



Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) ~ 'Sea of Change' Firefighting at Sea Project ~

NEWSLETTER ~ ISSUE NO.1

February 2003

The 'Sea of Change' is an MCA sponsored Firefighting at Sea Research Project, in cooperation with Her Majesty's Fire Service Inspectorate and the Chief & Assistant Chief Fire Officers' Association.

The Project's primary objective is to have in place a local authority Fire Brigade integrated response to incidents involving firefighting, chemical hazards and rescue at sea'....

Background to Project

For a considerable number of years several United Kingdom coastal Fire Brigades have provided a response to assist with ships on fire at sea.

These Brigades have declared their 'land based' resources available to carry out a non statutory role outside the area of the Local Authority and provide a voluntary response on behalf of the respective Chief Fire Officers, their Committees and their firefighters.

Concerns have been raised in recent months by some Chief Fire Officers, CACFOA Working Parties and MCA representatives in relation to the reduction in the number of Brigades that continue to maintain an 'offshore' response. The number with 'declared facilities' is now less than half of the number that was available a decade ago, (currently 11 out of 39 'coastal' Brigades) therefore escalating the inability to resource a serious incident around the coast should one occur.

In September 2002 the Chief Coastguard agreed to support a 'pilot' project to review the situation with the aim of producing a report for the Department for Transport (DfT) that could identify a way forward and hopefully address the issues that have led to the current position.

Discussions were held between the MCA, Chief and Assistant Chief Fire Officers' Association (CACFOA) and Her Majesty's Inspectorate New Dimensions Group (NDG). It was agreed that two senior fire officers be seconded to review and develop the national strategy for the UK Fire Service response to maritime incidents.

Divisional Officer Mervyn Kettle from Cornwall and Divisional Officer Peter Pearce from Kent, were subsequently seconded in January 2003.

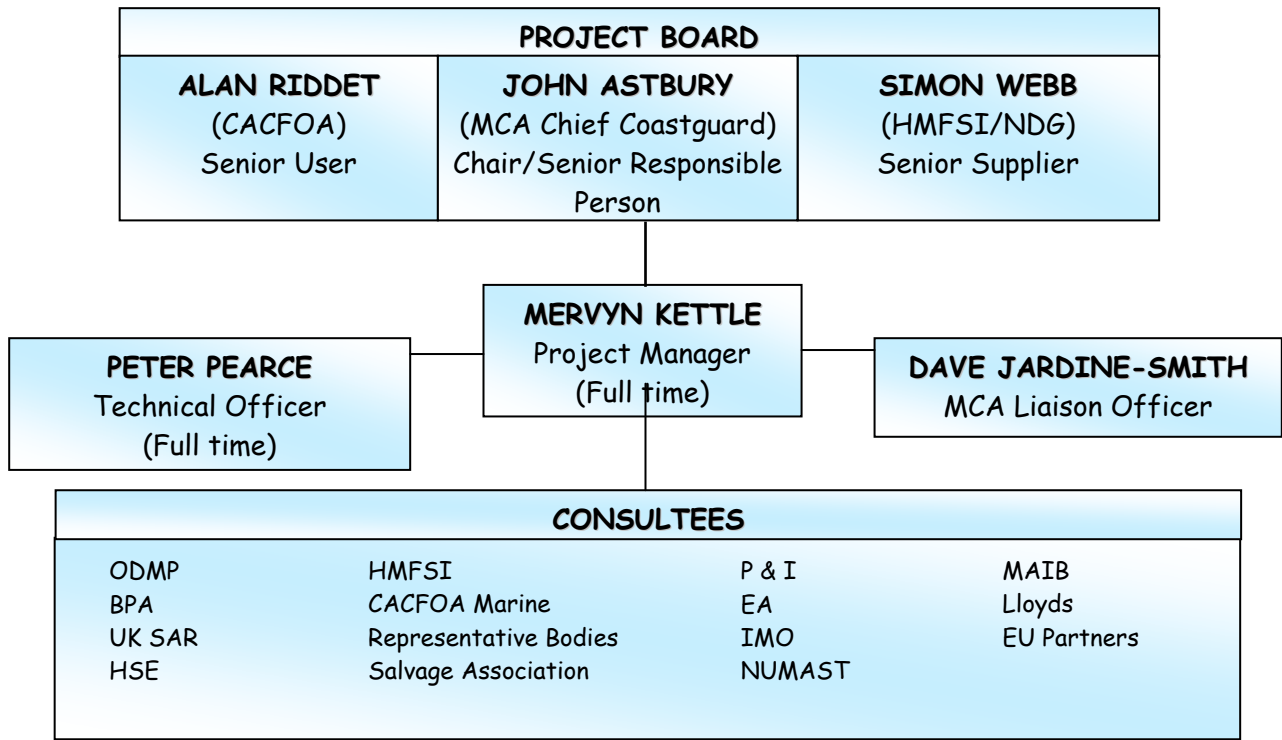
The project now also has acknowledgement from the United Nations International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and expressions of interest in the project and its outcomes have been received from Canada, Sweden and Germany.

Project Scope

The project will develop systems thus ensuring that the UK Fire Service, acting as a primary agent for the DfT, is sufficiently prepared to be able to respond to a life threatening marine incident involving a vessel located at sea around the coast of the United Kingdom.

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

Project Board



Project Objectives

The project has identified over twenty key objectives to achieve the primary goal of 'having in place a local authority Fire Brigade integrated response to incidents involving firefighting, chemical hazards and rescue at sea'.

Action Plan

SHORT TERM GOALS (by July 2003)

Confirm 'at sea' criteria; raise awareness of the overall objectives by circulating information to all interested potential 'players' and key agencies; create a central area on the MCA Internet website (linked to CACFOA website) where all project related information can be accessed, reviewed and validated; ensure resilience of current responses from existing Fire Brigades; review existing national and international systems, processes and protocols.

MEDIUM TERM GOALS (by April 2004)

Develop regional response arrangements in partnership with the MCA; role out strategy after consultation with all appropriate organisations; develop equipment specifications to facilitate national procurement by MCA.

LONG TERM GOALS (by January 2005)

Audit, debrief and review; refine strategic and tactical operational techniques.

For Further Information Contact:-

Mervyn Kettle ~ Project Manager ~ Mervyn_Kettle@mcga.gov.uk
Peter Pearce ~ Technical Officer ~ Peter_Pearce@mcga.gov.uk

Websites: MCA ~ www.mcga.gov.uk CACFOA: www.fire-uk.org