

# Integrated fire management and how it assists in effectively fighting fires



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“Climate and environmental changes are causing a global increase in wildfires, some of which have the propensity to become large scale disasters,” says managing director of the Working on Fire programme, Trevor Abrahams. He explains that researchers at the University of Alberta in Canada highlighted that eight of the worst wildfire weather years on record happened in the last decade and that it will only get worse. “The challenge of large wildland fires is likely to grow and as such, aerial fire fighting will become an important part of our armoury in combating this challenge.”

The threat of unwanted wildfires needs to be actively and adequately managed. According to Abrahams, wildfire management is a science and therefore, Kishugu has done extensive work in protecting, preventing and suppressing wildfires based on applied research on all aspects of wildfire.

Kishugu, the implementing agent for the award-winning Department

of Forestry Fisheries and the Environment’s (DFFE’s) Working on Fire programme for the past 18 years, has sufficient knowledge and expertise to effectively fight fires through a concept it has developed, namely integrated fire management (IFM).

IFM is used globally in fire-prone countries to successfully and efficiently fight wildfires. According to Emile Grobbelaar, CEO of Kishugu

Aviation, the key to IFM consists of five Rs: Readiness, Reduction, Response, Recovery and Research.

“80 percent of the focus is placed on the proactive sections, reduction and readiness. Grobbelaar explains it is essential to take preventative measures to counter the start and spread of fires. Readiness speaks to establishing systems and acquiring resources and capacity to mitigate the effects of fire and effectively respond to unwanted wildfires that might occur.”

“IFM incorporates different fire management activities, such as aircraft, vehicles, pilots, fire fighters, incident management teams, equipment and tools, in a strategic framework to reduce the overall impact of unwanted wildfire damage. It also promotes the beneficial use of fire as part of reduction,” he says. “These services are managed through our four subsidiaries, namely, Kishugu Aviation, Kishugu Training, Kishugu Fleet Solutions and Working on Fire on behalf of DFFE.”

“Kishugu provides all aspects of IFM services to all affected sectors such as Government, environmental and military agencies, forestry and agricultural companies to land users,



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NGOs, national and multinational development agencies, industry associations and fire protection associations (FPAs). If the shift to proactive planning isn't done in a structured, collaborative way across the landscape, it will not be effective and will quickly become reactive again. Maintaining an 80 percent proactive focus takes planning, collaboration and dedication with all our partners in the provinces. Fires don't respect cadastral boundaries and IFM shouldn't either," Grobbelaar said.

"Our fire fighters are stationed at 196 bases across South Africa. They receive training on the highest standards and Kishugu Aviation's highly qualified aerial teams work closely with the WoF ground teams to combat wildfires," he added.

"With the Summer Fire Season soon coming to an end in the southern parts of our country, Kishugu sincerely thanks all its partners who assisted in successfully combatting wildfires in this region. During the month of May, we will get ready for the Winter Fire Season in the northern parts of South Africa, which officially starts on 1 June. We wish everyone well for the upcoming fire season as we continue to strive to save lives, property and the environment from wildfires."

"Together with our partners, we have and will continue to successfully implement integrated fire



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If you are a landowner or fire protection association who would like to book wildland fire fighter

training, get a quote on any of our fleet options (fire fighting trucks) or if you have aerial resource backup in your region, please don't hesitate to contact us on [www.kishugu.com](http://www.kishugu.com) for more information. ▲