



Lesotho Highlands Development Authority

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LHWP II NEWS IN BRIEF July 2021

Underground tunnelling at LHWP II diversion tunnels reaches a milestone

Construction of the Polihali diversion tunnels on Phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project has reached another milestone with excavation inside the two tunnels reaching substantial completion in June 2021.

Excavation at the intake and the outlet portals of the two Polihali diversion tunnels was completed in August 2020. Erosion control and flood protection work on both the inlet and the outlet portals have been completed.

Excavation inside the diversion tunnels is advancing from the outlets at the rate of about five (5) metres per tunnel per day. The inside walls of both tunnels have been lined with concrete for approximately 35m from the upstream end. Floor lining is halfway through completion and will cover the full length of the tunnels. Construction of the intake structures is in progress.

“The construction team encounters challenges resulting from geology, groundwater and COVID-19 restrictions. Despite the contractor having to work with reduced staffing per shift, and the flooding of the Works earlier this year (28 Jan 2021), much has been accomplished,” states Ntsoli Maiketso, LHDA Phase II Divisional Manager.

The Polihali diversion tunnels are excavated by drill and blast method and are supported by rock bolts and welded mesh reinforced shotcrete. The two tunnels, 7m and 9m in diameter respectively and almost a kilometre in length each, run parallel to each other from the intake portal to the outlet portal. They will divert the waters of the Senqu River away from the natural river bed to create a dry foundation and work area needed for the construction of the Polihali Dam.

Mr Ntsoeleng Mohale, the Chief Resident Engineer from Metsi a Senqu-Khubelu Consultants Joint Venture (MSKC) indicates that the construction of the diversion tunnels is approximately 85% complete with the breakthrough projected at the end of August 2021 and overall completion planned for the end of this year.

The Contractor is SCLC Joint Venture which comprises the South African Salini Impregilo S.p. A, Cooperativa Muratori Cementistri CMC di Ravenna (South African branch), Lesotho based LSP Construction (Pty) Ltd and South African CMI Infrastructure Ltd is constructing the tunnels under the supervision of the Metsi a Senqu-Khubelu Consultants Joint Venture (MSKC) which also designed these diversion tunnels.