

## 'SEA OF CHANGE' - ONE YEAR ON...

The Project commenced on 6<sup>th</sup> January 2003.

The Project aims to develop systems thus ensuring that elements of the UK Fire and Rescue Service, acting as a primary agent for the Department for Transport (DfT), is sufficiently prepared to be able to respond to a life threatening marine incident involving fire, rescue or chemical incident on a vessel located at sea around the coast of the United Kingdom.

The project incorporates issues relevant to New Dimension and Civil Contingencies as identified by Her Majesty's Fire Services Inspectorate (HMFSI), CACFOA and international studies.



Currently fifteen Fire Authorities have been identified and approached to form what will be called the UK Fire & Rescue Services Maritime Incident Response Group ('MIRG').

## 'MIRG' MEETING ~ JANUARY 2004

The second meeting of the proposed 'MIRG' took place at HMS Excellent in Portsmouth on Wednesday, 28<sup>th</sup> January. Representatives from fifteen Fire & Rescue Services, the Scottish Fire Service Inspectorate and MCA attended. In addition, two officers from the Command Centre for Maritime Emergencies (Cuxhaven, Germany) attended following the Project Teams visit to Germany in August 2003.

A key issue for the meeting was bringing to a suitable conclusion the concerns regarding the contingent liability agreements that are still outstanding. Additionally, considerable discussion took place with regards the provision of suitable equipment (see Equipment); the initiatives surrounding transportation of teams to and from incidents and the provision and funding of existing teams to enable them to

sustain their training competencies and standards of equipment.

It is hoped that an MCA and Fire Service inter-agency working agreement can be accepted by April 2004 which will outline the working principals of the final group.

## CACFOA MARINE OPERATIONS GROUP (MOG) MEETING NO. 10

This six monthly meeting also took place at HMS Excellent on the 28<sup>th</sup> & 29<sup>th</sup> January. More than 75 delegates attended the meeting which included speakers from the MCA, Department for Transport, MAIB, NUMAST and United Salvage thus provided varying and interesting presentations. (Further details on this and previous meetings can be found on the Internet at [www.fire-uk.org](http://www.fire-uk.org))

## DRAFT FIRE SERVICE CIRCULAR (FSC)

One of the Project Team's earlier Objectives (2.3.2) looked at the issues surrounding 'boundaries' in relation to dealing with vessels 'at sea' or/and 'inshore'. Historically, this has some caused consternation for Fire Officer's around the United Kingdom. The team based research around the MCA's Merchant Shipping Notice No. 1758(M) ~ Categorisation of Waters.

Subsequently, a draft FSC has been prepared in the hope that it will assist Fire & Rescue Services in determining their boundaries and areas of maritime operation when producing their Integrated Risk Management Plans (IRMP's).

In addition, the FSC gives guidance on operational response levels for all water related incidents.

The draft FSC was submitted to the ODPM in November 2003 and is currently awaiting ratification before publication.

## AQUARIUS PROJECT

On behalf of the Civil Resilience Directorate of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and the Fire Service National Water Safety Working Group, VT Integrated Services have been tasked to undertake the study entitled Project Aquarius. This study will be used to inform the future requirements of the New Dimensions programme regarding the provision of a comprehensive water safety capability for the Fire & Rescue Service.

The Aquarius Team have spent four months gathering data and evaluating activity which is designed to inform the ODPM of the present water safety capability within the Fire & Rescue Services of England and Wales (the project does not cover all of the UK Search and Rescue Region).

Included in the research brief is the need to consider area specific water conditions, training and equipment.

A meeting took place at the MCA headquarters on the 19<sup>th</sup> January 2004 between the 'Sea of Change' and 'Aquarius' Project Teams where both teams discussed their specific objectives.

The Aquarius Team is due to report back to the ODPM by February 2004.

## EQUIPMENT

The Project Team, in conjunction with MCA procurement staff, have already submitted specifications and tendering information for some items of 'Transportation PPE' (see Newsletter 4), in particular 'Transit Suits and Lifejackets.



In addition the provision of helicopter load bags has been included due to the fact that some of the existing team bags are beyond suitable repair.

The EU tendering process is currently being managed by MCA staff in relation to the future provision of suitable Transit Suits.

## TRAINING

Work continues to progress in producing modules in line with IPDS for Command and Control, Stability, Transportation by air and sea and Marine Legislation.

The recent addition of laptop computers provided by the MCA to each of the CACFOA MOG Training Sub Group (TSG) has been a useful addition to the training 'toolbox'.

In addition a Business Case has recently been submitted and accepted by the MCA that will allow the full time secondment for two of the TSG team to the MCA. They will be responsible to the project manager for focussing on accelerating the production of the training information which is recognised as a key issue in ensuring a successful outcome to the overall Project.

It is anticipated that the secondments will commence in April for a period of 12 months. One of the primary objectives for this group is to provide Fire & Rescue personnel with fully interactive training packages that meet the competency requirements in line with IPDS.

The TSG will be holding a further three day workshop in Staffordshire during February to approve a large number of modules already prepared and to continue the development and planning for the modules still to be researched.

## EXCEPTION REPORT

The current status of the Project's research will be found in the 'Project Progress' pages of the Members' Area on the MCA website.

## FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

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