

CASE STUDY

CATEGORY

YOUNG PROJECT PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR

WINNER

JOSHUA MACEY – MOD, DEFENCE EQUIPMENT AND SUPPORT ORGANISATION



Overview

To support its operations in the Falkland Islands, the UK Ministry of Defence (MOD) uses two vital helicopter capabilities: search and rescue (SAR) for all-year-round emergency cover for civilians and the military, operated by the Royal Air Force; and a support helicopter (SH) that provides essential transportation of personnel and equipment around the islands, due to limited road infrastructure.

With the Sea King helicopters used by the RAF due to be retired from service by the end of March 2016, and the SH contract due to expire in the same month, there was an opportunity to combine the two helicopter capabilities under a single service-based contract: the new Falkland Islands Search and

Rescue and Support Helicopter (FISARSH) service.

Since joining the MOD in 2004, aged 16, as an electrical and electronic engineering apprentice, Joshua Macey has worked on a variety of projects, gaining a number of promotions within its Defence Equipment and Support organisation. In 2013, he was promoted to project manager and given responsibility for planning and delivering all aspects of the FISARSH project, which had a through-life budget of around £190m.

Resources

From January 2015 to March 2016, Joshua led the development phase of the establishment of the new service. This comprised many elements, including the development and build of two brand-new helicopters, civil aviation approvals and the recruitment and training of more than 30 personnel.

The project also involved the modification of infrastructure in the Falkland Islands, the transportation of aircraft and personnel from 8,000 miles away to the Falkland Islands, and rigorous proof of the FISARSH capability.

Joshua led a small team of three deputy project managers, an RAF requirements manager and two commercial officers. By giving individuals the opportunity to lead packages of work, Joshua helped instil a sense of ownership and empowerment

in the team as they worked together towards a common goal.

Managing the project remotely from the office in Bristol, Joshua made the 24-hour journey to the Falkland Islands eight times, with each trip lasting a week.

Project management and governance

In his continuous drive to follow project management best practice, Joshua devised a robust project management plan with links to other plans, including a risk- and opportunity-management and an approvals and assurance plan. These plans proved valuable when new team members were recruited and needed to get up to speed quickly.

Robust governance was also fundamental to the success of the project. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities, along with a structure of project meetings tailored to each stage of the project, meant that all stakeholders bought into ensuring project success.

Stakeholder management

The project had to interface with a vast array of stakeholders: the Commander of the British Forces South Atlantic Islands; technical, security and quality experts to ensure the project was compliant with MOD requirements; helicopter manufacturers; the Civil Aviation Authority; and many more.

In order to manage this complex and diverse range of stakeholders, Joshua produced a combined stakeholder, governance and handling plan so that there was full transparency on matters such as reporting and governance arrangements, and communications plans for wider stakeholders such as ministers and the media.



Challenges

Despite initially finding it difficult to get full stakeholder buy-in during the early stages as project manager, it was Joshua's detailed and robust governance regime that helped secure an effective working relationship between the stakeholders.

The location of stakeholders throughout the UK, the Falkland Islands and the US (where the prime contractor was located) was also a factor. This was overcome by the use of telephone and videoconferencing and joint contractor/MOD visits to the Falkland Islands.

When HMRC ruled that VAT would be applicable to the FISARSH contract in March 2016, Joshua successfully challenged the ruling so that project costs were not affected.

Project successes

Despite forecasting a service-commencement date of September 2016 at the start of the development phase, the FISARSH service commenced ahead of schedule on 31 March 2016.

This, critically, was in time to allow the planned retirement of the Sea King fleet, provided a seamless transfer of service to the residents of the Falkland Islands and avoided costs for extending the military SAR operation.

This launch of the service represented the first-ever civil-regulated SAR service using AW189 helicopters, in just 14 months from the award of the FISARSH contract, and more than 8,000 miles from the UK.



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WINNER'S

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