Keep in touch **everywhere**

The French fire and rescue services must be ready to spring into action anywhere, and the fast deployment of tactical cells from Cassidian can ensure that they're never out of touch when they do. In addition, Radio Access Gates can be used to ensure that network contact is maintained, even when a base station is out of action.

The new solutions were developed in response to demand from the French fire and rescue service (SDIS), which was experiencing difficulties keeping in touch at all times because of the high mountains and deep gorges in some parts of the country.

For example, the SDIS is often called on to rescue water sports enthusiasts who get into trouble in the deep gorges of the Verdon, Tarn and Ardèche, where the existing radio network struggles to provide coverage. The SDIS of the Ardèche region thus decided to experiment with tactical TETRAPOL cell technology from Cassidian to improve coverage during rescue operations. Success in these trials is expected to generate a lot of interest in other areas of France that experience similar challenges, such as Alpes de Haute Provence or Tarn.

The cells are deployed using independent digital repeaters (IDRs), which relay signals back to the network's fixed base stations or control rooms via a Radio Access Gate (RAG). IDRs can provide voice and data, so that commanders can use geo-localisation to keep track of field officers from both the local and regional headquarters, thanks to a new data feature in the latest version of the RAG.

RAG backup can also help the SDIS to maintain coverage when one of its base stations fails for any reason. The service will deploy several RAGs at the highest points throughout the department, so they can "see" over a wide area. Features included in the new-generation RAG units enable them to choose which base stations or IDRs they communicate with, effectively providing the control centre with coverage in areas that might otherwise be experiencing problems.

Tactical TETRAPOL cell technology improves coverage