




Second Tunnel Boring Machine is on the way - marks major milestone for Polihali Transfer Tunnel

Progress on the Polihali Transfer Tunnel, a critical component of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) Phase II, has taken another significant leap forward with the announcement that the second Tunnel Boring Machine (TBM) has officially departed from China. The TBM, which left port on May 2, 2025, is expected to arrive at the Port of Durban in South Africa in June before making its way to the Polihali construction site in Mokhotlong.

This second TBM is set to play a pivotal role in the completion of the 38-kilometre-long Polihali Transfer Tunnel, which will transfer water from the Polihali Dam to the existing Katse Reservoir. Once on site, the TBM will be deployed from the Polihali end of the tunnel and is expected to bore at least 17.5 kilometres, effectively half the total tunnel length working in tandem with the first TBM, which was launched from the opposite end (Katse side, Ha Bereng) in January.



The first TBM arrived in Lesotho in September 2024. Together, the two TBMs will accelerate the timeline for completing this crucial infrastructure project, which will not only secure water supply for South Africa's Gauteng region but also support energy generation and economic development in Lesotho.

In keeping with tradition, the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) will launch a campaign to name the second TBM, a symbolic gesture that aims to inspire national pride and ownership of the project. The previous naming campaign was widely celebrated, drawing participation from across the country and underscoring the importance of the LHWP Phase II to the people of Lesotho.

“The arrival of the second TBM signifies our steady progress and continued commitment to delivering on this transformative national project,” said Mr. Gerard Mokone the Polihali Operations Branch Manager. “As we prepare to welcome this critical piece of machinery, we also prepare to engage the nation once more in celebrating and participating in this major milestone,” Mr. Mokone concludes.

The LHWP Phase II is one of the largest water infrastructure projects in the region and forms part of a bilateral agreement between the governments of Lesotho and South Africa. Beyond water security, the project promises a significant socio-economic benefits, including job creation, skills development, and infrastructure upgrades.

With the arrival of the second TBM imminent, Lesotho stands united in its mission to drive national development and regional cooperation through the successful implementation of the LHWP

