

## **Proposed cessation of military search and rescue statistics – response to external consultation**

On 18 February 2015, Defence Economics opened a consultation with stakeholders regarding proposed changes to military Search and Rescue statistics.

The Ministry of Defence (MOD) currently produces a National Statistics series (monthly, quarterly and annual) covering military search and rescue (SAR) statistics. From April 2015 the current mix of military and civilian search and rescue capacity will transition to a single civilian contract, managed by the Department for Transport (DfT). As part of this transition the production of military SAR statistics by the MOD will cease. Data on civilian SAR Helicopter (SAR-H) activities will be managed by the DfT and/or the Maritime Coastguard Agency (MCA).

The aim of the consultation was to seek users' views on the cessation of the MOD statistics and proposed changes to the 2015 military SAR series.

The consultation period ended on 18 March 2015. There were two responses from external stakeholders during the consultation period, and no comments from internal stakeholders.

The feedback from external stakeholders is summarised below:

**Respondent 1** asked whether the civilian statistics will record SAR incidents when the UK will not be able to provide the SAR cover, and the reason why. As this query relates to the future civilian statistics that will be published by DfT, we have passed this query on to DfT to answer.

**Respondent 2** requested that an annual report be compiled beyond 2015 covering Search and Rescue work undertaken by the MOD and its personnel (including overseas). This should include any MOD assets now or in the future for long-range SAR such as an MPA aircraft, Mountain Rescue Teams, as well as the helicopter assets on PJOBS of Cyprus, Gibraltar and The Falklands, and any assistance given by RN ships. MOD has considered this request, but has concluded that there is not sufficient demand for statistics on overseas callouts or the military mountain rescue service to be published on a regular basis beyond 2015. The number of callouts is small: over the last 3 years the average was around 40 overseas callouts per year and 70 mountain rescue callouts per year, so it would be possible for MOD to collate and release the statistics on an adhoc basis if required.

There were no objections to the changes proposed to the monthly or quarterly SAR reports, or to the 2015 annual report. MOD will therefore be making all the changes proposed in the consultation, beginning with the April monthly report (to be published on 4 June 2015). There will be no further quarterly reports, and the annual report (to be published in February 2016) will be a streamlined version of the current annual reports.