



International Search and Rescue Dog Organisation
Annual Report 2024

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Prepared to save lives

2024 was another stark reminder of how suddenly people can find themselves in need of professional assistance. Natural disasters across several continents caused immense suffering and put our search and rescue dog teams to the test. However, effective emergency response begins long before disaster strikes. Our volunteer handlers regularly train with their dogs, take part in assessments, and practise in realistic conditions to prepare for emergencies.

Through training, consistent standards, and operational tests, we ensure that our teams are ready when it matters most. Your support makes this vital work possible, and I am truly grateful for it. Together, we can ensure that our search dog teams are ready to respond wherever and whenever people need them.

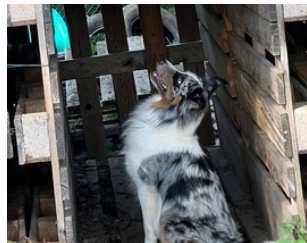
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A. Balog'.

Alois Balog

President of the International Search and Rescue Dog Organisation

Moments that stay with us







Ready when it matters

Helping people in need

For over 30 years, the International Search and Rescue Dog Organisation (IRO) has had a clear objective: to ensure that search and rescue dog teams worldwide are as well-prepared as possible for emergencies.

The foundation of this work is formed by internationally recognised standards for training and operations. These standards are continually refined to reflect changing operational conditions. Practical experience and new insights are therefore regularly incorporated into training. As a United Nations partner in disaster response, the IRO also promotes high-quality standards in international rescue operations.

Sharing knowledge is equally important. Training and practical experience help our member organisations to develop their expertise and strengthen their capabilities at a local level. The greater the number of qualified search and rescue dog teams available regionally and nationally, the faster professional help can be provided in an emergency.

IRO members worldwide

Across four continents, the International Search and Rescue Dog Organisation connects institutions of different sizes, from small associations to state-run organisations.

Professionalism is essential in search and rescue dog work – together with our 132 member organisations*, we ensure this is achieved in training and deployment.

* As at: December 2024





132

member organisations

41

countries

You can find a detailed
overview of all our member
organisations on our website.
www.iro-dogs.org/en/about-us





Devastating floods in Brazil

In May 2024, large parts of southern Brazil were hit by severe flooding. Over 150 people lost their lives and more than two million were affected. Ten search dog teams from our member organisation, Corpo de Bombeiros Militar de Santa Catarina (CBMSC), helped to search for around 100 missing individuals.



At times like these, our dogs prove just how invaluable they are, locating people trapped beneath the rubble and providing comfort to those in emergency shelters.

Captain Tiago Domingos, CBMSC Officer

In situations where every minute counts, it is crucial that handlers and their dogs can trust one another. Years of training and thorough preparation lay the foundations for this trust, creating close-knit teams that are ready to help people in need, even in the most challenging conditions.

Earthquake in Taiwan

In early April 2024, Taiwan was hit by its strongest earthquake in 25 years. Buildings collapsed, roads and tunnels were buried under rubble, and people were left trapped.

Search and rescue dog teams from our member organisations, Taiwan Fire Service Rescue Dog Unit (TFSRD) and Taiwan Special Search and Rescue Team (TSSRT), joined the search for missing individuals. Despite the rubble, dust and noise, the dogs remained focused on detecting human scent, undistracted by the surrounding chaos.



8
PEOPLE
FOUND
ALIVE



Their exceptional sense of smell enables them to locate people trapped beneath the rubble where technology and human rescuers reach their limits.

When a search and rescue dog detects a human scent, it follows it to its source and barks to alert its handler. This gives rescue workers vital clues about where to focus their search for survivors.

Thanks to the efforts of these teams, eight people were found alive.



Proving mission-readiness

Search and rescue dog teams must be able to perform reliably, even in difficult conditions. Noise, lack of sleep, unfamiliar surroundings and long waits alternate with intense searches. The rubble search mission readiness test prepares handlers and dogs for these challenges.

Search day and night

Complete at least five searches

Ready at any time

The next call-out is unpredictable

Living in field conditions

Base camp and self-sufficiency

”

Deployments are physically and mentally demanding. Search and rescue dog teams must be well prepared to help people in need quickly and effectively.

Alois Balog, IRO President

Our global activities

Dogs are not born heroes

Saving lives with the help of dogs! This is the vision that unites all members of our organisation. With our globally recognised training programme, we ensure that dogs become lifesavers under the guidance of highly qualified, dedicated professionals:

37

training events took place
around the world.

24

countries covered by our
training activities.

670

dogs completed an
IRO Test.

44

search and rescue dog teams
were certified as mission-ready.

Support that makes a difference

Give today. Save lives tomorrow.

Train

Regular training improves the skills of both handlers and their dogs.

Test

Assessments and mission readiness tests ensure high standards.

Equip

The right equipment protects handlers and their dogs in challenging conditions.



Your donation helps to turn
search and rescue dogs
into lifesavers.

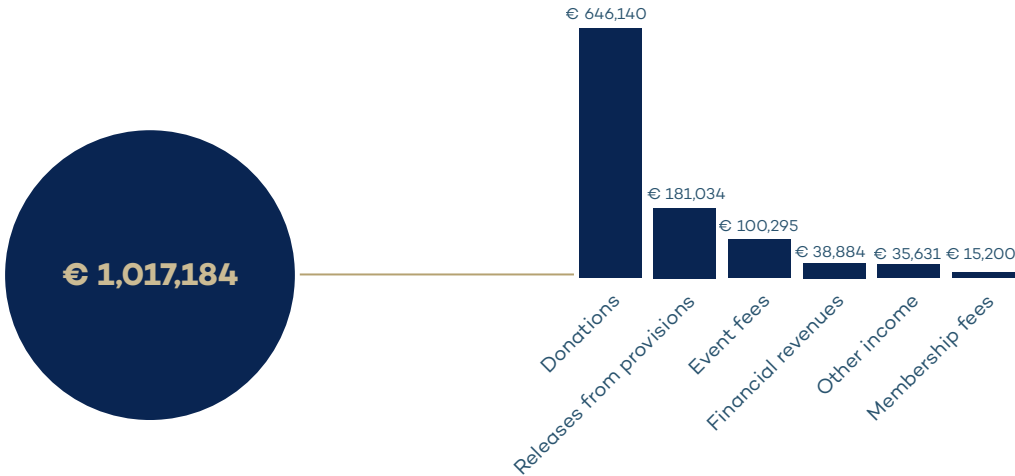
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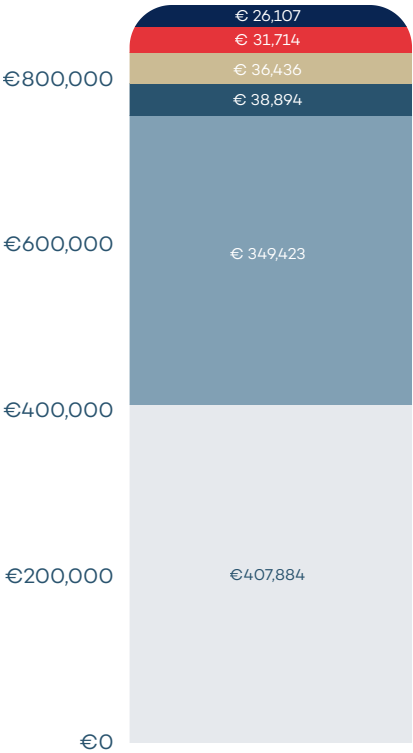
Financial report 2024

Transparency for donors

Income



Expenditure



- Marketing, Public Relations
- Depreciations
- Other expenses
- Tax and legal advice, translations
- Administration
- Expenses for statutorily defined purposes

As a non-profit organisation, we rely on donations from both individuals and companies to carry out our work. We do not receive any basic funding from public authorities.

The administration of donated funds is reviewed and disclosed annually by recognised, independent experts, ensuring that all contributions are used in accordance with our statutory objectives.

The fascinating world of a dog's nose

Amazing facts about their sense of smell

For dogs, the world largely consists of scents. Their noses reveal information that remains hidden from us. They can detect trails, distinguish the subtlest differences in scent, and determine its direction of travel. What seems almost unimaginable to us is simply part of their everyday life.



Built for the search

When the conditions are right, search and rescue dogs can detect the scent of humans from up to 500 metres away and locate people buried up to five metres deep.

Designed for continuous scent detection

When sniffing, dogs exhale sideways, drawing in fresh, scent-carrying air to maintain a constant flow of information.

Pinpointing the direction

Each nostril detects scents separately, allowing dogs to determine which direction a scent is coming from.

Ready, set, sniff!

It doesn't take much to make scent work fun. Just a few simple ideas are enough to awaken our dogs' natural instinct to explore.

Hidden treats

Hide a few treats around the house or garden and let the search begin! As your dog gets better, make the hiding places more challenging.

Sniffing walk

Take it slow and give your dog plenty of time to sniff around. Allow them to decide which scents are worth exploring further.

Toy treasure hunt

Hide a favourite toy and let your dog find it. Start with an easy hiding place, then gradually make it more challenging to keep the search fun.



IRO

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**Setting standards.
Saving lives.**