An Stiúrthóireacht Náisiúnta um Dóiteáin agus Bainistíocht Éigeandála
National Directorate for Fire & Emergency Management

Ctrí Project Newsletter **November 2016**

Ctrí Project Board Chairman's Communication

The job of the Ctrí project board, is to oversee the effective implementation of this multi-million Euro project, on behalf of the Irish government. As chairman of the board, I am delighted to be associated with the project, which represents both a significant financial commitment from Irish government and the effective collaboration of all Irish local authorities. The purpose of the project is to improve the quality and resilience of fire services communications across the country, ensuring that we keep our firefighters safe and in turn allowing them to protect the communities they serve. Ctrí retains the ambition of delivering significantly better communication systems, integrating our controls and providing a platform upon which firefighters across the country can continue to deliver safer communities.

Brian Sweeney, Chairman, Ctrí Project Board.

WHAT IS CTRÍ

The Ctri project has been established by the Management Board of the NDFEM and is a 3-4 year project to deliver the next generation of fire service communications and mobilisation system. While our current three regional systems have operated successfully since the early 1990's they are now nearing end of life. The technology has now moved forward sufficiently to allow us to establish a single National system with three nodes in the three Regional Communications Centre's and facilitating the development of standardised national technological systems and operational processes. The core elements of the project are:

- the migration from our old analogue radio systems to the new Tetra platform
- the development of a new national Fire Service Command and Control software platform which all three regions will use for receipt and despatch.
- and the standardisation, to a common national standard, of all operational process in the three regions, i.e. staffing,training, quality management, control room procedures, etc.

Significantly this will develop a systems and operational structure where all three regions can interact and provide support and redundancy to each other, progressing to a significantly more redundant and reliable system than currently exists both operationally and technically.

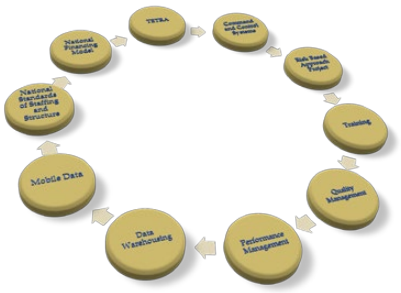
WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Historically the first generation of the project was referred to as CAMP (Computer Aided Mobilisation Project). As the aim of this iteration of the CAMP project is to implement a single project across the three existing CAMP Regions the project has been branded as Ctrí.

The three centres will be interconnected and capable of despatching, monitoring and communicating with each other's Fire Service resources. The system will operate to common national standards in all aspects of its operations, technical configuration and staffing and structure.

The Ctrí brand is intended to signify the Command and Control, Communications and Collaborative nature of the project and the fact that we are migrating from three independent regions to a single system with three regional nodes.

WHAT'S IN IT FOR US?



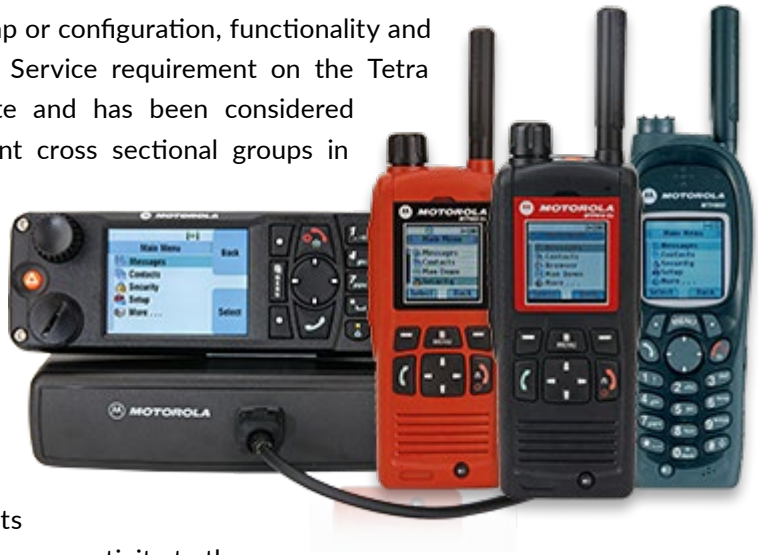
- Stakeholders – Public/Firefighters/Junior Senior Officers/CFO's/ RCC operational Staff/NDFEM/Local Authorities CEO's/ Other Agencies/ECAS etc.
- Common national platforms providing mobilisation of Fire Service resources in an efficient and effective manner,
  - Common national, inter-operational, Command and Control Systems
  - Common best practise operational process
  - Common Key Performance Indicators governed by common quality management platform ensuring continuous development of the operational processes and procedures to provide the most efficient and effective systems possible.
  - Migration to National best practise in terms of standards of staffing, governance and structure.
  - Development and implementation of national technology platforms for the effective and efficient mobilisation of Fire Service resources and the facilitation of access to management information and Fire Service data
  - Development of communications technologies to facilitate effective communications between Fire Service resources and Regional Communications Systems.
  - Development of common national training process and procedures to an accredited standard.
  - Development of common national funding model ensuring that the operational cost of the system provision is distributed equitably across all its constituent Fire Authorities.

TETRA

Tetra is a digital radio technology used to provide the National Emergency Services digital Radio system. This is a managed service that provides radio services to a number of agencies but to date primarily the Gardaí and the HSE.

The Fire Service has now completed an extensive evaluation of its migration to the Tetra platform and made the decision to migrate to this technology.

The Fire Service Fleetmap or configuration, functionality and deployment of the Fire Service requirement on the Tetra system is now complete and has been considered by a number of different cross sectional groups in Fire Services and by Tetra themselves and our current suppliers all of whom have commented positively in terms of a deployment.



We have also finalised the technical requirements and configuration of Tetra connectivity to the Regional Communications Centre network and in tandem with this the development of a National Fire Service ICCS platform which will allow the RCC operator positions to connect to Tetra systems.

We will soon be commencing a terminal evaluation process to select what specific radios will be the most suitable for Base Radios, Mobile Appliances, hand portables etc...

Initial costing in terms of both the Capital and operating cost of the System to the NDFEM and the Fire Authorities have been prepared and are currently being considered by the Authorities.

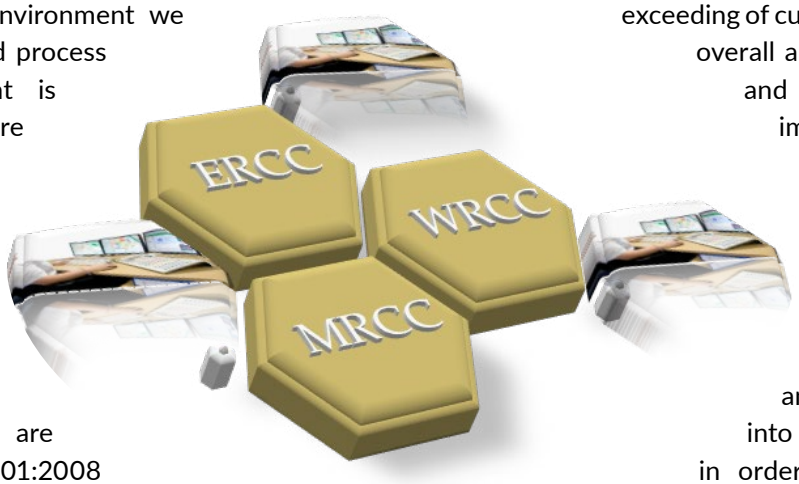
Much consideration has been given to the subject of the distribution of Tetra radio terminals and hand portables. It has been decided that all appliances which may transport personnel to incidents, must be fitted with a Tetra radio.

The results of a Fleet Survey have been used to define a baseline number of appliances of each type for which tetra terminals will be funded, this baseline is linked to the Area Risk Categorisation process for each station.

After investigation, consultation and consideration, it has been determined that Tetra as a technology is not suitable for use for “At Incident” hand portable communications. It has been identified that Tetra is not in use for this purpose in the vast majority of European brigades. It has however been identified that there are a number of issues in some brigades with the current hand portable technologies in use. As such the Ctrí project has been tasked with identifying these issues and proposing a recommendation for their resolution.

PERFORMANCE AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT

In terms of the achievement and development of high standards of performance in the RCC environment we have determined that a defined process for performance management is a requirement and that its core is the tenant of “Continuous Improvement”. This principle of “Continuous Improvement” is an essential element of the implementation of the ISO 9001:2008 Quality Management Standard.



Currently 2 of the 3 regions are successfully accredited to ISO 9001:2008 and achievement of a quality management standard in WRCC is fundamental to their progression and implementation of the national standards that underpin the project.

Performance in terms of quality, accuracy and the exceeding of customer requirements are the overall aims of Quality Management and will ensure the continuous improvement of the efficiency and effectiveness of the National Communications System.

To date the current status of performance in each RCC has been established and this will progress forward into a process of consultation in order to determine a National Standard of Performance. The process of seeking accreditation to the ISO Quality Standard in WRCC has commenced.

TRAINING

Our aim is a common national accredited training program for both recruit and existing Emergency Control Operators. This is not fully achievable until other technical elements of the project have been completed to a national standard, however, the ground work is presently being completed and the consultative process has begun.

A Task and Finish Group, consisting of Senior Officers and both Operational and Regional Communications System staff are working on the design of a Nationally Accredited Recruit Emergency Control Operator Training Course.

It's evident that a high standard of commitment from the three regions who are co-operating in sharing information, training materials and experience will result in motivating and performance enhancing training programs. The Ctrí project team are also cognisant of the work currently being undertaken in the area of the design of a National Recruit Fire Fighter Training Course.

COMMAND & CONTROL SYSTEM

Our Emergency Control Operators in the Regional Control Centres are tasked with mobilising a Fire Service response to those calling 999/112.

The most powerful tool at their disposal is their Command and Control software system of which, currently, there are three independent systems. Each of these systems essentially operates in a similar manner but do so independently with no capability for mutual support or interaction. These systems would, in any case, require replacement over the course of the coming years.

A new National CAD system with the three regional command and control centres operating as hubs or clients from the same Command and Control Software system with the capability to interoperate and provide mutual support to each other in the event of spate conditions or technical failure and communicate with each other will be a significant step forward.

Technology in the area of Command and Control systems has moved on considerably since we were last in the market, no longer are CADs locked down on controlled networks, firewall technology allows a great deal more connection to the outside world. Management Information Systems, Performance Management Systems, Dynamic real time remote access, Geographical Information Systems, access to social media etc. have all seen significant technological development in the intervening period.

We are at stage of establishing what functionality we currently have nationally across the three regional communications systems and what our end users really want from a new system before we move on to preparation of functional specifications for a new national command and control system.

It will be an inclusive process and we will deliver a system that will help Emergency Control Operators with their core role of mobilising the right brigade to the right location as quickly as possible and improved functionality when it comes to the management of incidents and appropriate deployment of resources.

FIRE SERVICE MOBILISATION

(National Fire Alerting Communications System)

This project element is the upgrade and replacement of all station alerting hardware equipment in each of the 218 fire stations nationally. The project is currently underway and this will facilitate additional bearers, improved speed of operation, improved redundancy and allow migration into a national system.

The end result will allow for:

- Improved Speed of message transfer
- Additional bearer routes for mobilising messages
- Improved redundancy or fallback systems
- Allow each of the Regional Communications Centres to mobilise and despatch each other's resources.

Telent, formerly Arqiva, are the supplier for the delivery of the outstation project.

The redundancy of the new mobilising system will be evident in migration from a two bearer system (Analogue Radio/PSTN) to a three bearer system with two of those bearers providing high speed messaging.

- I.P. (Internet Protocol) VPN
- GMS (3G/4G/GPRS)
- PSTN (Landline)

Telent Ltd., formerly Arqiva, are the supplier for the delivery of the outstation project and Limerick Council is acting as the National Contracting Authority for the project implementation.

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

A new document management system for use in the National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management and the wider Fire Service has been developed in co-operation with Cork City Council. This Alfresco platform is currently being used in areas such as training, Major Emergency Management, Ctrí, Fire Service National Oversight and Implementation Group and will be further developed into other areas of Fire Service operations.

COMMUNICATION AND CONSULTATION

The Ctrí Project team intend to use a process of communication and consultation with stakeholders throughout the life of the project. Already Task and Finish Groups featuring a cross section of Emergency Service, Operational and RCC personnel have been utilised in the areas of Tetra and Training. Further groups will be set up to ensure experienced personnel who will be directly affected by upcoming developments and systems have an opportunity to contribute.

Communication is also an essential element and now that the project is well underway with progress being made in many areas, keeping staff informed will be a key aim. Along with the Ctrí project team working closely with existing Regional Communication System personnel, there will be both a quarterly newsletter and a series of organised briefings.

Queries and observations / comments regarding any aspect of the project can be directed towards the Ctrí project team via email.

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