



Lesotho Highlands Development Authority

P.O. Box 7332, Maseru 100, Lesotho • Telephone: (+266) 22 246 000 / 22 311 280 • Fax: (+266) 22 310 665 • Email: lhwp@lhda.org.ls

BOLD START TO 2019 FOR LHWP

Maseru, 12 December, 2018: The Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) will start 2019 boldly with the launch in January of the construction pre-qualification for the Phase II main works, the Polihali Dam and Polihali Transfer Tunnel.

“The call for Expressions of Interest for the construction of the 165m high Polihali Dam and the 38km long Polihali Transfer Tunnel is expected to attract the interest of major engineering and construction companies, and we encourage suitably experienced contractors to join forces with local contractors and apply,” Tente Tente, Phase II Divisional Manager, confirmed yesterday.

The prequalification documents will include requirements for participation by Lesotho- and South Africa-national contractors, in accordance with the terms of the Phase II Agreement and the project’s commitment to ensuring local participation. It will be advertised on the LHDA website at <http://www.lhda.org.ls/phase2/tenderbulletin/> and in local print media.

“Implementing large scale infrastructure projects combines ‘maths and music’: the maths of delivering multiple highly technical engineering components within a specific timeframe and budget, and the music of the softer skills of diplomacy, communication, social, environmental and community protection, while considering the interests and expectations of multiple, diverse stakeholders.

Phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project is no exception to this and while the project is behind the timelines proposed in the Feasibility Report, given the two-year deferred start, Phase II is stepping ahead purposefully with 2018 having been a busy year for the both the water transfer and hydropower components,” added Mr Tente.

In summary, more than 35 contracts are in force covering a range of environmental impact assessments, socio-economic and resettlement projects, hydropower feasibility, advance infrastructure projects encompassing access roads, project housing, power and telecommunications, geotechnical investigations, the Polihali diversion tunnel, major bridges and the main works i.e. the Polihali dam and transfer tunnel. Other than the geotechnical drillers, demarcation survey and the first two advance infrastructure construction contract awards announced in the last quarter, these are all consulting services contracts

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Resettlement planning is nearing completion; livelihood restoration demonstration projects have started in the project area. Environmental Records of Decision have been granted for the Polihali Western Access Corridor and the main Polihali project area, environmental go-ahead for the new Polihali Western Access Road and the Polihali Dam, Polihali Transfer Tunnel, major bridges and project housing. The fieldwork for the cultural heritage protection programme is progressing steadily. Equally important, the dam and tunnel designs are at an advanced stage and several more advance infrastructure construction contracts are under procurement.

The further feasibility studies for the hydropower component of Phase II are nearing completion. Conventional hydropower has been confirmed as the more feasible option to meet Lesotho's energy needs. To this end, the decision was taken earlier this year to advance the studies for two sites on the Senqu River and one at Oxbow to bankable feasibility. These studies are expected to be completed by the second quarter of 2019.

A pumped storage scheme option has been deferred due to the prevailing economic conditions.

“Advance infrastructure construction has started and is expected to be largely completed by 2020 before the dam and tunnel construction commences. In all, we're confident that 2019 will see Phase II taking great strides with activities on the ground evident to all.”

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, and a hydropower scheme.

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.

For additional information, please contact:
Mrs Mabasias Ntoi on +266 22246000 or ntoin@lhda.org.ls.