

Working together

Fighting wildfires



Wildfire investigation

Learning from wildfires

On Easter Sunday 2014, the Netherlands suffered one of its largest ever wildfires. The fire destroyed 350 hectares of the natural landscape in the 'De Hoge Veluwe National Park'. More than 1000 emergency first responders from the fire service, the police, the military and contractors from all over the country were deployed to control the fire and its effects. Several questions were asked shortly after this fire. Why did it spread so fast? Why was the fire able to cross the fire break line unhindered? Why did the fire change direction? Did the fire development match the wildfire spread model? After a thorough analysis, the Wildfire Investigation Team were able to give substantiated answers to these questions. Furthermore, based on the findings, various improvement projects were initiated.

Goal

Embedding the national specialist area of Wildfire Investigation as part of the Netherlands Fire Service.

Why

Fire investigations enable the fire service to learn from fires and from how they develop. Fire investigation is about finding the cause of a fire, analysing its development, and determining the effectiveness of fire prevention facilities and firefighting techniques/tactics. Investigating wildfires calls for a specialist approach, one which is very different from investigating fires in buildings and other objects. Almost all regions have operational fire investigation teams but only a few regions also have a special team that investigates wildfires. The Wildfire investigation subproject serves to embed the investigation into wildfires at a national level, thus ensuring the continuity of this specialist area.

Results

The deliverables:

- A uniform procedure and task description for investigating wildfires in conjunction with the basic principles of fire investigation.
- Organising the provision and continuation of wildfire investigation at a national level.
- A frame of reference for teaching and study content for wildfire investigators.
- Organising lasting professional skills in the field of wildfire investigation.
- Basic principles for preparing reports and contributing to the learning organisation.
- Implementation plan including a communication plan.

Planning

Delivering the project results	Q4 2017
Implementation	2018

The specialist area of Wildfire Investigation is a subproject of the Wildfire Fighting project that is part of the national programme for working together on large-scale and specialist response by the Netherlands Fire Service.

Wildfire incident management project

There are three main themes for the project: Information provision, Specialist areas, and Organisation. Several subprojects have been identified as part of these themes and, jointly, they form the way we intend to implement our vision of fighting wildfires. All current information about on going and future subprojects can be found on the website of the Netherlands Fire Service.

Information provision

- Satellite data and vegetation maps
- Geodata
- Wildfire spread model
- Wildfire risk index - RIN)
- Wildfire database and statistics

Specialist areas

- Creating fire breaks
- Fire investigation
- Fire Bucket Operations
- Wildfire consultants
- Rules of thumb
- Area-specific approach

Organisation

- Knowledge & Expertise Network
- Decisive wildfire incidents
- Guidelines for the first group deployed
- Communication with the public
- Command and control system
- Wildfire fighting doctrine

More information

Current information about all projects and subprojects that form part of the programme can be found on:

 www.facebook.com/samengrensverleggend
www.brandweer.nl/samengrensverleggend

If you have any questions about the Wildfire investigation project, then please email them to: Jan-Piet.Zijp@vggm.nl