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Milestone Reached in “Emergency Network Philippines“ - First Centre Takes up Operations in Manila

With the Emergency Network Philippines (ENP) an innovative emergency dispatch centre comprising 19 networked systems comes into being. This large-scale project was designed, developed and implemented by the Viennese high-tech enterprise FREQUENTIS, a provider of complete communications solutions. The taking up of operations in the first centre in Manila marks the successful completion of the first leg of the project.

The archipelago of the Philippines is hit time and again by serious natural disasters such as typhoons, inundations and land slides. Many Filipinos also lost their lives in big accidents such as fires and maritime disasters. A co-ordination of efforts by different disaster relief organisations has not been possible to date. In part this was due to the lack of an exhaustive emergency communications system and in part to the fact that it was impossible to access mission relevant data. The Philippine Ministry of the Interior thus drew up a challenging request profile for a modern emergency communications system that is to support disaster relief organisations throughout the country.

Frequentis convinced with its solution concept: 16 regional centres (one per province throughout the country), a headquarters, a centre for corrective maintenance and service, as well as a training centre are networked together. The topology of the country – the Philippines comprise of more than 7000 islands – was a big challenge for the Frequentis team. “We have proven that Frequentis not only offers first rate systems and technology, but that we can also develop an idea and offer solutions for a variety of applications”, Hannes Bardach, MD at Frequentis, proudly states.

Manila Centre Operates Smoothly

The going operational of the first emergency call centre in Manila, one of the largest in the country, marks the successful and timely conclusion of the first important portion of the project. The operative centre comprises 16 workstations; another centre with two workstations is directly connected to it for training purposes. Already in the month of June 150,000 calls were counted. This gives a clear picture of the capacity of the system that has been designed to handle more than 17,000 calls per day.

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The new emergency call centre can be reached 24/7 via one country-wide access number, the “General Emergency Number”, 117. Just to offer a comparison: in Manila alone, there exist more than 50 different numbers to call the fire brigade.

Modern computerised workstations make the tasks of the dispatchers easier: emergency calls are accepted reliably and related to the respective relief agency; later on the dispatchers verify the status of a mission. All calls, as well as all measures taken, are automatically recorded for statistics purposes. Important information can be drawn from this data and then used to improve the planning of future missions.

“This system gives the population access to an emergency call centre it can rely on,” the order client, the Philippine Ministry of the Interior is convinced, too.

The official inauguration of the new centre, which operates successfully since May, took place on August 2nd. The Philippine Ministry of the Interior and a number of guests of honour attended the ceremony.

All other call centres will be equipped within the next two years.

Safety in the Event of an Emergency Call

The networking of the emergency call centres has to fulfil a number of tasks. In addition to the voice network, there is a data network on intranet basis, which ensures the necessary information flow between the individual centres and facilitates maintenance because all centres can be accessed. This in turn allows for centralised data protection or software upgrades. In the event of difficult incidences or country-wide natural disasters specialists can be consulted no matter where they are located; they can actively participate in the missions via the network.

The network topology thus offers important advantages that are very effective with the application of the Frequentis VCS (Voice Communication System). It forms the central control and merges all aspects of the mission such as telephone landlines, mobile phones, radio and data communications (e.g.: latest available weather data). Also, each operator in the different centres can access digitised map material, so missions can be guided quickly and efficiently. Also integrated into the comprehensive solution is a powerful mission control computer software that makes relevant data available at all times and supports dispatchers during critical missions and decision making processes. Since lives can be at stake every time an emergency call is placed, it is of utmost importance that the fully digital voice and data communications system always works flawlessly – and thanks to their redundant and fully digital duplex architecture this is no problem for Frequentis systems.

Comprehensive Training Program for 350 Filipinos

Within the framework of the ENP-project, Frequentis offers also a comprehensive training program. In sum about 350 personnel have to be trained on the system. The training comprises servicing and maintaining the systems as well as the relevant dispatcher training to ensure the proper use of the available equipment.

For additional information, please visit www.frequentis.com

Or go to the homepage of the Philippine Ministry of the Interior www.dlg.gov.ph