



New cables for IBBK radio

IBBK radio is the Swiss population's source of information in crisis situations. The network is constantly maintained. In view of a certain amount of ageing, the current coaxial cables to the emergency transmitters have to be replaced. Evaluating the candidate replacement equipment requires specialist knowledge of materials and electrical engineering.

In a crisis situation, it is essential to inform the population of the threat quickly. This is the task of the IBBK network (IBBK is the German abbreviation of "Information of the population by the federal government by radio"). IBBK is able to reach more than 85% of the Swiss population by using certain parts of the existing transmitter network infrastructure of SRG's three radio stations (SRF, RTS and TSI), which can transmit signals into cellars and shelters. The existing transmitters can be replaced by backup transmitters should the need arise. These backup transmitters are erected 20-30 metres above the ground and can be set up and switched in within 10 minutes. The cables for the transmitters have been in service for 30 years now and are starting to show signs of ageing as a result of electrical, thermal and mechanical stress. S+T has been mandated by the Federal Office of Civil Protection (FOCP) to make preparations to replace the existing cables with new ones that are capable of withstanding the stresses in question. Market developments mean that there are few manufacturers with sufficient specialist expertise to manufacture this niche product. This issue applies generally to components of security-related systems that have been in service for many years. Within armasuisse itself, specifying, evaluating and testing specific elements is associated with skill sets that present long-term challenges for knowledge management as specialists start to approach retirement age.



Author: Pierre-François Bertholet, WTK