Overview of the Incident Command System

U.S. Department of Agriculture
Forest Service

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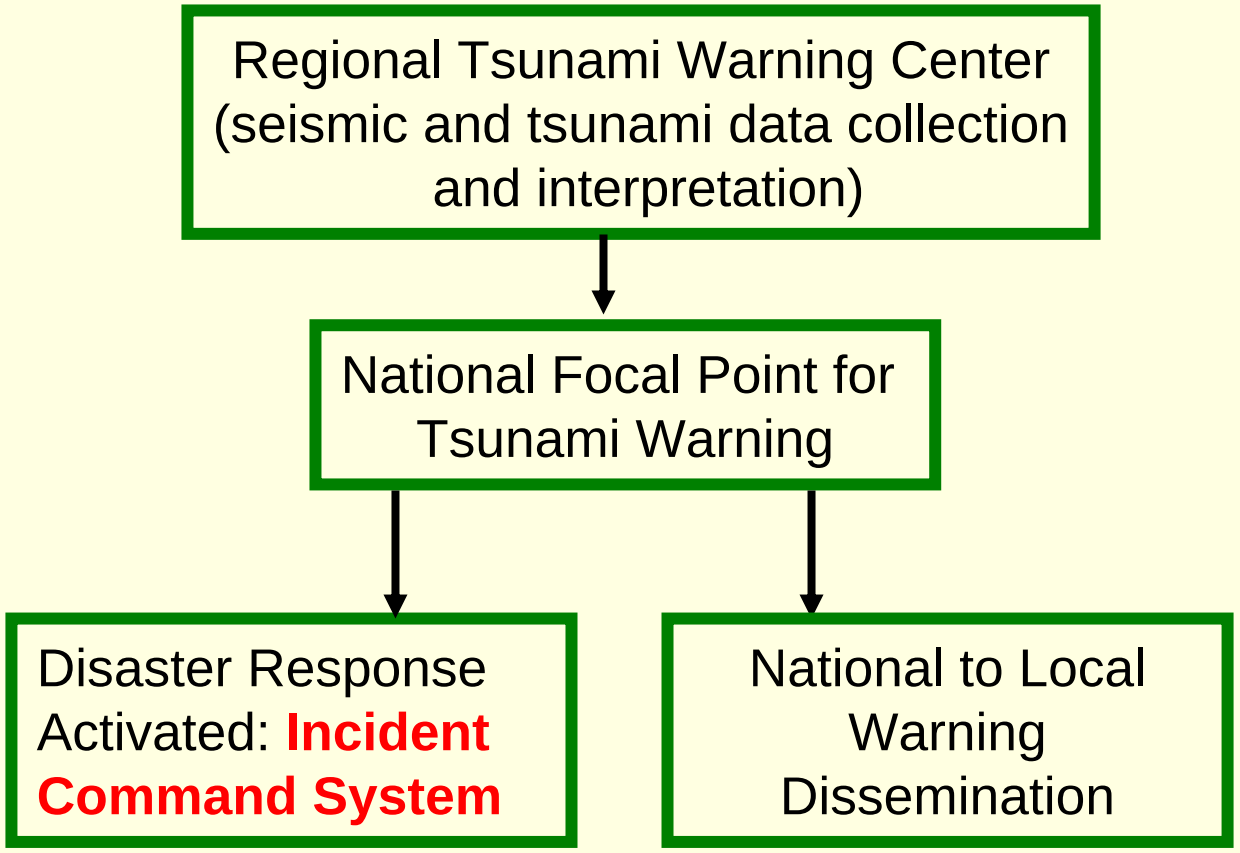
U.S. Contribution to the Indian Ocean Tsunami Warning System

FOREST SERVICE
US
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

ICS in a Tsunami Response Context



Global Trends Towards Increasing Disaster Complexity

- Population growth and spread of urban areas
- Greater life, property loss from natural and human caused technological disasters
- Language and cultural differences
- More multi-jurisdictional incidents
- Need to share resources
- More complex and inter-related incident situations
- Sophisticated media coverage
- Complicated cost decisions on incidents

1970s Scenario: Disaster Management Challenges in the US

- Too many people reporting to one supervisor
- Different emergency response organizational structures
- Lack of reliable incident information
- Inadequate and incompatible communications
- No mechanism for coordinated planning between agencies
- Unclear lines of authority
- Terminology differences between agencies
- Unclear or unspecified incident objectives

Origins of the Incident Command System

- 1970s – recognition of the need for a standardized system of disaster response
- USDA Forest Service (USFS) tasked as lead agency to develop a better system
- 1980s - ICS adapted for all-hazard emergency and disaster response

- Now utilized for all emergency/disaster response in the US and introduced to other countries

What is ICS?

- Single standardized incident management system used by all emergency response disciplines
- Multi-hazard disaster response leadership structure for COMMAND AND MANAGEMENT: specific technical competency skills are integrated in the ICS organization
- Provides accurate information, strict accountability, planning, and cost effective operations and logistical support for any incident

National Incident Management System (NIMS) – March, 2003

- Presidential Directive that mandates use of the National Incident Management System (NIMS)
- Establishes a single, comprehensive, and common national approach to domestic incident management, used by all levels of government

NIMS

- **Command and management**
- Preparedness
- Resource management
- Communications and information management
- Supporting technologies
- Ongoing management and maintenance

US Government Structure and Context of ICS

- Multiple agencies and jurisdictions at the local, state, and federal levels
- Recognized need for resource sharing
- Decentralized decision making authority for emergency response – local levels

US Government Structure and Context of ICS (cont)

- Delegation of authority to emergency management specialists
- ICS positions based on expertise and qualifications
- The US has a vast pool of technical response units for all types of disasters

Basic ICS Concepts

- The ICS is a multi-hazard disaster response management organization structure: specific technical competency skills are integrated in the ICS organization
- ICS used on day-to-day basis for routine incidents as well as for major emergencies; activated at first response

Basic ICS Concepts

Command vs. Coordination

- Command is the direct management of the on-scene operations
- Coordination and support functions serve the needs of the command function – generally located away from the site

Basic ICS Concepts

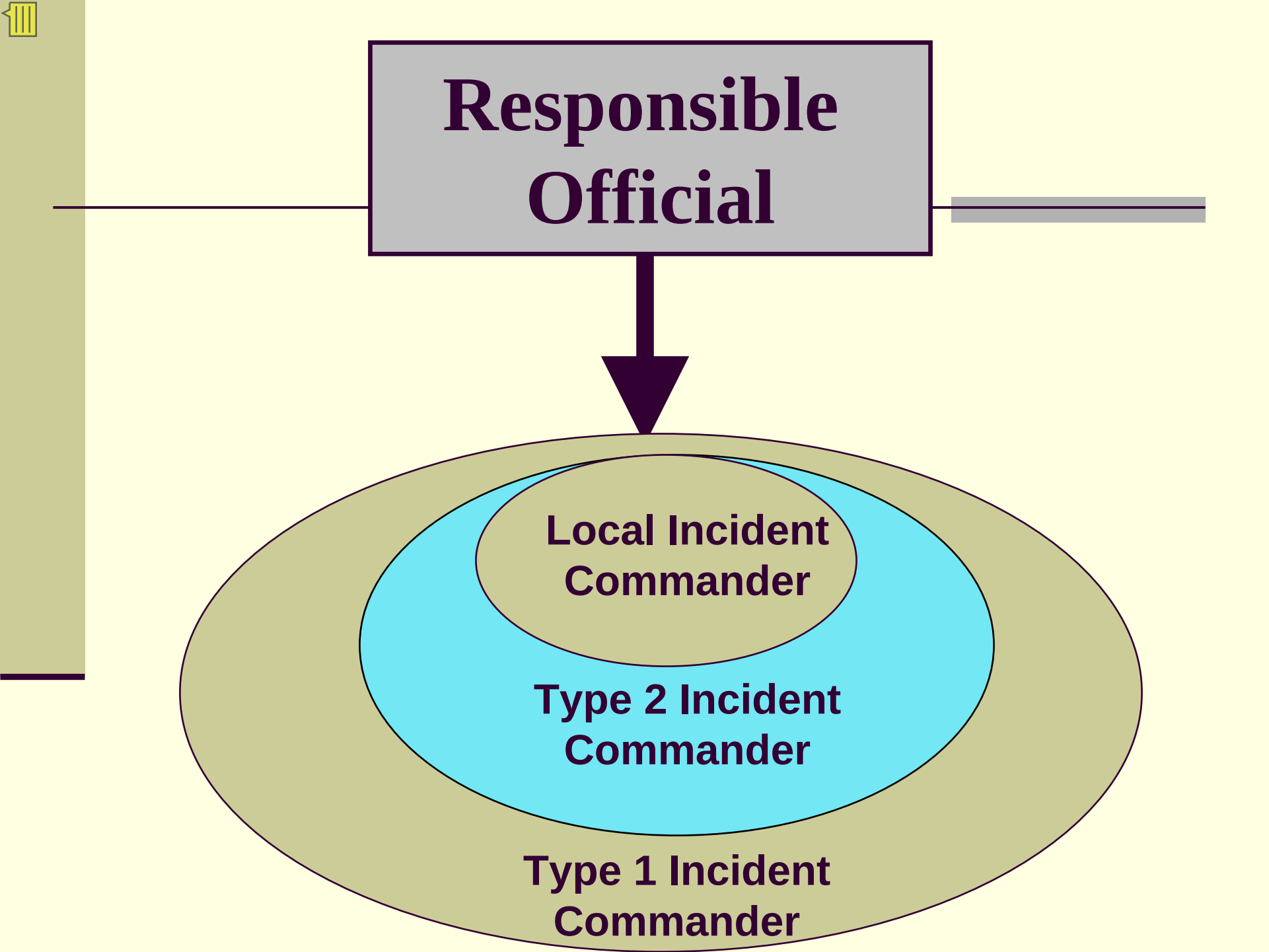
Non-Permanent Organization

- The ICS is activated in response to an emergency
- NOT a permanent organizational structure or secretariat
- During an emergency, ICS qualified personnel leave “regular” positions

Basic ICS Concepts

Delegation of Authority

- The responsible official establishes policy, direction, parameters, and delegates authority to the Incident Commander
- Responsible official generally not at scene all the time but maintains contact as necessary.


Responsible Official
Local Incident Commander
Type 2 Incident Commander
Type 1 Incident Commander

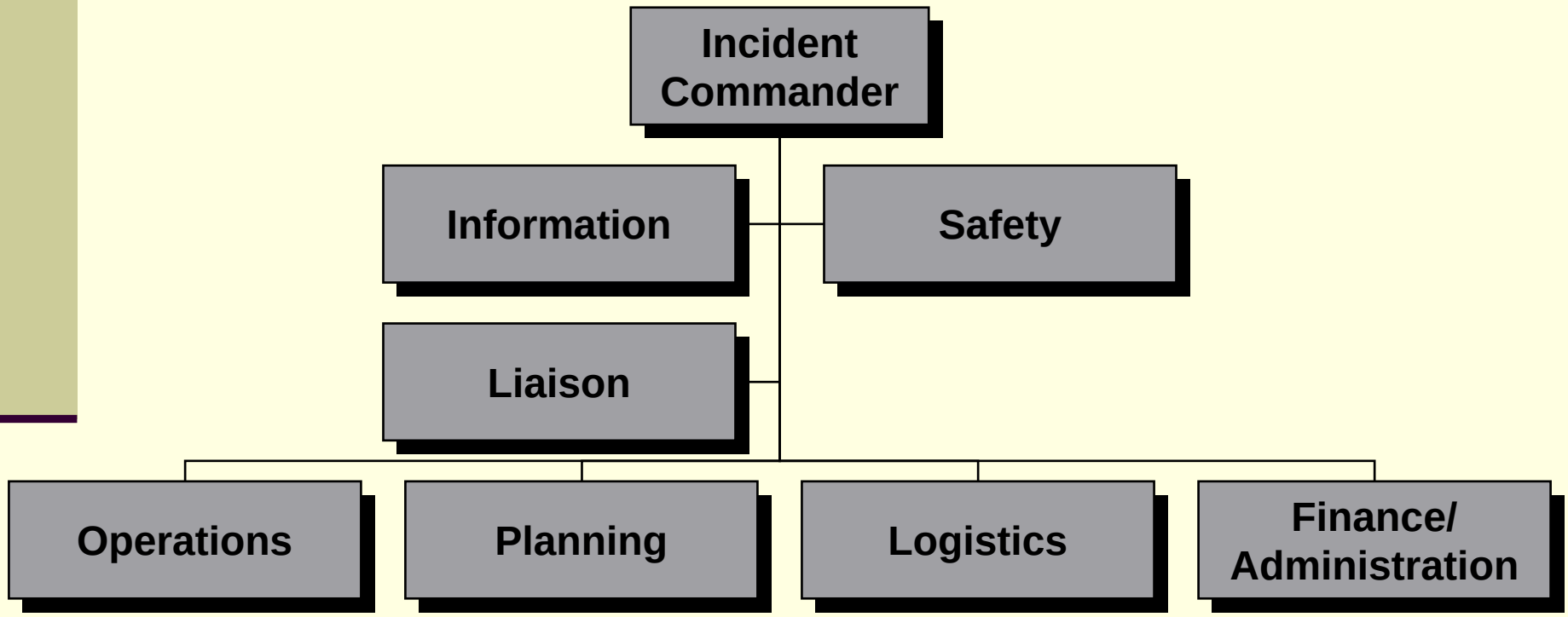
Incident Command System Capabilities

- Provides for a single management system for multi-jurisdictional incidents
- Modular - Allows expansion and contraction depending on size and complexity of incident
- Used on any type or size of incident

Incident Command System Capabilities (cont.)

- Structured to integrate any type of resource including police, military, technical experts, and NGOs
- Can be used to manage sudden onset disasters, long-term relief efforts, or non-emergency events

ICS Major Organization Functions



Examples of US Incidents Using ICS

- Exxon Valdez Oil Spill – 1989
- Hurricane Iniki, Hawaii – 1992
- Northridge Earthquake – 1993
- Oklahoma City bombing – 1995
- World Trade Organization Riots - Seattle 1999
- Pentagon, World Trade Center terrorist attack – 2001

Examples of US Incidents Using ICS

- Winter Olympics Salt Lake City security plan – 2002
- Exotic Newcastle's Disease, California – 2003
- Columbia Space Shuttle Recovery – 2003
- Political Conventions – 2004
- Hurricanes – 2004, 2005, 2006
- Wildfires

ICS – An Evolving System

- No quick solutions
- On-going evaluation
- Hard work, compromise and commitment
- Commitment to interagency training, simulation exercises, and drills
- Combination of political will and administrative machinery are critical

ICS and the USDA Forest Service (USFS)

- Lead agency to develop the ICS
- USFS fields largest numbers of personnel serving on Incident Management Teams
- International Arena: Disaster Mitigation Programs and Disaster Assistance Support Program
- USFS annually conducts interagency training in all aspects of ICS - international training

Countries in which USFS Conducted ICS Courses

- Canada
- Australia
- Mexico
- Bulgaria
- Mongolia
- India
- Sri Lanka
- Association of Southeast Asian Nations (10 member countries)

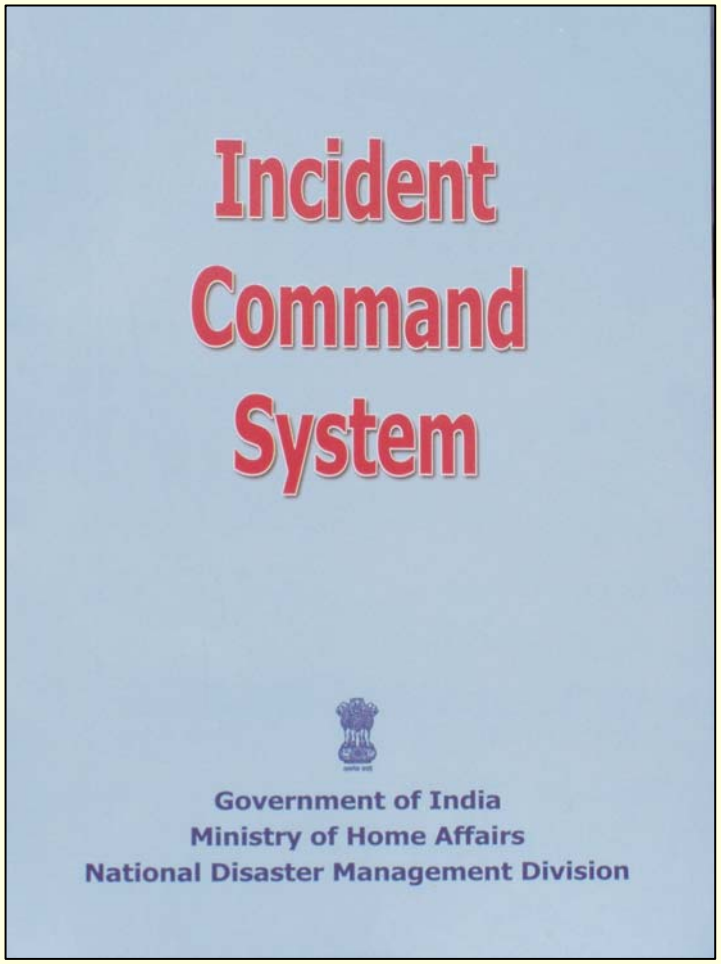
Countries Using ICS

- United States
- Canada
- Australia
- New Zealand
- Mexico (in transition for wildland fire)
- India (in transition)
- United Nations – FAO and UNICEF deliberating use

ICS is emerging as the “common language” of disaster response globally

ICS in Asia

- India - ongoing since 2002
  - Ministry of Home Affairs – focal point
  - LBSNAA – Indian Admin Service training partner
- ASEAN - On-going since 2004
  - ASEAN Committee on Disaster Mgmt – focal point
  - Regional application
- Sri Lanka -on-going since 2005
  - Disaster Management Centre – focal point
  - SLIDA – training partner



ICS Integration Strategy

- **Phase 1** – Foundation and System Adaptation
- **Phase 2** - Formal training-of-trainers course curriculum in ICS (8 courses)
- **Phase 3** – Implementation of ICS, establishing teams, simulation exercises

Phase 1: Foundation and System Adaptation

- Identify partner institutions
- Brainstorming workshop and consultations
  - Develop ICS framework document with adaptations to government and cultural context
  - Develop comprehensive training plan with focal training institution, curriculum, train-the-trainer scheme
  - Develop time line of collaborative activities to integrate ICS into disaster response system

Phase 2: Train-the-Trainer ICS Course Curriculum

- Adapt course materials to country context
- Conduct an 8-course ICS curriculum covering all aspects of the system
- Provide training materials for all courses to focal training institution
- Conduct study tours to the U.S. on disaster management
- Monitor first offerings of ICS course by country trainers

Phase 3: Implementation Activities

- Provide technical consultation to assist establishing system and teams
- Facilitate disaster simulation exercises

Thank You

For

your kind attention