OPENING OF THE SEASON IN ANTARCTICA!



During this time, David Rigotti, Henri Robert, Nicolas Herickx, Tim Grosnaud, and Tom Sage-Segard completed a two-day fire-fighting training course. The first day focused on learning about the different types of fires, how they start and spread, and the appropriate methods and equipment used to extinguish them. The second day was dedicated to practical exercises, with a simulated fire inside a container mimicking a boat corridor and cabin. In complete darkness, the team practised several fire extinguishing methods in a confined space, learned how to react quickly and become accustomed to the best methods to control and extinguish fire.

Before flying from Cape Town to Antarctica, the team collected the polar clothing and equipment needed for the expedition from the IPF Cape Town Office. They also received a mandatory briefing from ULTIMA Antarctic Logistic flight company, covering the basic safety procedures of the flight and the rules of the

Antarctic Treaty. This includes special attention to prevent pollution and measures to avoid introducing alien invasive plant and animal species.

Now at the Princess Elisabeth Antarctica since last Saturday, the BELARE team has been hard at work clearing all the snow accumulated on the station's terrace, in front of the annexes during the 8 winter months. This represents three days of work using tractors, excavators and manpower. Inside the station all the systems were switched to summer mode. An important work was to install two supplementary battery clusters that will enhance the storage of the station's renewable energy from the wind turbines and the solar panels. As soon as the garage doors were free, the snow melter could be refilled and the water production fully restarted to allow cooking, functioning heating, washing machines, toilets and showers.

At the start of each season, before the team fully switches the station from winter to summer mode, living at the Princess Elisabeth Antarctica is a bit like camping: no hot water, no laundry, no facility. Now that the systems are all functional again, daily life has become a lot more comfortable!
In the past few days, our intrepid team has also been checking all the scientific equipment installed to make sure that they're in good shape after the winter season and assure the data collection for the various research projects. Some parts have already been replaced and several "summer instruments" are being installed.

The new season has definitely begun!