster-affected area

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- Establish a sequence of stations to allow the rapid processing of arriving relief teams. The stations should include immigration, customs, registration, briefing, logistics and transport to the site
- Supervise the activities of RDC staff throughout the operation
- Ensure an information flow from the RDC to the OSOCC and LEMA

RDC Logistics

- Facilitate logistics support for arriving international relief teams in cooperation with LEMA and airport authorities. This task includes determining logistics requirements of arriving USAR teams, making necessary logistics arrangements with LEMA and briefing newly arrived relief teams accordingly
- If the RDC is requested by the OSOCC or LEMA to assist with the tracking of international contributions, the RDC/OSOCC Logistics function would be assigned this responsibility
- Liaise with the Logistics Cluster if and when established

RDC Administration

- Ensure the establishment of the RDC, including the stations for rapid processing of arriving relief teams
- Ensure the set-up and operation of any electronic equipment that is required to carry out its task, including ICT equipment, internet connectivity and communication within the RDC
- Register information about arriving relief teams at dedicated reception stations and share this information with the OSOCC and other stakeholders
- Establish a system for filing and back-up of electronic documents on a regular basis

4. OSOCC Support

When necessary, OCHA will request support to set up and run the OSOCC from partners that provide predefined support services. Disaster management experts should manage the OSOCC functional elements, but technical services like ICT-support, mapping, accommodation, and logistics will on request be provided by various partners.

The International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP) has developed a model that provides support to international humanitarian operations using a system of tailor-made rapidly deployable modules which can be requested by international organizations. The partnership-model has also been established in the Asia-Pacific region (Asia-Pacific Humanitarian Partnership – APHP) and the Americas region (Americas Support Team – AST). Each region has resources and equipment modules designed to support an OSOCC including ICT equipment, support staff, and base camp support.

In many disasters UN agencies/offices and NGOs providing humanitarian common services may deploy simultaneously with the UNDAC team. These include the Logistics Cluster, OCHA Information Management modules, UN Department of Safety and Security (UN DSS), Télécom Sans Frontières (TSF), Map Action, and others. These are technical partners with substantive expertise and should be fully integrated in the activities of the OSOCC when deployed.

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4.1 Management Support

An OSOCC may need support from well trained and experienced staff workers. The Management Support Staff is a two person support-module with the necessary skills and to ensure their operability they will be deployed with a limited amount of office equipment. The overall role of the Management Support Staff is to support the OSOCC Management, but all functional elements in the OSOCC will benefit from their contribution. When deployed, they will support the OSOCC with:

- Tasking, i.e., transformation of decisions and directives into assignments
- Preparation of briefings, meetings, and information for decision making and internal dissemination including marking and updating of information displays
- Coordination of activities of external resource providers such as DHL, Map-action, TSF, IHP, AHP and AST
- Ensuring the establishment of a common operational overview
- Evaluation of internal processes to ensure an efficient work flow and internal dissemination of information
- Facilitation of a balanced work load
- Support all functional elements of an OSOCC

4.2 Technical Support

Support in the form of technical resources is necessary for the OSOCC to function effectively. These resources are provided by OCHA's external resource providers in the form of a support module with the necessary equipment. The main areas of technical support are Information Communication Technology (ICT) and Geographical Information Services (GIS).

When an ICT-module is assigned to the OSOCC, it should be tasked to establish and maintain technical communication links through e-mail, sat-phone and manage all technical internal communication issues (VHF radios). The module will support the OSOCC with:

- Provision of necessary ICT equipment and, if necessary, transport to the affected country
- Establishment and maintenance of ICT equipment for the OSOCC and RDC
- Establishment and maintenance of a LAN with sufficient numbers of computers
- Configuration of software
- Development and implementation of an OSOCC technical communications plan
- Monitoring, analysis and assessment all communications traffic
- Ensuring the compatibility of security communications system with UN agencies, NGOs, and other partners
- Provision of ongoing training and technical assistance on the installations.

4.3 Equipment

OSOCC equipment requirements will vary depending on the disaster situation and the level at which the OSOCC will operate. However, ICT-equipment is a vital need for an OSOCC in order to establish reliable and sustainable information links between the disaster site, the RC/HC, and the international community. Normally an ICT module will be deployed together with the UNDAC team. The ICT equipment should have pre-loaded software and tools, such as the UNDAC Mission Software to facilitate the work of the OSOCC.

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A specially designed OSOCC module may be requested from partnership-countries. It consists of tents and various office and subsistence equipment suitable for the establishment and running of an OSOCC.

From time to time it will be necessary for international relief teams to assist in equipping and supplying an OSOCC from their team's own equipment and supplies. The first relief teams to arrive may be asked to share some of its resources to enable the OSOCC to function.

It is recommended that USAR teams establishing an RDC or OSOCC have sufficient equipment earmarked in their stock to take on this task. Such equipment should as a minimum consist of:

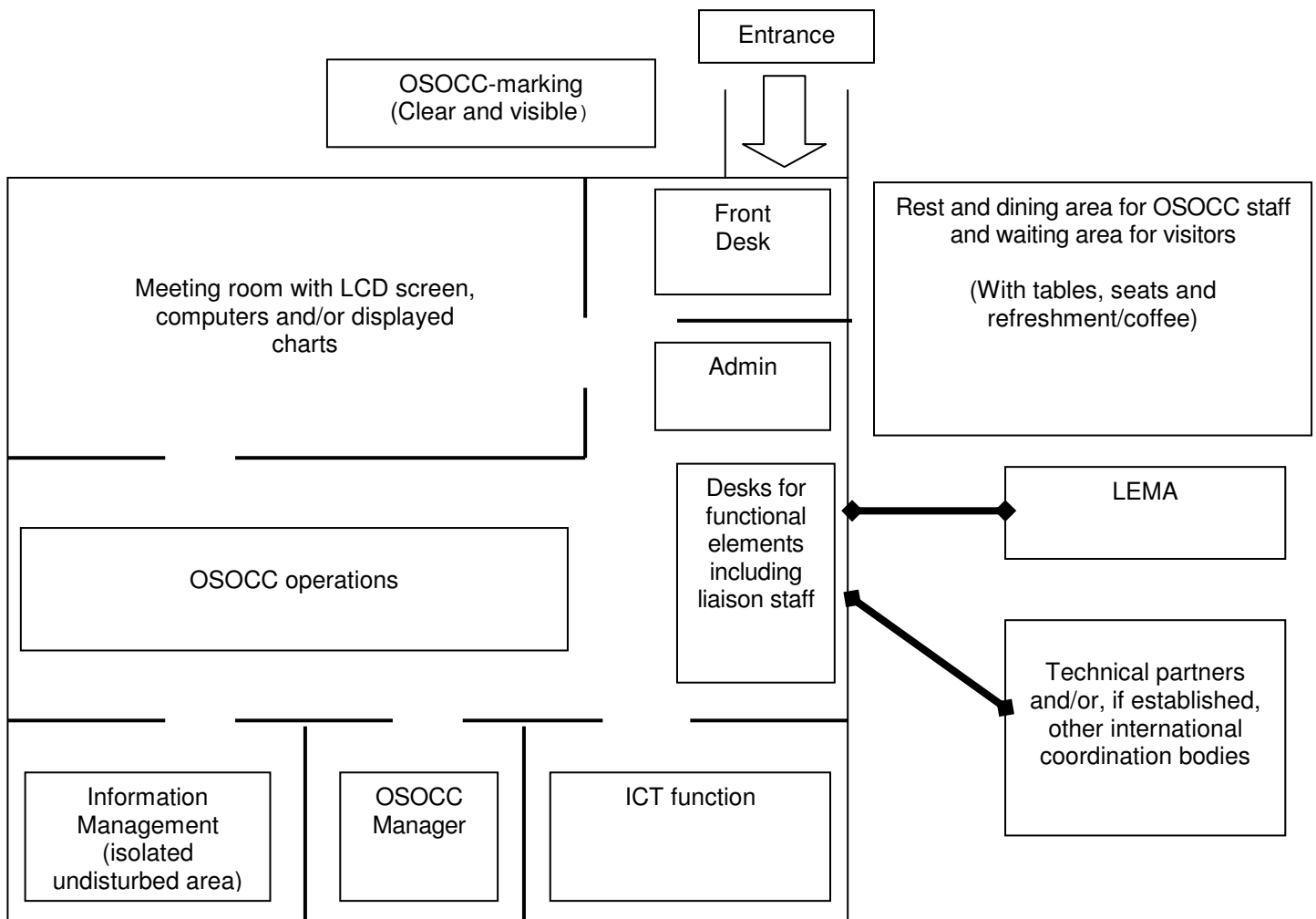
- Sufficient ICT equipment to process information electronically and communicating this both inside the affected country and globally
- Software with the necessary tools, including standard INSARAG-formats, to support the smooth processing of incoming relief teams and items
- Office equipment facilitating the work of the RDC
- Material to ensure good visibility of the RDC such as flags, stickers, or large sheets of paper with marker-pens

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Annexes

Annex A, OSOCC Setup Chart

The chart depicts a suggested layout of an OSOCC. The situation, available resources and infrastructure will however influence the physical setup.



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Annex B, Checklists for OSOCC Functions

OSOCC Manager

Task:

Develop a work plan for the OSOCC, allocate tasks, and supervise the work of the functional elements. In cooperation with the UNDAC Team Leader, the Management cell should facilitate the organization of resources to enhance the effectiveness of the OSOCC.

Checklist:

- Assign personnel to functions and main areas of responsibility
- Establish contact with LEMA and other relief organizations
- Conduct internal meetings and briefings
- Provide the necessary leadership, advice and guidance to ensure a smooth, efficient emergency operation
- Conduct coordination meetings with LEMA and representatives of international relief resources, as appropriate
- Plan and execute an effective handover of OSOCC responsibilities once the OSOCC phases out

Expected result:

Ensures that staff is optimally employed and that the OSOCC meets the objectives established by LEMA, the UNDAC Team Leader and the RC/HC.

OSOCC Operations

Task:

Maintain an overview of ongoing relief activities and facilitate the development of a Humanitarian Relief Plan in cooperation with LEMA and international relief actors, e.g., Cluster Leads.

Checklist:

- Initially identify priority areas for deploying resources, direct relief providers to high need areas, track progress, and adjust the response as required
- Provide briefings on ongoing operations
- Coordinate an assessment of national and international organizational roles, resources, capabilities, and comparative strengths
- Identify gaps, duplication, and bottlenecks by Cluster
- Monitor and facilitate inter-agency coordination efforts across Clusters
- Facilitate communication between relief-providers and national counterparts
- Monitor and evaluate the efficiency, effectiveness, and impact of operations
- Monitor RDC activities

Expected result:

Integrated plan for the coordination of relief activities.

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OSOCC Information Management

Task:

Collect, collate, analyse and disseminate information received from outside sources (RDC, assessment reports, situation reports, media, etc.) by consolidating it into the appropriate output formats for distribution to stakeholders, e.g., situation reports, databases, charts, etc. The Information Management cell works in close cooperation with all other functional elements.

Checklist:

- Collect, collate, analyse, and disseminate information on all activities of NGOs, donors, media, UN agencies, and other international and national relief actors
- Oversee the information flow (input, throughput, output) of the OSOCC and RDC
- Prepare situation reports and distribute these accordingly
- Develop and maintain a central registry of organizations including information on contacts and operations and who-what-where information
- Coordinate the development and implementation of common assessments surveys, questionnaires and other information gathering tools
- Liaise with IM focal points of Clusters for inter-cluster information flow

Expected result:

Provision of timely output of analyzed information in appropriate format.

OSOCC Logistics

Task:

Provide logistics support to the OSOCC, and establish links with other relief organizations and the Logistics Cluster when established.

Checklist:

- Ensure adequate working space and accommodation for the OSOCC
- Ensure adequate transportation to meet the needs of the OSOCC
- Identify local logistic resources such as transport, fuel, and services and secure, as required
- Ensure/establish/maintain the necessary technical needs including electricity, lighting etc., to run and sustain an OSOCC
- Identify capability gaps in equipment and facilities
- Liaise closely with other relief organizations and the Logistics Cluster, if and when established, to ensure the coordination of logistical common services
- Determine from LEMA and publish procedures for customs clearance, local documentation, and taxes
- Facilitate cooperation and sharing of facilities, supplies, and equipment with other relief organizations

Expected result:

Logistics support for the OSOCC and formal links to all logistics entities of the relief operation.

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OSOCC Liaison

Task:

Establish and maintain formal information exchange procedures between the OSOCC and other international coordination bodies and undertake Civil Military Coordination (CMCoord) functions as needed.

Checklist:

- Communicate regularly with other international coordinating bodies and ensure a regular information exchange
- Facilitate meetings on request for planning, coordination and information exchange with other international coordinating bodies
- Assist with the establishment of a mechanism for coordination of humanitarian interaction with military forces in the area
- Liaise and ensure information exchange with military contingents in the area and, if necessary, assist in the development of country/emergency specific CMCoord Guidelines

Expected result:

Systematic information exchange between the OSOCC and respective bodies/entities.

OSOCC Media

Task:

Coordinate all external relations, monitor media, and prepare media fact sheet about OSOCC activities as well as situation updates for public distribution.

Checklist:

- In cooperation with LEMA, the UNDAC Team Leader, RC/HC, and OSOCC Manager establish guidelines for interaction with the media
- Serve as OSOCC focal point for the media
- Monitor media publications concerning the relief operation
- Identify and maintain contact with relevant media to promote advocacy for the relief operation
- In cooperation with the Information Management cell, prepare relevant information for public distribution
- Support Donor/VIP-visits and fact-finding missions
- Liaise closely with LEMA in media questions

Expected result:

Ensure a proactive relationship with national/international media is established.

OSOCC Guidelines

OSOCC Safety & Security

Task:

Monitor the safety and security situation, exchange regular information with the UN Designated Official (DO) for security and security officers from other relief actors, including the UN DSS Chief Security Advisor, and establish safety and security procedures for the OSOCC.

Checklist:

- Update OSOCC staff and other relief actors on security information and develop a security plan for the OSOCC, including a staff evacuation plan
- Ensure that safety and security measures for the OSOCC are established
- Monitor the security situation and UN security phases
- Assist UN DSS with the establishment of a local security plan and update as required
- Communicate security procedures to all affected parties and, if needed, facilitate the implementation of these
- Develop a plan for medical evacuation

Expected result:

Security plan and periodic update on the security information through constant situational monitoring.

OSOCC Administration

Task:

Organize the administration of the OSOCC and ensure that internal procedures for the day-to-day running of the OSOCC are established and maintained.

Checklist:

- Plan administrative requirements
- Document and file incoming and outgoing messages
- Introduce administrative systems and procedures, including logging and filing systems
- Manage financial support for the OSOCC such as petty cash and accounting
- Procure maps, boards, stationery and other support materials necessary for the OSOCC
- Procure and manage translation/interpretation services
- Organize an OSOCC staffing roster
- Establish an OSOCC entry point for effective crowd management
- Assist with update of contact-lists
- Arrange meetings, briefings and other activities as requested by the OSOCC Manager
- Arrange for administrative support and equipment, as appropriate
- Establish a post box mail system and, if possible, email-groups for distribution of information

Expected result:

Internal administration of the OSOCC.

OSOCC Guidelines

Annex C, The Cluster Approach

Following the recommendations of the Humanitarian Response Review in 2005, the Cluster Approach was endorsed as a way of addressing gaps and strengthening the effectiveness of humanitarian response through building partnerships. It aims to ensure sufficient global capacity, predictable leadership, strengthened accountability and improved strategic field-level coordination and prioritization. The approach is designed around the concept of partnerships between UN agencies, the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, International Organisations and NGOs where the organizations *cluster* together in sectors of humanitarian activity to work towards a common goal.

| Sector or Area of Activity | Global Cluster Lead |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Agriculture | FAO |
| Camp Coordination/Management | UNHCR – IDPs from conflict situations IOM – Disaster situations |
| Early Recovery | UNDP |
| Education | UNICEF Save The Children - United Kingdom |
| Emergency Shelter | UNHCR - IDPs (from conflict) IFRC – Convenor |
| Emergency Telecommunications | OCHA/UNICEF/WFP |
| Health | WHO |
| Logistics | WFP |
| Nutrition | UNICEF |
| Protection | UNHCR – IDPs from conflict UNHCR/OHCHR/UNICEF – Disasters/civilians affected by conflict other than IDPs |
| Water/Sanitation/Hygiene (WASH) | UNICEF |

The Global Cluster Leads, together with their partners, can support and strengthen field response with technical surge capacity, trained experts to lead Cluster coordination at field level, increased stockpiles, standardized technical tools, agreement on common methods and best practices from field tests. In disasters where the Cluster Approach is activated, an OSOCC should support the Cluster coordination process by:

- Facilitating the development of a Humanitarian Relief Plan in collaboration with Cluster Leads
- Supporting cross Cluster coordination and information sharing
- Facilitating the work of the Cluster Leads through provision of physical space, office/technical support and staff support
- Providing support for meetings, e.g., venue, briefing material, co-chairing, etc.
- Establishing information management systems which will support the respective Cluster information management systems
- Ensuring linkages with relevant governmental entities;
- Ensuring coordination in areas not covered by clusters such as USAR
- Providing GIS support
- Managing a Cluster contact management database

More information on the cluster approach can be downloaded from www.humanitarianreform.org

OSOCC Guidelines

Annex D, RDC Establishment Checklist

- ☐ Identify airport authorities or equivalent and determine focal points for air and ground traffic control, administration, logistics, customs, immigration, security, humanitarian aid storage facilities, and, if necessary, military liaison
- ☐ Arrange for airport official passes, particularly if required to go airside on the airport
- ☐ Brief airport authorities with partners on the purpose of the RDC and OSOCC and how it supports the arrival of international actors and relief items
- ☐ Negotiate a venue for the RDC that is visible and easily accessible but not too exposed to public traffic
- ☐ Establish the RDC with communication links and ICT equipment
- ☐ Establish one or more reception desks easily visible and accessible
- ☐ Prepare for crowd management, including:
 - Place signage to the RDC throughout the airport
 - Visible signal (RDC flags) on reception desks and RDC
 - Arrangements for paging with airport authorities
 - Preparation of waiting area for arriving teams including area for search dogs
- ☐ Arrangements for customs, immigration and administrative support for arriving teams
- ☐ Arrangements for transport of teams to the disaster site
- ☐ Prepare briefing handouts about own purpose, contact information and situation update
- ☐ If available, handout maps
- ☐ Prepare questionnaires for registration of arriving teams (Annex E USAR Team Fact Sheet)
- ☐ Prepare briefing for arriving teams (Annex F, RDC Briefing Checklist)
- ☐ Prepare for support of departing teams, including accommodation, logistics, and flight booking
- ☐ Prepare questionnaires for departing teams (Annex J USAR Team Demobilization Form)
- ☐ Develop exit strategy, including the identification of procedures that should be maintained and the entities to which they should be handed over

OSOCC Guidelines

Annex E, USAR Team Fact Sheet

USAR Fact sheet to be completed and submitted at the Reception Centre and OSOCC

TEAM NAME: _____

COMPOSITION:

(Complete/tick information in spaces provided)

_____ - person _____ - dogs

USAR team: INSARAG Classification - ☐ Light/ ☐ Medium/ ☐ Heavy

Multi-disciplinary organisation:-

☐ Search element ☐ Rescue element ☐ Command element

☐ Medical element ☐ Technical support element

Self-sufficient: ☐ Yes / ☐ No

Deployment for 10 days of operation: ☐ Yes / ☐ No

Full equipment stock to support the team's operations. ☐ Yes / ☐ No

SUPPORT REQUIREMENTS:

(Complete information in spaces provided)

Transportation/Logistics:-

Transport for _____ personnel and dogs

Transport for _____ tons of equipment

Access to medical oxygen _____ cylinders, oxygen/acetylene _____ cylinders, petrol:
(gasoline) _____ litres and (diesel) _____ litres

Access to appropriate area maps, building plans or other information.

If available, receive copies of past/current/future OSOCC planning documents.

Area of operations assignment.

CONTACT:

Team Focal Point (Team Leader / Liaison): _____

Mobile Phone: _____

Sat Phone: _____

Radio Frequency: _____

OSOCC Guidelines

Annex F, RDC Briefing Checklist

- **Situation**
 - Overview of the situation in the affected areas
 - Response
 - Coordination mechanisms, e.g., OSOCC, LEMA, etc.
 - Safety & Security concerns
 - Other
- **RDC purpose**
 - Information about RDC structure, purpose and organization
 - RDC stations
- **Arrival procedures**
 - Customs, immigration and airport security procedures
 - Airport facilities
 - Waiting area and administrative procedures
- **Logistical arrangements**
 - Transport arrangements to affected area
 - Provision of USAR team needs
 - Communications and contacts
- **Registration of relief team**
 - USAR Team Fact Sheet
 - Registration of non-USAR teams

OSOCC Guidelines

Annex G, OSOCC Planning Form and USAR Planning Tool

| | |
|---|--------------------------|
| <u>USAR Team:</u> | <u>Date/Time:</u> |
| <u>Current Situation reported from LEMA:</u> _____ _____ | |
| <u>Accomplishments of Last Operations Period:</u> Work Site Location: _____ Number of live rescues accomplished: _____ Number of deceased/recovered: _____ Number of Buildings Assessed: _____ Totally Collapsed: _____ Partially: _____ Undamaged: _____ | |
| <u>Assignments for Next Operations Period:</u> Search assignment: _____ Rescue assignment:: _____ Medical assignment: _____ Engineer assignment: _____ | |
| <u>USAR Team Needs:</u> Personnel (translators, drivers, guides) - _____ Vehicles (car, truck) – _____ Food - _____ Water - _____ Lumber for shoring (dimension and quantity) – _____ Fuel (petroleum...) for generators - _____ Fuel (petroleum...) for vehicles – _____ Heavy equipment (crane, bulldozer...) – _____ | |
| <u>Affected Population Needs:</u> Number of affected population in assigned area: _____ Food - yes or no Water - yes or no Shelter - yes or no Sanitation - yes or no Medical – yes or no Others: _____ | |
| <u>Location of BoO (Street and GPS):</u> _____ | |
| <u>Communications means:</u> Satellite telephone number: _____ Cellular telephone number: _____ Radio frequency: _____ | |

OSOCC Guidelines

USAR Planning Tool

In several INSARAG exercises the following tool has been utilized for planning and assignment of USAR teams to various sites. A simple visual matrix is developed in the OSOCC to keep track of the utilization and availability of international USAR teams in each geographical sector of the affected area/town. This should supplement the standard map of USAR operations showing activities and BoO.

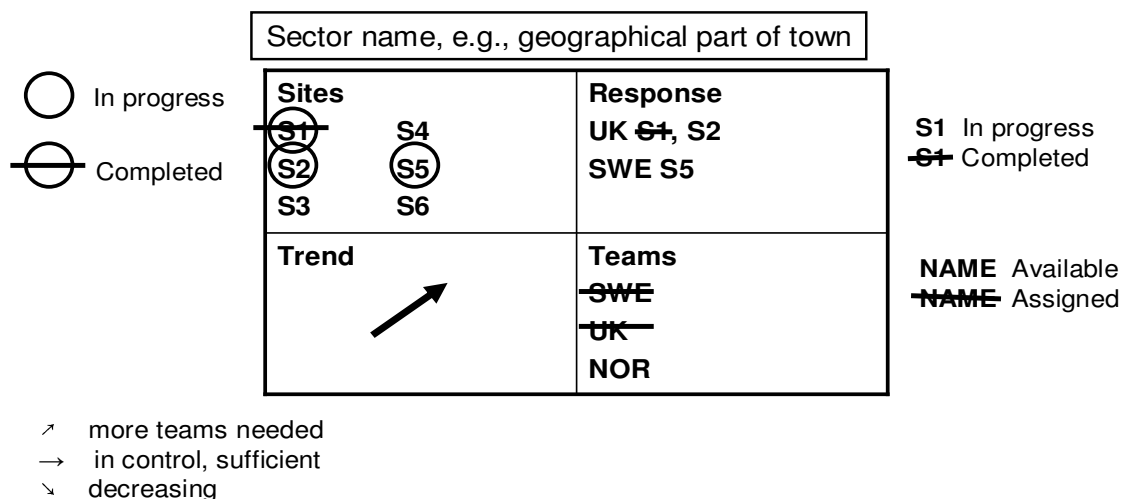
Such a low-tech tool can easily be updated and displayed in the OSOCC and gives a continuous overview of the situation. The various sites are named S1, S2, S3, etc for easy reference with a legend explaining type and kind of site. For example:

- Hospital - S1
- Apartment complex - S2
- School - S3

A site marked with a circle means work in progress on site. A site with a line across is completed (compare with INSARAG Marking System). A team acronym with a line is already assigned while a team acronym unmarked is still available.

The angle of the Trend Arrow indicates if there is a need of more resources

- (↗) More resources (teams) are needed in the sector
- (→) Resources are sufficient according to needs
- (↘) Needs are decreasing



OSOCC Guidelines

Annex H, Operational Briefing Checklist

- **Situation**
 - Overview of situation (USAR and non-USAR)
 - Humanitarian needs
 - Other

- **Accomplishments of last operational period**
 - Summary of USAR response
 - Work sites covered
 - Buildings assessed
 - Live rescues and deceased recovered

- **Assignments for next operational period**
 - USAR teams assignments
 - Special assignments, e.g., sharing USAR resources such as HAZMAT, engineer, medical, etc.
 - Coordination issues pertaining to USAR

- **Administrative arrangements**
 - BoO
 - Logistics
 - Communications
 - Other

OSOCC Guidelines

Annex I, USAR Team Mission Summary Report

To be completed by all USAR Teams prior to leaving the affected country. Completed forms are to be submitted to either the OSOCC or the Reception Departure Centre.

Team Name: _____

Contact Information (in home country):

Name: _____ Phone: _____

E-mail: _____ Fax: _____

Date and time of arrival: _____

Date and time of departure: _____

Assigned Area(s) of Operation:

Results:

| DESCRIPTION | NUMBER |
|-------------------------|--------|
| Live victims extricated | |
| Dead victims recovered | |

Suggested changes to current INSARAG Guidelines:

OSOCC Guidelines

Annex J, USAR Team Demobilization Form

USAR Demobilisation sheet to be completed by USAR Teams and submitted to the OSOCC to facilitate the coordinated transportation from the affected country

DEMOBILISATION INFORMATION:

Team Name: _____
Preferred Date of Departure: _____
Preferred Time of Departure: _____
Preferred Point of Departure: _____
Flight information: _____

TEAM INFORMATION:

Number of persons: _____
Number of dogs: _____
Equipment (TM³): _____

SPECIAL REQUESTS:

Need of ground transportation: ☐ Yes / ☐ No
Need of loading/unloading assistance: ☐ Yes / ☐ No
Need for accommodation at point of departure: ☐ Yes / ☐ No

OTHER NEEDS:

OSOCC Guidelines

Annex K, INSARAG External Classification (IEC)

Over the years, it has been observed that while deployment of international USAR teams has been of great benefit to disaster affected countries, there is the need for responding USAR teams to be integrated in a coordinated system to ensure the most appropriate use of available USAR resources. These lessons learned have been acted upon by classifying the international USAR teams according to their operational capacities so only qualified and appropriate USAR resources are deployed.

To achieve this purpose, the INSARAG Secretariat established the INSARAG External Classification (IEC) process in 2005. An external and international representative cadre of USAR experts conducts an external classification. INSARAG member international USAR teams are classified at three levels; namely Light, Medium and Heavy USAR teams. Since the beginning, over a dozen teams have been classified successfully.¹ These classified teams are expected to show an operational capacity at the minimum acceptable standards based on their classification as below:

- **Light USAR Teams** - These teams have the operational capacity to assist with surface search and rescue in the immediate aftermath of a disaster and they are usually from neighbouring countries.
- **Medium USAR Teams** - These teams can operate at technical search and rescue operations in structural collapse incidents and they are expected to be operational in the affected country within 36 hours of the posting of the disaster at Virtual OSOCC. One of the major differences between medium and heavy USAR teams is that medium teams are not expected to have an ability to cut, break and breach concrete reinforced with structural steel although they can break, breach and cut concrete.
- **Heavy USAR Teams** - Heavy USAR Teams are expected to work at difficult and complex technical search and rescue operations. Therefore these teams have the ability to work at collapsed structures that are reinforced with structural steel. These teams can be operational in the affected country within 48 hours of the posting of the disaster on the Virtual OSOCC.

It is important for the OSOCC staff to be aware of the teams' classification and assign them to the most appropriate working site. Classified teams can be recognized by the "United Nations INSARAG Classified" badges they carry on their uniforms. An example of a badge can be seen at the figure below. The badge indicates the classification of the team (light, medium or heavy) and the year the team was classified.

This system also enables OSOCC staff to differentiate the operational capacities of the teams as well as non INSARAG member and non-classified teams. Furthermore, it also enables disaster affected country to prioritize the acceptance of international response support from the USAR teams. The OSOCC staff is expected to be familiarised with the concept of classified teams and the capacity of them based on their classification.



¹ This information is valid as of the date of these guidelines. The updated list of classified teams can be found at the Virtual OSOCC or at the INSARAG USAR Directory http://ocha.unog.ch/virtualosocc/usar_directory/index.html