



Carillion provides new audio clarity in Weather Centre council chamber

A Carillion Case Study:
ECMWF Group Limited

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Project:
To achieve new audio clarity in the main council chamber from analogue to digital

Objective:
Upgrade ECMWF's council chamber audio and video systems

Location:
Reading, Berkshire

Tech spec:
Beyerdynamic Digital Control Unit
55 x Beyerdynamic microphones
Multiple speaker units
DSP Server
NEC projector and Euroscreen



The European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) carries out remarkable work in an unusual facility. While the ECMWF site houses super computers processing petabytes of data, it also has rooms like its council chamber which, to the visitor, resembles an early James Bond film set, with its impressive large table, country flags and interpreter booths.

Owing to its annualised budgets and strict procurement and compliance policies, the ECMWF's audio visual strategy tackles discrete areas at a time. As a result, the council chamber's audio and video conferencing had some catching up to do.

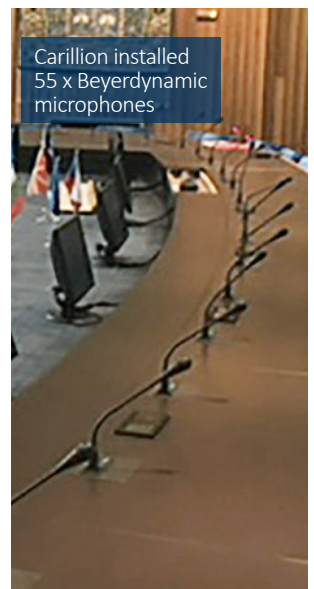
Tight deadlines after detailed tender process

Carillion Communications was successful in its tender to upgrade ECMWF's council chamber audio and video systems, and earned praise for the transparency of its proposal, the options suggested and for the value for money offered.

The challenge then was to ensure all components were available to be delivered and installed in a very tight schedule.

The council chamber is in almost continuous use, so upgrades and refurbishment needed careful coordination and precise logistics.

Stuart Mitchell, Senior Analyst and Team Leader, ECMWF, says the council chamber needed complete systems removal and new installation in a short availability window, just five working days. *"Carillion did an excellent job with coordination and logistics. At one point, we thought we might have to delay, but Carillion managed to secure all the equipment in time and put a crack engineering team in place."*



Carillion installed 55 x Beyerdynamic microphones



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Familiar functionality with improved performance

Stuart Mitchell says the upgrade from analogue to digital went seamlessly. To the casual observer nothing has changed in appearance or function. The large table retains its layout, with its delegate microphones and their push-to-talk functionality. However, the sound quality was improved greatly.

One of the proofs of success is in the use of the systems for webinars in multi-day workshops that are relayed to points around the world. Remote users have commented that the audio quality is perfect, with no background hum or problems with volume levels.

The new dedicated control panel is also appreciated by users. Stuart Mitchell says,

“The delegates are not there to operate equipment, so just being able to press a green button for on and a red button for off is a time saver compared to the individual remotes used to present previously.”

In-house expertise and external solutions make project possible

Adrian Adams, who oversaw ECMWF project for Carillion, says that the company assigned more engineers to ensure that everything was completed in the allotted five days.

“We have some experts to thank for making sure that everything happened quickly and worked perfectly first time. Our in-house programming team made sure that the control panel and the digital signal processing were spot on. We also worked with one of our fabrication partners to come up with a bracket solution for fixing the new microphones, which were specified and made in just 24 hours.”

Carillion Communications: friendly and detailed

Stuart Mitchell says,

“Carillion were very friendly and also very engaged with the detail of the project. One of the challenges of the installation was the layer of leather on the table, which had holes enlarged in it to accommodate new equipment. Carillion had elements custom made to hide marks and the table looks perfect. They were highly attentive to technical functions and the room’s aesthetics.”

The European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF) is a research institute and a 24/7 operational service, producing global numerical weather predictions and other data for 34 Member States and the broader community. The Centre has one of the largest supercomputer facilities and meteorological data archives in the world. Other strategic activities include delivering advanced training and assisting the WMO in implementing its programmes. The organisation was established in 1975 and now employs around 350 staff from more than 30 countries, based in Reading, Berkshire.



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✓ Included in the ECMWF Group project



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The Carillion Difference

Dee Reed, Carillion Communications’ MD, says

“In every tender, we have to earn the right to work with organisations. I am so pleased ECMWF noticed the lengths we went to specify the upgrade and complete the project to a tight deadline, to the satisfaction of both the IT team and the chamber’s users.”

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