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Seychelles Islands Foundation Forest Fire Prevention and Contingency Plan

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Definitions

CEO	The Chief Executive Officer of SIF
DRMD:	Disaster Risk Management Division
EOC	Emergency Operations Center
ICS	Incident Command System
REOC	Regional Emergency Operation Center
SFFPCP:	SIF Forest Fire Prevention and Contingency Plan
SFRSA:	Seychelles Fire and Rescue Service Agency
SIF:	Seychelles Islands Foundation
SPGA:	Seychelles National Parks Authority
TRASS	Terrestrial Restoration Action Society of Seychelles

1 Introduction

The SIF Forest Fire Prevention and Contingency Plan (SFFPCP) is a dynamic and adaptive document designed to be a "living document" that will require regular updates to ensure its continual relevance to current practices and circumstances. This comprehensive plan is commissioned by the Seychelles Islands Foundation (SIF) and aims to proactively address the threats to the Coco de Mer species from forest fires within the Vallée de Mai and Fond Ferdinand.

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of the SFFPCP is multifaceted. Firstly, it aims to establish a structured framework that will enable effective management, coordination, and response to forest fire incidents in the Vallée de Mai and Fond Ferdinand. The plan will be continuously reviewed and updated to incorporate new insights, technological advancements, and lessons learned from past incidents to ensure that its objectives are met always.

The primary objectives are as follows:

- Ensuring the implementation of effective preventive measures to mitigate the risk of forest fires within the national parks.
- Ensuring that relevant stakeholders possess the necessary preparedness to respond swiftly and efficiently to forest fire incidents.
- Facilitating the establishment of a robust inter-agency communication and cooperation system to enhance the coordination of forest fire emergency responses.

Through these objectives, the plan aims to safeguard the invaluable biodiversity, ecological integrity, and natural heritage of the Vallée de Mai, Fond Peper and Fond Ferdinand areas from the potentially devastating impact of forest fires.

1.2 Key Concepts of the Plan

The SFFPCP is underpinned by key concepts that guide its development and execution. These concepts reflect the dynamic, integrated and collaborative approaches required to

effectively address forest fire emergencies. This section elaborates on these pivotal concepts that shape the essence of the plan.

1.2.1 Living Document Approach

The SFFPCP is not designed to be a static document confined to bookshelves. It embodies a "living document" approach that emphasizes ongoing relevance and adaptability. This approach is achieved through regular updates, revisions, and version numbering to incorporate new insights, technological advancements, and lessons learned from past incidents. It ensures that the SFFCPC remains a current and robust framework for forest fire management in Vallée de Mai, Fond Peper and Fond Ferdinand.

The "living document" approach is driven by the understanding that effective forest fire management requires flexibility and responsiveness. Forest fire dynamics, prevention strategies, and response techniques are subject to change due to various factors, including agency responsibilities, technological advancements, and evolving best practices. By keeping this plan agile and regularly updated, SIF acknowledges the need to stay aligned with these changes, ensuring that the forest fire prevention and response strategies remain relevant.

1.2.2 Alignment with Seychelles NIEMP

A core principle of the SFFPCP is its alignment with the Seychelles National Integrated Emergency Management Plan (NIEMP). By adhering to the NIEMP framework, the SFFPCP benefits from a cohesive and integrated approach to emergency management. This alignment fosters synergy across various emergency response efforts, enabling efficient coordination and resource utilization.

1.2.3 Key Stakeholder Involvement

The SFFPCP thrives on the active involvement of key stakeholders, ensuring a collaborative and well-coordinated response to forest fire emergencies. Stakeholders from various sectors contribute their expertise, resources, and perspectives, enhancing

the overall effectiveness of the plan. This inclusive approach facilitates effective collaboration and knowledge sharing.

1.2.4 Inter-Institutional Coordination

Enhanced inter-institutional coordination is a fundamental principle of the SFFPCP. The plan promotes seamless communication and collaboration among various agencies responsible for different aspects of emergency response. This coordination ensures that resources, expertise, and efforts are combined to deliver a comprehensive and united response in the face of forest fire incidents.

1.3 Scope

The scope of this plan covers diverse facets of forest fire prevention, preparedness, and response within the geographic boundaries of the Vallée de Mai and Fond Ferdinand. The subsequent subsections provide an outline of the plan's scope. The defined scope is as follows:

1.3.1 Geographical Boundary

The plan's coverage includes the area enclosed by Fond Ferdinand fire break and the Praslin National Park fire break.

Vallée de Mai's small size, coupled with an abundance of leaf litter that cannot be removed due to its World Heritage status, renders it highly vulnerable to forest fires. Additionally, certain trees within the firebreak area are protected under conservation regulations. Consequently, the effectiveness of the firebreak is significantly compromised. Due to these constraints, Vallée de Mai relies heavily on the Praslin National Park firebreak for protection against forest fires.

1.3.2 Responsibilities

The plan places a primary focus on ensuring that the Seychelles Islands Foundation (SIF) possesses the necessary capacity to fulfill its responsibilities outlined within the plan. It is

understood that other stakeholders are expected to establish their own capacity-building initiatives and response plans. This collaborative approach ensures that each stakeholder is adequately equipped to complement and enhance the collective forest fire prevention and response efforts.

1.3.3 Exclusions

While primarily centered on the natural ecosystems of the Vallée de Mai and Fond Ferdinand, the plan excludes coverage of man-made structures, with the exception of those purposefully designed to aid forest fire response. This includes forest fire water tanks and reticulation systems strategically located within the parks to facilitate effective firefighting operations.

1.4 Authority

The implementation and maintenance of the SFFPCP is carried out by SIF under the authority and guidance of DRMD. SIF holds the overall responsibility for the effective management of forest fire prevention and contingency in Vallée de Mai, Fond Peper and Fond Ferdinand.

The Regional Emergency Operation Center (REOC), established by DRMD to coordinate disaster response on Praslin, will have an oversight function in ensuring the continual relevance of this plan and other supporting plans. The REOC will facilitate the regular updates and reviews necessary to adapt to evolving circumstances and practices.

Minor amendments to the SFFPCP, which do not alter the scope or key responsibilities of stakeholders, will be approved by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of SIF.

Significant amendments that may result in changes to the scope of the plan or the responsibilities of stakeholders require the endorsement of all key stakeholders as identified in the Institutional Framework section. This inclusive endorsement ensures that any adjustments to the plan's directives are consistent with the collective understanding and agreement of involved parties.

1.5 Activation of Plan

The SFFPCP will be activated in response to specific triggers, primarily including instances of forest fires occurring within the Vallée de Mai and Fond Ferdinand or when a significant threat arises from a fire approaching the defined geographical boundary. The activation of the response plan will be initiated by the Regional Emergency Operation Center (REOC) in conjunction with the request of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of the Seychelles Islands Foundation (SIF) or their designated representative.

During the activation process, the CEO or designated representative will assess the situation based on the information provided by on-site personnel and relevant authorities. Upon determination that the situation warrants a coordinated response, the CEO or designated representative will communicate the activation of the plan to DRMD and the REOC.

In instances where the existing firefighting capacity on Praslin becomes overwhelmed, and additional resources need to be mobilized from Mahé, the REOC will collaborate with the Disaster Risk Management Division (DRMD) to assess the situation and consider the declaration of a national emergency. Subsequent operations will be conducted in accordance with the provisions outlined in the National Emergency Response Plan, ensuring a coordinated and effective response to the crisis.

1.6 Related Documents

The SFFPCP is an integral component of a broader emergency management framework. It is essential to recognize its relationship with other documents that collectively contribute to the Seychelles' comprehensive disaster preparedness and response strategies. This section outlines the key related documents that interlink with the SFFPCP, providing context for its implementation.

1.6.1 Disaster Risk Management Act 2014

The Disaster Risk Management Act 2014 establishes the Disaster Risk Management Division, facilitating effective disaster management through an integrated approach. This

Act serves as the legal foundation for disaster management and underscores the importance of comprehensive preparedness, coordination, and response across all hazards.

1.6.2 Seychelles National Integrated Emergency Management Plan (NIEMP)

The Seychelles National Integrated Emergency Management Plan (NIEMP) constitutes a pivotal guide for emergency preparedness and response stakeholders. Designed to align with national legislation and policies, the NIEMP provides a framework for organizing central government responses, sectoral arrangements, and local district strategies. It establishes roles, responsibilities, and collaborative mechanisms to ensure a coordinated and effective response to various emergencies in Seychelles.

1.6.3 Seychelles Forest Fire Contingency Plan

The Seychelles Forest Fire Contingency Plan outlines the organizational structure and functions of entities involved in forest fire fighting. This includes delineating the roles of primary and supporting response agencies, such as DRDM, Police, Environment, Fire Brigade, and the Army. This plan elucidates the chain of command, the setup of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC)/Incident Command System (ICS), and the coordination mechanisms essential for managing forest fire incidents.

These related documents collectively contribute to a holistic approach to disaster management in Seychelles. The SFFPCP draws on their principles and frameworks to ensure that forest fire prevention and response strategies are well-integrated into the broader emergency management landscape.

2 Institutional Framework

The successful implementation of the SFFPCP hinges on a robust institutional framework that defines the roles, responsibilities, and collaborative mechanisms of various stakeholders.

This section outlines the key responders and supporting agencies who play pivotal roles in forest fire prevention, response, and recovery within the defined geographical boundary. These stakeholders collectively contribute to the plan's objectives of safeguarding the unique ecosystems of the Vallée de Mai and Fond Ferdinand.

By establishing clear lines of communication, coordination, and cooperation, the institutional framework ensures a cohesive and effective approach to addressing the threat of forest fires while promoting inter-agency synergy and shared responsibility.

2.1 Key Responders

2.1.1 Seychelles Islands Foundation

The Seychelles Islands Foundation (SIF) is a public trust established by law in 1979. SIF's mission involves managing and safeguarding the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Aldabra Atoll and Vallée de Mai. Since 2020 the MACCE has entrusted the foundation with the management of Fond Ferdinand.

SIF generates its own funds fully and its revenues are made of entrance fees from Vallée de Mai, Fond Ferdinand and impact fees collected for visiting Aldabra. In addition, the sale of coco de mer nuts and kernel as well as other souvenirs, project funding, grants, and donations contribute to generate an income.

SIF's responsibilities under the SFFPCP are as follows:

- Swift response to fire incidents within the boundaries of Vallée de Mai, Fond Peper and Fond Ferdinand;
- Custodianship of the plan, ensuring its relevance and currency;
- Collaboration with stakeholders for ongoing plan enhancement;
- Maintenance of the Glacis Noir radio repeater;
- Effective management of forest fire prevention and contingency in Vallée de Mai, Fond Peper and Fond Ferdinand;
- Maintenance and servicing of fire-fighting equipment in their custody;

- Ensuring the availability, readiness and competency of their staff to deliver on their responsibilities under the plan;
- Regular organization of mock exercises to ensure plan compliance and stakeholder readiness; and
- Periodic revision of the plan to incorporate new insights, technological advancements, lessons learned from past incidents, and emerging challenges, to ensure its continued effectiveness and relevance.

2.1.2 Disaster Risk Management Division

The Disaster Risk Management Division (DRMD) operates as a critical component of Seychelles' disaster risk management framework. Established to oversee the development and coordination of comprehensive disaster risk management systems, DRMD plays a pivotal role in enhancing the nation's resilience against various hazards, including forest fires.

DRDM's responsibilities under the SFFPCP are as follows:

- Providing expertise and coordination in disaster risk management strategies;
- Collaborating with other stakeholders to ensure the continual improvement and relevancy of the plan;
- Playing a key role in activating and overseeing the Regional Emergency Operations Center (REOC) during the plan's activation;
- Coordinating emergency response efforts in conjunction with relevant agencies after the declaration of a national emergency;
- Ensuring the alignment of SFFPCP with national emergency management strategies;
- Overseeing policy development related to forest fire prevention and management; and
- Assisting in the sourcing funds to cover response and recovery expenses.

2.1.3 Regional Emergency Operations Center

The Regional Emergency Operations Center (REOC) will serve as the nerve center for disaster response coordination on Praslin. Created under the provisions of the Disaster Risk Management Act, the REOC is a collaborative initiative guided by DRMD to ensure

swift and efficient response during emergencies. This section outlines the responsibilities of the REOC, highlighting its crucial functions in managing forest fire emergencies.

The REOC comprises key stakeholders from various agencies to ensure a comprehensive and coordinated approach to disaster response. Participating organizations include the SFRSA, Seychelles Police, local hospitals, Department of Environment, and the District Administration, and will be chaired by the District Administrator.

REOC's responsibilities under the SFFPCP are as follows:

- Coordinating response efforts to effectively address emergencies within the defined geographical boundary.
- Conducting rapid situational assessments to gauge the severity of a forest fire incident, informing subsequent response efforts.
- Acting as the central hub of communication, the REOC will liaise and maintain constant contact with all relevant stakeholders, disseminating critical information and updates.
- Coordinate resource mobilization, ensuring that adequate personnel, equipment, and supplies are deployed to address forest fire incidents effectively.
- Assisting DRMD in responding to a fire outbreak that has been declared a national emergency.
- Continuously monitoring the progress of response operations, and adjusting strategies as necessary to address evolving challenges.
- Providing regular situation reports to keep all stakeholders informed of the incident's progression and response efforts.
- Maintaining comprehensive records of actions taken, decisions made, expenses incurred and outcomes achieved during forest fire emergencies to facilitate post-incident analysis and improvements.
- Participating in regular mock exercises to ensure plan compliance and stakeholder readiness.
- Seeking funding opportunities to sustain effective forest fire response and recovery operations.

2.1.4 Seychelles Parks and Gardens Authority

The Seychelles Parks and Gardens Authority (SPGA) is a government Authority, established under the Seychelles Parks and Gardens Authority Act 2022. It is responsible for the stewardship and management of marine and terrestrial National Parks and Gardens across Seychelles. Funded through the proceeds from the sale of park tickets and associated products, SPGA plays a crucial role in ensuring the preservation and sustainable management of these protected areas. Within the context of SFFPCP, SPGA's active involvement is critical in safeguarding the Vallée de Mai from forest fire threats.

SPGA's responsibilities under the SFFPCP are as follows:

- Swift response to fire incidents within the boundaries of the Praslin National Parks;
- Active participation in collaborative response efforts, coordinating closely with other stakeholders to ensure a unified and effective approach in responding to forest fire incidents.
- Providing assistance with drone surveillance technology to accurately pinpoint the location and extent of forest fires;
- Providing assistance with drone surveillance to aid in identifying optimal routes for approaching the fire front and accessing critical areas. Additionally, the authority will assist with the use drone data to plan escape routes for responders, ensuring their safety and rapid evacuation if required;
- Maintenance of Firebreaks and Trails: SPGA assumes responsibility for the maintenance of firebreaks and trails within the Praslin National Park.
- Maintenance and servicing of fire-fighting equipment in their custody; and
- Ensuring the availability, readiness and competency of their staff to deliver on their responsibilities under the plan.

2.1.5 Seychelles Fire and Rescue Services Agency

The Seychelles Fire and Rescue Services Agency (SFRSA) established under the Seychelles Fire and Rescue Services Agency Act 2010 is the entity entrusted with fire suppression, rescue operations, hazardous materials mitigation, fire inspection, fire

investigation, and public education. Its mission revolves around providing quality services to the community.

SFRSA's responsibilities under the SFFPCP are as follows:

- Responding to forest fire incidents that overwhelms or threaten to overwhelm SIF's response capabilities. This includes fire suppression and rescue operations.
- Assuming the role of the On-Scene Commander (OSC) responsible for coordinating fire suppression efforts and overall incident command in instances where SFRSA is present on-site during fire incidents.
- Collaborating closely with other key stakeholders to ensure effective coordination during emergency response efforts.
- Playing a leading role in the training of forest fire responders, contributing to the overall readiness of all stakeholders.
- Providing technical expertise to other stakeholders, offering insights and advice on forest fire management strategies, equipment, and response techniques.
- Providing information regarding forest fire-fighting equipment with all stakeholders to ensure compatibility and effective response coordination.
- Playing an active role in the preparation of mock exercises that simulate emergency scenarios, allowing stakeholders to practice their roles and refine response strategies in a controlled environment.
- Contributing to the enhancement of the SFFPCP by actively participating in plan review and update processes. Forest Fire Disaster Management Strategies

2.2 Supporting Agencies

Supporting agencies play vital roles in ensuring the overall effectiveness of emergency response efforts. Although they may not operate directly on the fire front, their contributions are critical for maintaining smooth operations and mitigating challenges during firefighting activities.

2.2.1 Police

The Police department will provide essential support by managing traffic flow and crowd control. Their responsibilities include ensuring that firefighting personnel and equipment

can access the fire site without delays caused by traffic congestion. This support will be crucial for maintaining swift response times.

2.2.2 ZilAir

ZilAir will contribute to emergency response efforts by offering aerial support with helicopters equipped with water-bombing capabilities. These helicopters can swiftly transport and release water to assist in suppressing fires in challenging terrains or difficult-to-reach areas. The helicopter may also be used to transport equipment, evacuate injured personnel and, surveying the extend and progress of the fire.

2.2.3 Red Cross

The Red Cross will contribute to the safety and well-being of firefighting personnel by offering first aid assistance if required. Their presence will ensure that immediate medical attention is available to responders in case of injuries or medical emergencies.

2.2.4 Hospital

The hospital's involvement is critical for providing medical support to responders. In addition to offering medical assistance if required, the hospital will stay informed about any potential roadblocks that could hinder ambulance access to the site. By coordinating with the police and firefighting teams, the hospital can ensure that necessary routes are cleared in advance for swift ambulance movement.

2.2.5 Terrestrial Restoration Action Society of Seychelles

The Terrestrial Restoration Action Society of Seychelles (TRASS) will extend its assistance in the recovery phase by providing volunteers for reforestation activities. In addition, their nursery, which contains plants suitable for rehabilitation, will be a valuable resource for restoring affected areas post-fire incident.

2.2.6 Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Climate Change

The Ministry of Environment, Agriculture and Climate Change plays a crucial role in enforcing the Lighting of Fires Act and imposing fire bans as necessary. Their involvement is essential for regulating activities that could pose a fire hazard and for implementing fire restrictions when conditions warrant such measures.

3 Forest Fire Management Strategies

The Forest Fire Management Strategies section of the SFFPCP encompasses a comprehensive approach to minimizing the risk of forest fires, ensuring preparedness, facilitating effective responses, and guiding recovery efforts. These strategies collectively create a robust framework that addresses the multifaceted aspects of forest fire management within the national parks.

3.1 Prevention

The prevention strategy focuses on proactive measures aimed at minimizing the occurrence and impact of forest fires. This encompasses regular maintenance of fire breaks, vegetation management, and enforcing restrictions on open fire during the dry season.

The prevention strategy also aims to foster a culture of fire safety and responsible behavior by promoting public awareness and education campaigns to reduce the likelihood of ignition incidents that will threaten the defined geographical boundary.

3.2 Preparedness

Preparedness forms a pivotal strategy in the SFFPCP, ensuring that all stakeholders are equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, and resources to effectively respond to forest fire incidents.

This strategy involves conducting regular training sessions for designated personnel and volunteers that will cover fire suppression techniques, safety protocols, and inter-agency

coordination. It also includes regular servicing of firefighting equipment to ensure optimal functionality during fire incidents, as well as ensuring the compatibility of firefighting equipment and communication devices used by various stakeholders.

Furthermore, the strategy encompasses the establishment of mock exercises designed to simulate emergency scenarios, allowing stakeholders to practice their roles and refine response strategies in a controlled environment, thus enhancing the overall effectiveness of the plan.

The Key Objectives of the mock exercise are:

- **Training:** The exercises will provide practical training to responders, honing their skills and enhancing their familiarity with firefighting equipment and established procedures.
- **Strengthening Coordination:** The effectiveness of inter-agency coordination and communication will be rehearsed, ensuring seamless collaboration among stakeholders.
- **Plan Evaluation:** Gaps and deficiencies within the plan may be identified, allowing for prompt corrective measures and updates.
- **Equipment Compatibility** The compatibility and functionality of equipment will be verified to guarantee their reliability during real emergencies.

3.3 Response

The Response strategy in the SFFPCP underscores the critical role of effective communication, coordination, and rapid deployment of resources. This strategy focuses on ensuring seamless interactions among stakeholders to minimize response time and enhance the overall effectiveness of firefighting efforts.

3.3.1 Communication and Coordination

Key to an effective response is a well-established system of communication and coordination. This strategy emphasizes the necessity of clear and timely communication not only within each stakeholder group but also across all participating agencies. Regular information sharing, constant updates, and accurate situational awareness are crucial

components to efficiently direct resources and make informed decisions during fire incidents.

Effective communication and coordination will be achieved through:

REOC Liaison: The Regional Emergency Operations Center (REOC) serves as the central hub for coordinating communication among all stakeholders during forest fire responses. It ensures that information flows seamlessly and decisions are made collaboratively.

Mock Exercises: Regular mock exercises to practice communication and coordination procedures.

Two-Way Radios: Use compatible two-way radios by responders from various agencies. This will facilitate real-time communication, enabling quick and effective information exchange in the field.

Command and Control: Our response plan defines a clear command and control structure. This structure ensures that roles and responsibilities are well-defined.

SITREP: Situational Reports (SITREPs) are used to provide concise and timely information to decision-makers. They play a crucial role in keeping everyone informed and guiding response efforts effectively.

3.3.2 Equipment Deployment and Location

Rapid deployment of firefighting equipment is paramount in containing and managing forest fire incidents. As such, the plan emphasizes the strategic placement of firefighting equipment at key locations to ensure quick access.

As the first responder, SIF should strategically position their firefighting equipment for rapid initial response before additional support arrives. This approach ensures quick access to essential resources and maximizes the efficiency of the early stages of firefighting operations.

3.3.3 Notification and Rapid Deployment

The effectiveness of the response largely hinges on how quickly responders can be alerted and mobilized to the frontline. This strategy includes the implementation of a prompt notification system that immediately alerts designated personnel and responders in the event of a fire outbreak. By integrating modern communication tools, such as mobile alerts and two-way radios, with a well-defined chain of command, the plan ensures that responders can be rapidly dispatched to the scene.

3.3.4 Real-time Information Flow

Timely access to accurate information is critical for making informed decisions during the course of a forest fire incident. The plan incorporates mechanisms for real-time data collection and sharing, allowing stakeholders and decision makers to have a comprehensive understanding of the evolving situation. This enables informed adjustments to response strategies, resource allocation, and evacuation plans as needed.

3.4 Recovery

While the primary focus of the SFFPCP is on prevention and contingency planning for forest fire incidents, it is essential to acknowledge the critical importance of post-incident recovery. Recovery entails ecological rehabilitation and community support, often involving a complex array of factors and considerations. While this plan does not provide detailed strategies for recovery, it recognizes the necessity of this phase and recommends the establishment of protocols, procedures, and partnerships that will be employed to address recovery efforts.

3.5 Continuous Improvement and Plan Update

The SFFPCP embraces a strategy of continuous improvement and regular updates. This strategy is founded on the principle that learning from each incident, as well as advancements in technology and best practices, should be incorporated into the plan to enhance its effectiveness over time.

Regular post-incident assessments, referred to as "post-mortem," should be conducted following each forest fire incidents. These assessments should comprehensively review the response actions taken, identify strengths and areas for improvement, and gather insights to refine strategies and procedures. The lessons learned from these assessments should be used to inform ongoing training, optimize equipment deployment, and enhance coordination among stakeholders.

The living document approach adopted by the SFFPCP ensures that the plan remains a relevant and practical tool. This approach entails periodic reviews and updates to incorporate new knowledge, insights, and experiences gained from each incident and training exercise. Stakeholders will collaborate to ensure that the plan evolves in alignment with the latest practices and technological advancements.

4 Concept of Operations

The Concept of Operations outlines the hierarchical levels of emergency response and defines the key functional areas that will be activated during a forest fire incident. This section lays the foundation for a structured and coordinated approach to forest fire management, ensuring that appropriate actions are taken based on the severity of the situation.

4.1 Levels of Emergency

The levels of emergency in the SFFPCP are structured to correspond to the magnitude of a forest fire incident and guide the appropriate response actions. These levels are

defined based on specific criteria, ensuring that stakeholders can accurately assess the urgency and allocate resources accordingly.

To facilitate consistent decision-making, the plan incorporates a comprehensive decision tree (see Appendix XXII). This decision tree serves as a reliable tool for assessing critical factors such as ground cover, wind speed and direction, length of the fire front, and vegetation type. In the absence of an experienced Emergency Response Coordinator, this decision tree enables a dependable determination of the emergency level, thus ensuring that prompt and well-informed decision about the level of emergency can be made to optimizing the allocation of resources and response efforts.

4.1.1 Level 1 Emergency

A level 1 emergency involves a small ground fire with flames less than 1 meter high, which can be swiftly extinguished by the first responders. In this scenario, immediate action by the first responders is sufficient to contain the situation. Other supporting agencies are alerted, but their involvement may not be necessary unless the situation escalates.

4.1.2 Level 2 Emergency

A level 2 emergency encompasses a fire with flames exceeding 1 meter in height but still manageable by the first responders. Key stakeholders and supporting agencies are placed on alert, initiating procedures for potential deployment if required. The first responders' efforts are coordinated to contain the fire within their capabilities.

4.1.3 Level 3 Emergency

A level 3 emergency indicates a fire that has surpassed the capabilities of the initial responders. The determination of a level 3 emergency considers various critical factors, including:

- Flammability of ground cover
- Wind speed and direction
- Length of the fire front

- Type of vegetation

These factors are assessed to make an informed determination of a Level 3 emergency. This level of emergency necessitates the coordinated involvement of all key stakeholders and supporting agencies on Praslin to collectively address the escalating fire incident. The REOC will establish a Control and Command Center to effectively manage the response efforts.

4.1.4 Level 4 Emergency

A level 4 emergency denotes a fire that overwhelms the resources available on Praslin and requires assistance from Mahe. Factors indicating a Level 4 emergency may include:

- Rapid expansion of the fire's length
- Threat of the fire jumping the Vallee de Mai fire break
- Emergence of new spot fires

Once a Level 4 emergency is confirmed, the REOC will immediately liaise with the DRDM on Mahe to declare a national emergency. This activation allows for resources and support to be mobilized from Mahe to reinforce the response efforts on Praslin.

4.2 Functional Areas

The functional areas specified within the SFFPCP encompass the key aspects of forest fire management, each led by designated stakeholders. These functional areas correspond to existing operational domains of stakeholders and encompass their core expertise. While the functional areas retain their standard responsibilities, collaboration with other agencies may be required to facilitate effective execution.

4.2.1 Fire Suppression and Response

This functional area primarily involves the immediate response to fire outbreaks within the Vallée de Mai and Fond Ferdinand. SIF takes the lead in the initial stages, providing the first response a Level 1 emergency. SFRSA will assume the led role as the level of emergency escalates beyond Level 2.

It's important to note that while SIF takes the lead initially, SFRSA's role becomes more prominent from Level 3 emergencies onward, as they provide specialized fire-fighting capabilities and coordination expertise. SIF's involvement remains essential for providing valuable insights and assistance to ensure the best possible approach to fire suppression and containment.

4.2.2 Emergency Communications

Managed by the Regional Emergency Operation Center (REOC), this functional area focuses on maintaining clear and efficient communication among stakeholders during forest fire incidents. It involves disseminating critical information, coordinating response efforts, and ensuring seamless inter-agency communication.

4.2.3 Logistics, Resource Deployment, and Administrative Support

This functional area involves the running essential errands, ensuring that responders and equipment are promptly mobilized and provision of administrative support to maintaining accurate records of decisions, expenditures, and other relevant information.

While the REOC holds overall coordination responsibility, the SIF assumes a central role within this functional area.

4.2.4 Medical Support and First Aid

This functional area focuses on providing essential medical support and first aid to responders during forest fire incidents. The roles and responsibilities within this area vary based on the level of emergency.

During Level 1 and 2 emergencies, where the fire is relatively small and manageable, Seychelles Islands Foundation (SIF) staff will provide immediate first aid assistance to responders on-site.

As the level of emergency escalates beyond Level 2, the Seychelles Red Cross will assume a key role in providing crucial first aid support to responders. In cases where

injuries or medical attention are required beyond basic first aid, the hospital will play a critical role in offering further medical support.

4.2.5 Public Safety and Evacuation

Led by the Police, this functional area ensures public safety by managing traffic control, crowd management, and evacuation procedures if necessary. It encompasses securing the affected areas, ensuring safe evacuation routes, and maintaining order during fire incidents.

4.2.6 Aerial Support and Surveillance

This functional area encompasses crucial aerial support and surveillance activities to enhance forest fire response efforts. Aerial support involves both helicopter assistance and drone surveillance.

ZilAir will provide aerial support using helicopters equipped with water bombing capabilities to assist in fire suppression efforts in response to a level 4 emergency. In the event that a ground crew may be required to support the water bombing operations, SFRSA will take the lead in coordinating the ground crew's activities, ensuring seamless collaboration between aerial and ground-based firefighting efforts.

Seychelles Parks and Gardens Authority will offer drone surveillance assistance to pinpoint the exact location and extent of fires. This will enable real-time assessment of fire extents and assists in identifying the optimal routes for accessing the fire front and escape routes if rapid evacuation becomes necessary.

4.2.7 Public Awareness

This functional area includes updating roadside fire danger rating signs, liaising with neighboring landowners to mitigate fire risks, and conducting targeted awareness campaigns through news media outlets. Public awareness initiatives play a crucial role in enhancing fire prevention efforts.

SIF and TRASS will take responsibility for updating fire danger rating signs adjacent to the Vallée de Mai and Praslin National Parks respectively. These signs provide essential information to visitors and local communities about the current fire risk level.

The District Administration takes the lead in initiating interactions with neighboring landowners of the national parks. SIF and SPGA will be involved in liaising with landowners bordering the park that they manage. The primary objective of these engagements is to provide guidance and recommendations to landowners, ensuring that effective measures are in place to significantly reduce the risk of fires spreading from their properties and encroaching upon the national parks.

SFRSA will take the lead for public awareness campaigns through various media outlets. These campaigns will disseminate vital information, promote fire safety measures, and highlight the significance of preventing forest fires. Effective communication and education are pivotal in encouraging responsible behavior and minimizing fire risks.

4.2.8 Enforcement of Restrictions on Lighting of Fire

The *Lighting of Fires (Restriction) Act, 2019*, forbids the lighting of open fires without a valid permit. This legislative framework serves as a cornerstone in mitigating the risk of fire outbreaks and their potential ramifications.

This Act makes provisions for the imposition of fire bans during the dry season. All existing permits are temporarily suspended during the fire ban, to curb fire-related hazards. The authority to declare such fire bans rests with the Minister responsible for the environment.

The officers from the Forestry section of the Ministry of Environment are endowed with the authority to monitor compliance with the Act's provisions and issue fixed penalties to individuals found lighting fires without a valid permit.

5 Implementation of the Plan

This section provides comprehensive insight into the practical application of the SIF Forest Fire Prevention and Contingency Plan (SFFPCP). The strategies outlined earlier

will come to life through a detailed breakdown of how each aspect is implemented on the ground.

An integral part of this implementation approach involves the use of forms and checklists, carefully curated within the plan's appendix. These forms and checklists, designed for different stages of prevention, preparedness, and response, serve as practical tools for effective execution. Their utilization not only ensures adherence to the plan but also enhances its adaptability and relevance in real-world scenarios.

This approach ensures that managers and supervisors have an easy-to-follow system for the implementation of the plan.

In addition to the implementation details, this section also introduces the updating schedule for the SFFPCP and its associated appendix. Regular updates are crucial to maintaining the plan's effectiveness, especially in the face of evolving challenges and advancements.

The updating schedule outlines the intervals and requirements for reviewing and revising the plan, ensuring that it remains a dynamic and responsive resource for forest fire management. This proactive approach guarantees that the plan remains a reliable operational tool and continues to reflect the latest strategies, technologies, and stakeholder collaborations

5.1 Updating the Plan and Appendix

The plan and its accompanying appendix are not static documents; rather, they evolve in response to lessons learned, changes in technology, and advancements in forest fire management. To ensure continuous improvement and alignment with the most current strategies, the updating process has been meticulously defined.

5.1.1 Plan Review and Update

The SFFPCP will undergo a comprehensive review every three years or following a fire incident rated as a level 4 emergency, whichever comes first.

The SIF will assume responsibility for conducting the plan review. This review process involves a thorough assessment of the plan's content, including strategies, responsibilities, and coordination procedures.

In addition to SIF's review, the Regional Emergency Operation Center (REOC) will serve as an auditing entity to ensure that the review is carried out as scheduled. This role aligns with the REOC's overarching function of coordinating emergency responses and fostering effective inter-agency collaboration.

Following the completion of the plan review, SIF will generate a comprehensive report detailing the outcomes of the assessment, proposed updates, and any adjustments made. This report will be submitted to the REOC for verification and record-keeping.

5.1.2 Appendix Maintenance

The accompanying appendix plays a pivotal role in the successful execution of the SFFPCP and maintaining its “living document” status. This section outlines the dual aspects of maintaining the appendix, including structural and content-related updates.

5.1.2.1 Structural Updates

The structural integrity of the forms, checklists, and reference materials within the appendix is critical to ensuring their effectiveness during forest fire management operations. The structural updates pertain to the layout, organization, and design of the materials, enabling them to be user-friendly and functional.

5.1.2.1.a Scheduled Structural Updates:

To harmonize with the plan's overall updating schedule, structural reviews will coincide with the plan's comprehensive review, taking place every three years or following a level 4 emergency. During these regular updates, the forms and checklists will be assessed for coherence, accuracy, and alignment with the latest strategies and technologies in forest fire management.

5.1.2.2 Operational Manager-Requested Updates

In recognition of the dynamic nature of forest fire management and the potential for operational managers to identify the need for specific structural updates, a provision for such updates is established.

Operational managers may submit a formal structural update request to the CEO. This request should include a detailed recommendation for the required update, along with a justification for its necessity. The CEO will assess the request in accordance with the authority defined in section 1.4 and the plan's objectives. If the request aligns with the plan's strategic goals and enhances operational efficiency, the CEO will initiate the necessary update process.

The inclusion of an operational manager-requested structural updates process ensures that the appendix remains agile and responsive to the evolving needs of forest fire management while adhering to the defined plan governance and decision-making mechanisms.

5.1.2.3 Content-Related Updates

Continuous maintenance of the appendix involves not only structural adjustments but also regular updates of the content within the forms, checklists, and reference materials.

These content-related updates involve information that is subject to change due to various factors, including staff turnover, equipment replacement, stock inventory management, introduction of new equipment, shifts in employee responsibilities, and upskilling of responders. This approach to content-related updates ensures that the appendix serves as a dynamic resource, providing current and accurate information during every phase of forest fire management.

SIF will be responsible for all content-related updates. The table below outlines the content-related updates required for specific forms and checklists within the appendix:

Figure 1: Appendix Update Schedule

Appendix	Update Frequency	Information Source(s)
Document Update Register	Following any update	SIF
Register of Trained Responders	Following each training and capacity building exercise	SIF, SFRSA, SPGA
Contractor Register	Each April or whenever new information about a contractor becomes available	SIF, Contractors
Contacts	Each April or whenever there is a change in the contact details of responding agencies and personals	All stakeholders and responding agencies

5.2 Version Control and Document Modularity

Ensuring the accuracy and relevance of the SFFPCP and its associated appendices is paramount to its effectiveness as a living document. To meet this objective, a dynamic version control system is employed, harmonizing updates and revisions while accommodating the diverse operational needs of stakeholders. This section outlines the versioning approach for both the main plan and the individual appendices, coupled with the practical implementation of document modularity.

5.2.1 Versioning Approach

The SFFPCP employs a versioning system to manage updates and changes to both the main plan and its individual appendices. This system uses a three-number format, which offers clarity and ease of reference.

The versioning system functions as follows:

- The first number signifies major updates conducted during the scheduled three-year review of the plan. These updates may involve significant modifications to strategies, methodologies, or high-level structures.
- The second number represents changes made between the scheduled reviews. It is incremented by one for each update occurring within the same year and then resets to zero at the beginning of each new year. These updates may reflect operational adjustments, minor enhancements, or content-related updates.
- The third number corresponds to the year of the update. It ensures clear differentiation between updates conducted in different years.

Scenarios

- The original version of the plan and all the appendix made in year 2023 will be labelled as version 1.0.2023.
- If the plan or an appendix is amended after a scheduled review in 2026 it will be labelled as version 2.0.2026.
- If the plan or an appendix is not amended after a scheduled review in 2026 it will be designated as version 1.0.2026. This indicates that the plan or appendix was reviewed but not changed.

- An appendix that has been subjected to an operational manager requested update in 2025 will be labelled as version 1.1.2025.
- If the main plan is reviewed following a level 4 emergency in 2025 and an amendment is made to specific section based on lessons learned, the updated plan will be labelled as version 1.1.2025
- If the plan that was review is 2026 and labelled version 2.0.2026 is reviewed following a level 4 emergency in 2027 and an amendment is made to specific section based on lessons learned, the updated plan will be labelled as version 2.1.2026
- A content-related update in 2024 to the original contact list will be labelled as version number 1.0.2024.
- If the contact list undergoes a further content-related update in 2024 it will be labelled as version number 1.1.2024.
- A content-related update in 2025 of contact list version 1.1.2024 will be labelled as version number 1.0.2025.

All updates will be recorded in the “Document Update Register” provided at appendix I. This versioning approach enhances the plan's traceability, providing stakeholders with a clear understanding of the plan's evolution and relevance. Moreover, the document's modularity that is outline in the subsequent subsection allows the main plan and its appendices to exist as separate digital files, each with its own individual versioning number.

5.2.2 Document Modularity

A modular document approach is adopted to offers flexibility for stakeholders to keep only the relevant parts of the plan and replace updated sections without reprinting the entire document.

This approach involves the creation of separate digital files for both the main plan and each individual appendix. Each of these digital documents will be assigned its own distinct versioning number, following the system defined in subsection 5.2.1 Versioning Approach.

Furthermore, to enhance the plan's usability and practicality, physical copies of the plan and its appendices should be maintained in ring binders. This arrangement facilitates the easy replacement of updated sections, ensuring that individual stakeholders do not need to reprint the entire document in the event of updates. This approach also enables specific members within an organization to retain only the relevant appendices directly related to their roles, fostering increased user-friendliness and efficient access to critical information.

5.2.3 Version Control Responsibility

SIF shall designate responsible personnel for overseeing the version control process outlined in this section. These designated individuals will be responsible for ensuring the accurate implementation of versioning, coordinating updates, updating the Document Update Register and maintaining the integrity of the version control system.

5.3 Auditing of the Plan

The auditing of this Forest Fire Prevention and Contingency Plan will serve as a critical process for ensuring its effectiveness, compliance, and relevance in managing forest fire incidents on Seychelles Islands Foundation (SIF) managed sites.

5.3.1 Frequency

To maintain the plan's integrity and efficiency, the plan will be subjected to regular audits. The auditing schedule will be as outlined in the following subsections.

5.3.1.1 Annual Audits

Internal audits conducted by SIF management or designated personnel. These annual audits will provide routine checks on the plan's implementation and adherence to established procedures.

5.3.1.2 Triennial Audits

External audits performed by independent, third-party auditors. These comprehensive audits will occur at least once every three years to provide an objective assessment of the plan's effectiveness and level of implementation.

5.3.2 Auditing Process

The auditing process will encompass the following key steps:

5.3.2.1 Audit Preparation

Prior to the audit, SIF management or designated personnel will:

- Select audit team members.
- Define the scope and objectives of the audit.
- Develop an audit plan outlining the audit process and schedule.
- Notify relevant stakeholders about the impending audit.

5.3.2.2 On-Site Audit

During the audit, the audit team will:

- Review the plan's content for completeness, accuracy, and relevance.
- Evaluate the plan's implementation against documented procedures.
- Assess the effectiveness of the plan in addressing forest fire incidents.
- Examine documentation related to past incidents, including response records and post-incident reviews.
- Interview key personnel involved in plan execution.
- Identify areas for improvement or non-compliance.

5.3.3 Audit Report

Following the audit, a comprehensive audit report will be generated. The report will include:

- Audit findings, including any deviations from the plan.
- Recommendations for improvements or corrective actions.
- Observations on the plan's effectiveness and compliance.
- Suggestions for enhancing plan implementation.

5.3.4 Corrective Actions

Upon receiving the audit report, the CEO will:

- Develop and implement corrective actions to address identified deficiencies.
- Establish a timeline for implementing corrective actions.
- Monitor and report on the progress of corrective actions.

5.3.5 Plan Enhancement

Based on audit findings and recommendations, the plan may be updated and enhanced as necessary to ensure its continued effectiveness and relevance.

5.4 Prevention

The prevention phase focuses on measures to minimize the risk of forest fires in Vallée de Mai, Fond Peper and Fond Ferdinand. The prevention strategies detailed in this section collectively contribute to minimizing fire risks and fortifying the sites' resilience against potential fire incidents. Key strategies include maintaining firebreaks, enforcing fire lighting restrictions, and fostering public awareness.

Throughout the dry seasons (April to October), the implementation of preventive actions will be monitored monthly using the Preventive Action Checklist outlined in Appendix II. The finding will be submitted to the CEO to ensure accountability and transparency.

5.4.1 Firebreak Maintenance

- SIF teams will conduct monthly inspection of the Vallée de Mai and Fond Ferdinand firebreaks during the dry season to assess their condition.

- SPGA teams will conduct monthly inspection of the Praslin National Park firebreak during the dry season to assess their condition.
- The firebreaks should be kept clear of vegetation. Note: Some sections of the Vallée de Mai firebreaks contain protected species that will not be removed. However, whenever feasible, it is advised to trim these plants to reduce the risk of them serving as conduits for fire across the firebreak.
- SIF will liaise with SPGA for updates on the status of the Praslin National Park firebreak.
- Records of firebreak inspection and maintenance activities will be documented and filed in the forms provided in the appendix for reference.

Appendix References

Appendix III - Firebreak Inspection Form

Appendix IV - Firebreak Maintenance Log

5.4.2 Updating Fire Danger Rating Sign

The Fire Danger Rating Signs play a crucial role in educating and alerting the public about the prevailing risk of forest fires. Ensuring these signs are accurate and up-to-date requires a systematic approach to regular checks and updates, especially during critical periods.

To maintain the effectiveness of Fire Danger Rating Signs, the following routine checks and updates will be carried out:

- SIF will be responsible for updating the Fire Danger Rating Sign located next to Vallée de Mai.
- TRASS will be responsible for updating the Fire Danger Rating Sign located next to Fond B'Offay.
- Throughout the dry season (April to October), a weekly assessment of the Fire Danger Rating will be conducted.
- During the wet season, a monthly assessment of the Fire Danger Rating Signs will be conducted.

- Officers will physically visit each sign to verify its condition and update the displayed fire danger level if necessary.
- Any discrepancies, damages, or missing information will be noted in the inspection report.
- The findings of the checks will be documented in the Fire Danger Rating Sign Maintenance Log.
- Any physical damage to the sign must be reported to the CEO

Appendix References

Appendix V - Fire Danger Rating Sign Maintenance Log

5.4.3 Public Awareness and Education

Raising public awareness about fire prevention is pivotal. SIF collaborates with local communities, news outlets, and relevant agencies to educate the public about fire risks and safety measures. This includes updating roadside fire danger rating signs, liaising with landowners bordering the parks, and engaging in awareness campaigns through various media channels.

5.4.4 Enforcement of Fire Restrictions

The "LIGHTING OF FIRES (RESTRICTION) ACT, 2019" mandates strict regulations on open fires. SIF will liaise with law enforcement agencies, ensures compliance with these regulations. Officers from the Forestry section of the Ministry of Environment enforce the Act, issuing penalties for unauthorized fires and imposing fire bans during dry periods.

SIF will record enforcement activities in Appendix II - Preventive Action Checklist

5.4.5 Community Engagement

To foster community engagement, the District Administrator, along with support from SIF or SPGA, will conduct visits to landowners of properties adjoining the national parks. The purpose of these visits is to enhance awareness and secure their collaboration in preventing the spread of fire from their properties to the national parks.

The engagement activities will be initiated at the commencement of the dry season in April and will be documented in the Property Visit Form.

The implementation of these community engagement activities will be monitored Through the Property Visit Checklist

Appendix References

Appendix VI - Property Visit Form

Appendix VII - Property Visit Checklist

5.5 Preparedness

5.5.1 Training and Capacity Building

Equipping responders and staff with the necessary skills is imperative. Training programs and capacity-building initiatives will be conducted to enhance the capabilities of SIF and the other stakeholders involved in responding to forest fire.

5.5.1.1 SIF Personnel Training and Register

SIF will ensure that its personnel are adequately trained to fulfill their assigned responsibilities within the plan.

The specific skills, training requirements and responsibilities will be incorporated into the respective position descriptions.

5.5.1.2 Volunteer Firefighters

Volunteer firefighters will be trained by SFRSA to ensure their readiness and effectiveness.

5.5.1.3 Mock Exercise

A mock exercise will be orchestrated at the start of each dry season (April), This exercise serves as a platform for training responders, assessing the efficiency of inter-agency

coordination, identifying plan gaps and shortcomings, evaluating equipment compatibility, and fostering continuous improvement.

- SIF will take the lead in organising the mock exercise.
- Collaborative support is provided by SFRSA, REOC, and DRMD
- A thorough post-mortem analysis is conducted on the mock exercises.
- Findings and observations will be compiled into a comprehensive report and submitted to the CEO and the REOC.

5.5.1.4 Monthly Scenario Analysis Workshops

SIF will organize monthly Scenario Analysis Workshops during the wet season. The primary purpose of these workshops is to engage SIF staff and stakeholders in in-depth discussions about response strategies for potential fire outbreaks in and around the Fond Ferdinand and Vallée de Mai National Parks. These scenarios will cover a range of variables, including different locations, times of day, and weather conditions.

5.5.1.4.a Objectives

The objectives of the Monthly Scenario Analysis Workshops are as follows:

Enhanced Decision-Making	By simulating fire outbreaks under various specific conditions, SIF aims to improve decision-making processes during actual incidents. These workshops will provide a platform for stakeholders to explore different response strategies, assess their feasibility, and refine them as necessary.
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Interagency Coordination	The workshops facilitate collaboration and coordination among SIF staff, stakeholders, and responding agencies. By working together to analyze scenarios, participants will become more familiar with each other's roles and responsibilities, leading to better interagency cooperation during real emergencies.
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Resource Allocation

Through scenario analysis, SIF can evaluate the adequacy of its resource allocation plans. By identifying potential resource gaps or excesses, SIF can optimize its response strategy, ensuring resources are deployed efficiently and effectively.

5.5.1.4.b Frequency

Monthly workshops will be held during the wet season when the risk of forest fires is lower.

5.5.1.4.c Scenario Diversity

Each workshop will explore different fire outbreak scenarios, varying in location, time of day, and weather conditions. Scenarios will be developed in consultation with stakeholders and will include a range of realistic challenges.

5.5.1.4.d Participants

Participants will include SIF staff, representatives from key stakeholders, and other responding agencies. The involvement of diverse perspectives will enrich the discussions and foster a more comprehensive understanding of response strategies.

5.5.1.4.e Facilitation

SIF will designate a facilitator for each workshop to guide discussions, present scenarios, and ensure active participation. The facilitator will encourage critical thinking and foster a spirit of collaboration among participants.

5.5.1.4.f Outcomes

The expected outcomes of these Monthly Scenario Analysis Workshops are:

Improved Response Plans

Enhanced understanding of response strategies for different scenarios will result in more robust and adaptable response plans.

Strengthened Collaboration	Better coordination and communication among stakeholders will lead to more effective interagency collaboration during actual incidents.
Resource Optimization	Identifying resource requirements and allocation gaps will lead to more efficient resource management.
Enhanced Decision-Making	By simulating various situations, workshop participants will develop improved decision-making skills, enabling them to respond more effectively in high-stress situations.

5.5.1.4.g Documentation

Each Monthly Scenario Analysis Workshop will be documented, and the findings and recommendations will be compiled into a comprehensive report. These reports will be included in the appendix and will be reviewed and used to inform updates to the forest fire response plan, ensuring its continuous improvement.

Appendix References

Appendix XXI - Scenario Analysis Workshop Reports

5.5.2 Review and Update of Trained Responders Register

SIF will review and updated the trained responder register as necessary, at the start of each dry season following the mock exercise.

Appendix References

Appendix VIII – Register of Trained Responders

5.5.3 Regular Equipment Inspection and Maintenance

Ensuring the operational readiness of firefighting and communication equipment is of paramount importance to effective forest fire management. Stakeholders are required to

conduct routine inspections and maintenance of their equipment, ensuring that firefighting tools and gear remain in optimal condition.

An equipment servicing checklist will be updated at the beginning of each dry season. This checklist will verify that maintenance activities has been carryout as scheduled.

Periodic inventory of equipment will also be conducted to enhances equipment tracking, identifies missing items, and assists in maintaining an up-to-date record of available resources.

5.5.3.1 Firefighting and Communication Equipment Servicing

- SFRSA will adhere to their established equipment maintenance procedures, maintaining their firefighting tools and gear according to their specific protocols.
- SFRSA will collaborate with SIF and SPGA to develop a comprehensive equipment maintenance schedule.
- SIF and SPGA will prioritize a thorough servicing of their equipment during the wet season. This will be in addition to any routine servicing schedule established through the collaboration with SFRSA
- DRMD will ensure that national radio communication network are being maintained and serviced as required

5.5.3.2 Tagging and Documentation

- SIF will introduce a tagging system to clearly identify equipment that requires servicing. Tags will indicate the last servicing date and the next scheduled service date. This method enhances visibility and accountability for equipment maintenance.
- An additional red (Out-of-Order Tags) tag will be introduced to indicate when equipment is out of order. In the event an equipment is found to be faulty, any user can securely attach a red tag. However, only designated authorized staff can remove such a tag after resolving the issue.

5.5.3.3 Inventory Management:

- SIF will conduct a comprehensive inventory of their equipment at the start of each dry season and following a response to an emergency level 2 or above.
- SIF will liaise with other stakeholders for update on the status of their inventory at the start of each dry season and following a response to an emergency level 2 or above.

Appendix References

Appendix IX – Equipment Maintenance Log

Appendix X – Equipment Maintenance Checklist

5.5.4 Fire Trail Maintenance

Fire trails play a crucial role in maintaining effective firebreaks and aiding emergency response efforts. Regular inspection and maintenance of fire trails are essential to ensure their accessibility and functionality during potential fire incidents.

- SIF teams will perform monthly inspections of the fire trails within Vallée de Mai and Fond Ferdinand throughout the dry season.
- SPGA teams will conduct monthly inspections of the Fond B'Offay fire trails throughout the dry season.
- The fire trails should be kept clear of vegetation and trip hazards. The creation of steps in steep and slippery sections of the fire trails is strongly recommended.
- SIF will liaise with SPGA for regular updates on the status of the Praslin National Park firebreak.
- All fire trail inspection and maintenance activities should be documented.
- SIF will record all fire trail inspection and maintenance activities in its jurisdictions, using the form and log sheet provided in the appendix.

Appendix References

Appendix XI – Fire Trail Inspection Form

Appendix XII – Fire Trail Maintenance Checklist

5.5.5 Maintenance of First Aid Kits and PPE

Ensuring the availability and functionality of first aid kits is essential to promptly address any medical needs that may arise during fire response and prevention activities. Collaborative efforts and routine maintenance procedures are established to guarantee the effectiveness of the first aid kits.

- SIF will collaborate with local hospitals or the Red Cross to determine the recommended contents of the first aid kits. This partnership ensures that the kits are equipped with essential medical supplies and equipment relevant to fire-related incidents.
- With guidance from healthcare professionals, SIF will establish a servicing schedule for the first aid kits.
- Regular checks and updates of the contents will be conducted to ensure that the kits remain well-stocked and up-to-date.
- Medication Replacement System: A systematic approach will be devised to promptly replace used medications in the first aid kits. This process minimizes delays and ensures that the kits are fully equipped at all times to address medical emergencies.
- Comprehensive records of first aid kit maintenance activities will be maintained. This includes documentation of contents, servicing dates, medication replacements, expiry dates and any relevant notes or observations.
- Key personnel responsible for first aid kit maintenance will receive proper training in handling medical supplies and equipment. Awareness will also be raised among stakeholders about the locations of first aid kits and their availability in case of emergencies.

Appendix References

Appendix XIII – First Kit Content Management Sheet

Appendix XIV – First Aid Kit Maintenance Log

5.5.6 Strategic Location of Response Equipment

Strategic positioning of firefighting equipment is essential for swift and effective response to fire incidents. This section addresses the strategic distribution of basic firefighting equipment under the custodianship of SIF, to optimize first response efforts within Vallée de Mai and Fond Ferdinand.

- SIF's primary equipment storehouse at Fond B'Offay remains the central hub for firefighting equipment storage.
- To expedite initial response times, it is recommended that a selection of basic firefighting equipment be stationed at Vallée de Mai and Fond Ferdinand.

5.5.7 Pre-Identification of Service Providers for Plan Implementation

Pre-identifying service providers equipped to provide essential services during forest fire incidents is a proactive measure that enhances the preparedness and response capabilities of the forest fire management plan. This section outlines the process of establishing a contractor register and engaging with potential service providers to ensure swift response and effective collaboration.

- SIF will create and maintain a comprehensive register of service providers capable of providing crucial services during forest fire outbreaks. This register will include the names of service providers, their contact information, and a detailed list of the equipment and services they offer for hire.
- SIF will collaborate with the service providers, at the start of each dry season, to assess their readiness and ability to deliver the required services on short notice.
- SIF will establish a working relationship and familiarizing service providers with the forest fire management plan's objectives enhances future collaboration and reduces response time. This can be achieved by involving service providers in the mock exercises where practical and applicable.

Appendix References

Appendix XV – Contractor Register

5.5.8 Updating Contact Details

The contact list is a critical resource for effective response coordination, is readily available in the Appendix. This section outlines the process for implementing and maintaining the contact list to ensure seamless communication during forest fire incidents.

- SIF will diligently compile and update the contact information of all staff members directly involved in forest fire response efforts. This includes personnel assigned to firefighting, equipment operation, and communication roles.
- SIF will also compile and maintain a contact list of designated contact person(s) for each stakeholder involved in the forest fire management plan.
- Every stakeholder is responsible for maintaining their respective contact details to ensure accuracy and timeliness of communication.

Appendix References

5.5.9 Visitor Management System

In anticipation of efficiently managing visitor safety during emergencies, SIF needs to implemented a robust Visitor Management System. The primary objective of this system is to enable swift and accurate determination of visitor information, including names and counts, within the park premises in case of an incident. The system ensures that every visitor is accounted for and evacuated during emergencies, minimizing risks and enhancing overall response effectiveness.

Implementation of the visitor management system will be monitored through the preparedness checklist.

5.6 Response

In the event of a forest fire outbreak, an efficient and coordinated response is paramount to mitigate the potential impact of the fire. This section outlines the procedures, roles, and responsibilities that guide the actions of all stakeholders involved in managing forest fire incidents. This section is designed to ensure a rapid and effective response, from the immediate activation of personnel to the comprehensive coordination of resources. The response actions outlined here are structured to cater to varying levels of emergency.

5.6.1 Control and Command

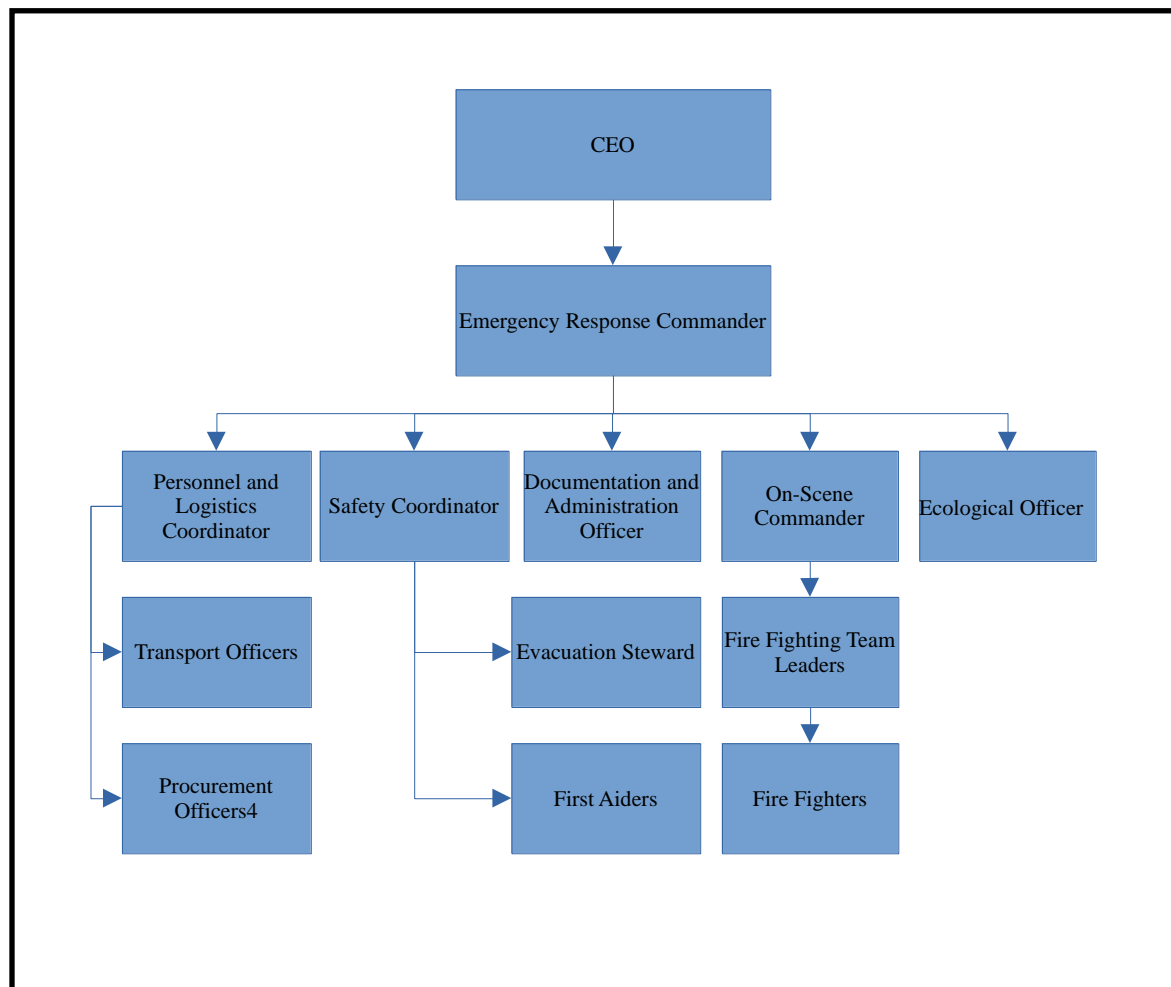
Control and command mechanisms are critical for coordinating the response efforts effectively. This section describes the command-and-control setup for all level of emergency.

5.6.1.1 Emergency Level 1 and 2

SIF will respond to fires rated up to emergency level 2. Their command-and-control setup can be defined as follows.

- The "**Emergency Response Commander**" takes the ultimate responsibility in case of a fire and decides which other roles are to be activated, and coordinates with other organizations for resources.
- The "**On-Scene Commander**" coordinates on-scene activities to suppress and extinguish the fire and provides situation reports.
- The "**Personnel and Logistics Coordinator**" manages equipment, manpower.
- The "**Safety Coordinator**" oversees visitor evacuation, safety, and medical assistance.
- The "**Documentation and Administration Officer**" is responsible for maintaining accurate records of decisions, expenses, and other administrative tasks.
- The "**Ecological Officer**" provides meteorological information and scientific insight for response decisions.

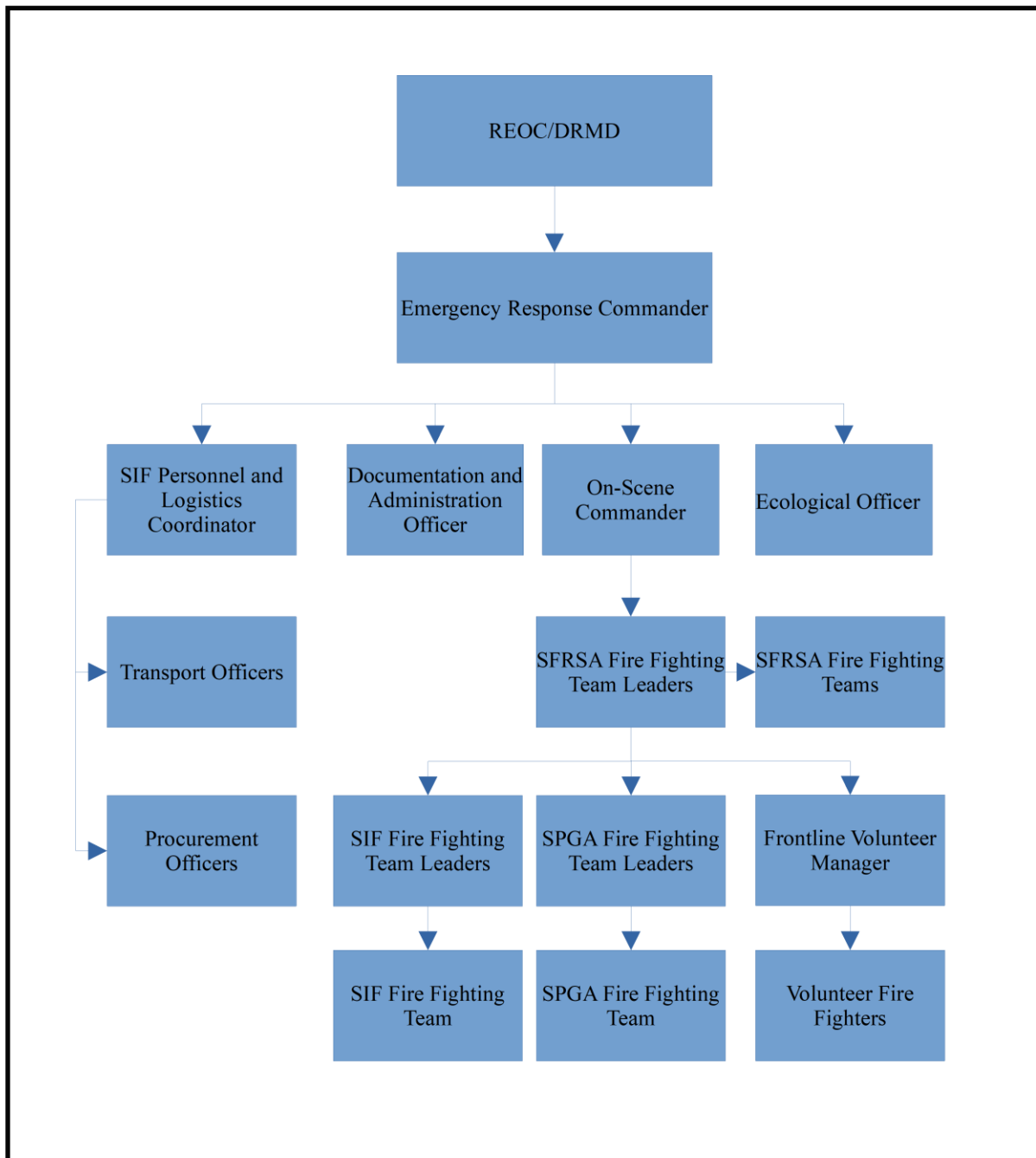
Figure 2: - Command and Control Structure for Emergency Level 1 & 2



5.6.1.2 Emergency Level 3 and 4

As the severity of the incident escalates to level three and beyond, a well-established command and control structure will come into play to oversee the coordinated response efforts.

Figure 3:- Command and Control Structure for Emergency Level 1 & 2



- The "**Regional Emergency Response Center**" becomes the central hub for managing and coordinating the response to emergency level 3 and 4. Various key personnel are designated within the center, each responsible for specific roles and functions during the response.
- The most senior SFRSA officer on the scene will assume the role of "**On-Scene Commander**", taking charge of the overall response efforts at the incident site.
- It is essential to ensure that all stakeholders at the scene operate seamlessly under the command of the "On-Scene Commander." Each response group or unit should have a designated leader responsible for their respective teams. The "On-Scene Commander" will liaise with these group leaders to coordinate and manage the response efforts effectively.

Appendix References

Appendix XVII – Command and Control Setup

5.6.2 Notification, Initial Alert, and Emergency Level Determination

In the event of a fire outbreak, prompt notification and initial alerts are vital to initiate a swift and coordinated response. This activity group encompasses the steps taken to inform relevant authorities, initiate the response mechanism, and determine the level of emergency.

5.6.2.1 Notification and Initial Alert

- The public is encouraged to report fire incidents to SFRSA.
- If notified, the police will immediately relay fire incidents to SFRSA.
- SFRSA will contact the designated SIF phone number to initiate first response.
- Upon receiving the alert, SIF will deploy personnel to assess the situation.
- After assessing the emergency level, SIF will promptly inform SFRSA and all the key stakeholders on Praslin about the situation and the designated level of emergency.

5.6.3 Deployment of Personnel and Equipment

Upon receiving notification of a forest fire incident, SIF will immediately initiate its response procedure.

5.6.3.1 Emergency Level 1 and 3

- The first step involves utilizing the contact list to alert the designated first responders.
- The On Scene Commander or another designated officer will head to the incident site without delay to evaluate the severity of the situation and determining the appropriate emergency level and response required.
- SIF Logistic Coordinator will take charge of transportation to collect the designated first responders from their respective locations.
- Simultaneously, the initial group of first responders arriving at the SIF Office will initiate the process of removing firefighting equipment from the storage facility, ensuring that the equipment is readily accessible, and ready for swift deployment.
- Firefighters and equipment will be quickly dispatched to the incident site, following the directions provided by the On-Scene Commander.

5.6.3.2 Emergency Level 3 and 4

In the case of more severe incidents at level 3 and 4, a more intricate deployment process will be implemented:

- SFRSA will implement its established deployment procedure, with the Chief Fire Officer overseeing the coordination and dispatch of additional firefighting resources.
- All responding agencies, including SIF and SPGA, will coordinate their deployment efforts through the Regional Emergency Operations Center (REOC). This central coordination ensures a synchronized and efficient response from all stakeholders.
- It is imperative that all volunteers participating in the response efforts report to the REOC before proceeding to the incident site. This step facilitates proper briefing, coordination, and accountability, ensuring that all responders are well-informed about the situation and response strategy.

Appendix References

Appendix XVIII – Deployment Checklist

5.6.4 Visitor Evacuation

In the event that the severity of the incident warrants visitor evacuation, the following actions will take place

- Upon evaluating the incident's severity, the Emergency Response Coordinator will instruct the Safety Coordinator to initiate the evacuation procedure, if deemed necessary to safeguard visitors' well-being.
- The Safety Coordinator will promptly instruct the Security Officer to implement strict access control measures, ensuring that no additional visitors are permitted to enter the park until further notice.
- The Safety Coordinator will access the visitor management system to confirm the number of visitors still within the park at the time of evacuation initiation.
- As visitors exit the park, it is mandatory that their details are recorded. This record will be crucial for accounting purposes and confirming the safety of all visitors.
- The Evacuation Stewards will be deployed into the park, focusing on designated authorized visitor trails. Their task is to locate and guide visitors towards safe assembly points.
- Evacuation Stewards will meticulously search for any visitors who might still be within the park. Their search will be confined to predetermined visitor trails.
- Should the evacuation stewards' search reveal any unaccounted visitors, SIF will promptly initiate contact with SFRSA to trigger the search and rescue process.

Appendix References

Appendix XIX – Visitor Evacuation Checklist

5.6.5 Transition of Command and Control

In the event of a forest fire incident escalating to emergency level 3 and beyond, the responsibility for command-and-control shifts from SIF to the Regional Emergency Operations Center (REOC). This transition is a critical step in ensuring a coordinated and effective response to more severe incidents. The following procedures outline the process for this transfer of responsibility:

5.6.5.1 Notification of Escalation

When an incident is assessed and determined to be at or above emergency level 3, SIF Emergency Response Commander will promptly notify the REOC of the escalation.

5.6.5.2 Activation of REOC

Upon receiving notification of the escalation, the REOC will activate its command and control structure. The activation process will follow the established REOC activation process.

5.6.5.3 Location of Command and Control

Initially, the REOC's main command and control center will be based at the SFRSA premises. However, depending on the level of the incident and other prevailing circumstances, the REOC may set up an on-scene command closer to the incident site.

5.6.5.4 Handover Meeting

SIF's On-Scene Commander, in coordination with the REOC's designated Incident Commander, will conduct a handover meeting to facilitate a smooth transition of command and control. This meeting should occur as soon as possible after the escalation is confirmed.

5.6.5.5 Transfer of Responsibilities

During the handover meeting, the following responsibilities will be formally transferred from SIF to the REOC:

- Overall command and coordination of the incident.
- Decision-making authority regarding resource allocation, strategies, and response efforts.
- Liaison with other responding agencies and stakeholders.
- Communication with the public, media, and stakeholders.
- Documentation and administrative tasks related to the incident.
- Any other responsibilities associated with incident management.

5.6.5.6 Information Transfer

SIF will provide the REOC with all available information, including incident status, resource deployment, ongoing actions, and any other relevant data.

5.6.5.7 Joint Operations

Following the transition of responsibility, SIF personnel will continue to work alongside the REOC's incident management team to provide support and share their knowledge of the incident's status and dynamics.

SIF and the REOC will maintain close collaboration and clear communication throughout the incident to ensure a seamless response effort.

Appendix References

Appendix XXI – Transition of Command-and-Control Checklist

5.6.6 Volunteer Management

Volunteers play a crucial role in firefighting efforts. Proper volunteer management ensures their safety, effective collaboration with core responders, and efficient task allocation. The following guidelines outline the procedures for managing volunteers during a forest fire incident. By adhering to these procedures, the volunteer management process ensures the safety of volunteers, effective task allocation, and accurate record-keeping, contributing to the overall success of firefighting operations.

5.6.6.1 Volunteer Registration

- Any individual intending to volunteer for firefighting efforts must register at the Regional Emergency Operations Center (REOC).
- Volunteers' information will be collected, including their names and contact details, to maintain accurate records.

5.6.6.2 Deployment of Volunteers

- The REOC, in coordination with the On-Scene Commander and Logistic Coordinator, will oversee the deployment of volunteers based on their skills and abilities.
- Volunteers will be assigned tasks that align with their capabilities to maximize their effectiveness on-site.

5.6.6.3 Appointment of Frontline Volunteer Manager

- The Regional Emergency Operations Center (REOC) will appoint a dedicated "Frontline Volunteer Manager" responsible for overseeing volunteer activities on the incident site.
- The Frontline Volunteer Manager will serve as a liaison between volunteers and the On-Scene Commander, ensuring that volunteers are assigned tasks under the instruction of the On-Scene Commander.
- Frontline volunteers must follow the directives of the On-Scene Commander and operate under their command for coordinated efforts.
- The Frontline Volunteer Manager will monitor volunteers to ensure their tasks are executed as per the On-Scene Commander's directives and that no unsafe practices are adopted.

5.6.6.4 Frontline Volunteer Procedure

- Volunteers participating in frontline firefighting efforts must register and report to the Frontline Volunteer Manager upon their arrival at the incident site.
- The Frontline Volunteer Manager will keep the On-Scene Commander informed about the arrival of volunteers and relay the assigned tasks to volunteers as directed by the On-Scene Commander.
- The Frontline Volunteer Manager will record all tasks assigned to each volunteer
- The Frontline Volunteer Manager will document any injuries or significant incidents involving a volunteer.
- All frontline volunteers must report to the Frontline Volunteer Manager before leaving the incident site.

5.6.6.5 Volunteer Engagement Register

- A dedicated "Volunteer Engagement Register" will be maintained for **all** volunteer participating in the forest fire response efforts.

- The register will include essential details such as the volunteer's name, contact information, assigned tasks, start and end times of engagement, incidents involving volunteers, and additional comments.

Appendix References

Appendix XX – Volunteer Engagement Register

5.7 Post-Response Activities

After the conclusion of each forest fire incident classified as emergency level 2 and above, a series of crucial post-response activities should be conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the response, ensure equipment integrity, assess the damage caused by the fire, evaluate the rate of recovery in the affected areas and assist with the continuous improvement of the plan.

5.7.1 Post-Incident Review

For incidents classified as emergency level 2 and above, a comprehensive post-mortem, is mandatory. This review serves as a critical learning exercise, enabling stakeholders to assess the overall response effectiveness, identify successes, and pinpoint areas for improvement. The findings and observations from the review are compiled into a detailed report, which is submitted to the CEO and the REOC.

5.7.1.1 Equipment Inventory and Maintenance

Following the response to an emergency level 2 or above, SIF must perform an exhaustive inventory of equipment. This assessment ensures that all firefighting tools and gear are accounted for and in optimal condition. Any damaged or missing equipment should be documented. Subsequently, a prioritized plan should be established to repair or replace the equipment as necessary. This meticulous approach guarantees that SIF is consistently equipped with operational resources and maintains a high level of readiness.

5.7.1.2 Survey of Burned Site

A survey of the burned area must be conducted following response to an emergency level 2 or above. The purpose of this survey is to assess the damage caused by the fire. It also plays a crucial role in evaluating the rate of recovery in the affected areas. It is designed to gather comprehensive data on the impact of the fire on vegetation and the overall ecosystem. This information serves as valuable feedback for refining response strategies, enhancing preventive measures, and optimizing recovery efforts.

Appendix References

Appendix XXIV – Forest Fire Survey form

5.7.1.3 Plan Review and Enhancement

In the aftermath of a level 4 emergency, a comprehensive review of the entire SFFPCP should be conducted. This evaluation should involve all relevant stakeholders, with the objective of identifying gaps, assessing plan efficacy, and proposing enhancements. The recommendations generated from this review contribute to refining the plan's framework, strategies, and procedures, making it more resilient and adaptable to future incidents.

