



Lesotho Highlands Development Authority

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LESOTHO HIGHLANDS WATER PROJECT BRINGS POWER TO REMOTE REGIONS

Maseru, 15 October 2019 – “Investing in the extension and upgrading of the bulk power transmission network in Lesotho is not to facilitate the implementation of Phase II alone. It will also bring long term benefits to the country by increasing access to power for people and businesses in remote areas, as was the case in Phase I of the LHWP,” confirmed Tente Tente, LHDA’s acting Chief Executive, following the recent award of a contract for the construction of a 132kV power line from Matsoku to Polihali to Mkhulu Electro Distribution Projects (Pty) Ltd.

The second of the two bulk power components of the Phase II advance infrastructure, the project commences in September and is expected to be completed in two years. The project is valued at M494 million.

The works under this contract include the construction of a new, approximately 38km long, 132kV line between the existing Lesotho Electricity Company (LEC) transmission network in the Matsoku Valley to the Polihali Dam construction site, and the upgrading of existing LEC lines from Ha Lejone to Matsoku, and Maputsoe to Katse. The upgrade comprises the installation of insulation and shielding earth conductors. The works also include the installation of optical ground wire (fibre) communication line from Maputsoe to Katse and Polihali. This line is intended to enhance communication at the project area.

South African-based Mkhulu Electro Distribution Projects has extensive experience in overhead transmission line construction and civil engineering projects in southern Africa, including in Namibia, South Africa, Botswana and Mozambique.

In March 2019, the LHDA awarded the tender for the construction of a 33kV line and the diversion of an existing 33kV LEC distribution line to LSP Construction at a contract value of M41 million. The 33 kV line which is constructed from the existing Letseng/Mokhotlong distribution network will supply power to the Polihali construction village site, temporarily. Sections of an existing LEC 33kV distribution network between Letšeng and Mokhotlong, will be submerged in five different positions by the new Polihali Dam at full supply level necessitating the diversion of the existing line.

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Phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project builds on the successful completion of Phase I in 2003. It delivers water to the Gauteng region of South Africa and utilises the water delivery system to generate hydro-electricity for Lesotho. Phase II will increase the current water supply rate of 780 million cubic metres per annum incrementally to more than 1 270 million cubic metres per annum. At the same time, it will increase the quantity of electricity generated in Lesotho and is a further step in the process of securing an independent electricity source. The hydropower further feasibility studies have confirmed that conventional hydropower is the preferred option for Phase II.

Ends

About

The Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) is multi-phased, multi-billion Maloti/Rand project between the governments of the Kingdom of Lesotho and the Republic of South Africa.

It comprises water transfer and hydropower generation components with associated ancillary developments. The water transfer component entails the construction of dams and tunnels in Lesotho, enhancing the use of water from the Senqu (Orange) River and its tributaries by storing, regulating, diverting and controlling the flow to effect the delivery of specified quantities of water to South Africa, and utilizing the delivery system to generate hydro-electric power in Lesotho.

The major works of Phase I included the construction of the Katse Dam, the transfer and delivery tunnels, 'Muela Hydropower Plant and the Mohale Dam. The Phase II water transfer component comprises a dam at Polihali and a gravity tunnel that will connect the reservoir at Polihali with the Katse reservoir. The further feasibility studies for the hydropower component of Phase II have concluded that conventional hydropower is the more feasible option to meet Lesotho's energy needs.

The Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) is the implementing and management authority of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project, on behalf of the government of Lesotho.

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