



Lesotho Highlands Development Authority

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POLIHALI MAJOR BRIDGES DESIGN CONTRACT AWARDED

Maseru, 29 November, 2018 – The Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) has appointed Aurecon Lesotho (Pty) Ltd to design and supervise the construction of the major bridges to be built in Phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP). The major bridges project also includes the realignment of the A1 national road in the vicinity of the bridges. Lesotho-based White Life Consultants (Pty) Ltd and Leporogo Specialist Engineers CC of South Africa are sub-consultants.

Valued at approximately M123 million, the contract commenced on 05 November. Construction of the bridges is expected to be completed in early 2024.

“The LHDA is proud to announce another contract award. Each of these is another step on our journey to deliver Phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project on behalf of the governments of Lesotho and South Africa and to advancing the economies of our two countries,” comments Refiloe Tlali, CE, Lesotho Highlands Development Authority.

Three major bridges spanning the Polihali reservoir – the Senqu, Mabunyaneng and Khubelu bridges - will be constructed on the existing A1 national road between Oxbow in the Buthe-Buthe district and Mokhotlong in the mountainous, north-east of Lesotho where the Polihali Dam and Polihali Water Transfer Tunnel, the major works of Phase II, will be constructed. The bridges will restore the A1 access that will be lost as a result of the reservoir **inundation**.

Constructed at high altitude in mountainous terrain across a deep steep valley, the Senqu Bridge is expected to be over 100 metres tall and almost 600 metres long. It is the largest of the major bridges. The other two will be smaller with an approximate height of 20 metres and lengths of 45 and 150 metres.

The bridges will be required when inundation of the reservoir starts just after the completion of the Phase II major works. Water transfer to South Africa is expected to commence in 2026.

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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 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 to meet Lesotho's domestic requirements.

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 form of the hydropower component is subject to agreement on the outcome of a further feasibility studies **which are expected to be completed by the second quarter of 2019. These studies have concluded that conventional hydropower is the more feasible option to meet Lesotho's energy needs. To this end, the decision was taken to advance the studies for two sites on the Senqu River and one at Oxbow to bankability stage.**

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

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