



THE INTEROPERABILITY WORKSHOP 18 OCT 17

The Workshop was held under the auspices of the Global Fire Monitoring Center (GFMC), which functions as the Secretariat for the International Fire Aviation Working Group (IFAWG) and the Wildfire Preparedness Mechanism (IWPM).

Opening Statement

Richard Alder, IFAWG Chairman, welcomed the delegates, describing the increasing need for cross boundary operations, the fact that no one nation can deal with the requirement, and concluding that AFF aircraft sharing needs to be routine. This requires interoperability and agreed SOPs. This message was reinforced by Johann Goldammer, Director of the GFMC. He briefed on regional fire management resource centres, agreements that have been made bilaterally and multilaterally, as well as work with the World meteorological organisations to assess the global implications of smoke pollution. This latter area has grown in importance due to the radioactive terrain in Ukraine, and the clear effects of smoke pollution on remote areas such as the Antarctic. He also commended the work of the FIRE-IN - Fire and Rescue Innovation Network – project. Thierry Sonderer, Deputy Head of Air Assets Office, Securite Civil, then developed the topic of European SOPs for AFF. He described the development of the SOPs for the CL415, and the need for information sharing for rapid deployment and effective working together. All this work needs to be sustainable and certifiable.

Exercise Lessons

The intention was to have an overview of the live flying exercise, but as it was cancelled, the discussion centred on lessons from the preparation of such events. Speakers stressed the need to work together more. Common training at the beginning of the season would be beneficial, including timely debriefs to iron out differences. Alessandro Abriani, from Babcock, Italy, stressed that lessons from real operations showed the need for discipline, good communications and effective SOPs allowing easier mission briefings covering, inter alia the target, hazards, patterns, emergencies, and allowing for different experience levels of aircrew.

Regional Experiences

Johann Goldammer then briefed on the Second Regional Consultation on Transboundary Cooperation in Fire Management in South America. This had underlined the messages on the need for SOPs; a central library to provide an institutional memory; the requirement for an early warning system; and for competency standards, training materials and courses. He also described the developments in Chile which suffered severe fire in Jan/Feb 17, resulting in new fire management centres to improve coordination, and CONAF courses. Andrey Eritsov briefed on the challenges of AFF in the vast area of Russia, and Lt Col Davor Turkovic gave a very interesting account of the operation in support of Israel which had 1776 fires in November 16, which were handled with the assistance of 9 other nations flying 5 different aircraft types.

Closing Remarks

Richard Alder and Johann Goldammer closed the workshop by summarising the messages on the need for information sharing and effective debriefing, and the unchanging need to keep small fire small!

Air Marshal P O Sturley CB MBE BSc FRAeS RAF Retd

Workshop Chairman