



Lesotho Highlands Development Authority

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LHWP Phase II main works

Construction of Polihali Dam and Transfer Tunnel set to start

Maseru, 4 November 2022 – Today the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) announced the Polihali Dam and Polihali Transfer Tunnel construction contract awards, the two biggest Phase II contracts to date. These milestone awards mark the start of the final lap of the water transfer infrastructure construction. Work on the multibillion Maloti contracts commences in November and December respectively, and commissioning is expected in 2028.

“This is an exciting moment for the Project and the LHDA. With our experience in successfully delivering large and complex infrastructure projects, we are confident that we will deliver quality engineering showpieces even as we carefully manage impacts on people and the environment,” confirmed Tente Tente, Chief Executive, LHDA. “Both joint ventures include Lesotho, South African and international companies in keeping with Article 10 of the Phase II Agreement.”

“Training young professionals and LHDA staff for the purposes of operating and maintaining the dam and tunnel is part of the skills and technology transfer element of the projects,” added Ntsoli Maiketso, Phase II Divisional Manager, LHDA.

The contract amount for the Polihali Dam is approximately M7.68 billion. The successful Polihali Dam bidder is the SUN Joint Venture, comprising main partners: Sinohydro Bureau 8 (China); Sinohydro Bureau 14 (China); Unik Civil Engineering (South Africa) and Nthane Brothers (Lesotho). Subcontractors include Melki Civils and Plant Hire (South Africa); MECSA Construction (South Africa); SIGMA Construction (Lesotho) and Kunming Engineering (China). Notice of Award will be published on the LHDA website as per norm, which will include other bidders and how they performed. Construction will be supervised by the Matla a Metsi Joint Venture, comprising GIBB (South Africa); MPAMOT Africa (South Africa); Tractebel Engineering SA/Coyne et Bellier (France) and LYMA Consulting Engineers (Lesotho).

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The Kopana Ke Matla joint venture, which will construct the Polihali Transfer Tunnel, includes Yellow River Company (China); Sinohydro Bureau 3 (China); Unik Civil Engineering (South Africa), the main joint venture partners. Subcontractors include Nthane Brothers of Lesotho, Esor Construction and Mecsa Construction of South Africa. The contract amount for the Polihali Transfer Tunnel is approximately M9.2 billion.

Notice of Award will be published on the LHDA website as per norm, which will include other bidders and how they performed. Construction will be supervised by Metsi a Senqu-Khubelu Consultants (MSKC) joint venture. MSKC comprises Lesotho-based FM Associates and South African firms Zutari South Africa, Hatch Africa, Knight Piesold and SMEC South Africa, the main JV partners.

Phase II adds 2 325 million cubic metres in storage capacity to the LHWP and will increase the current annual supply rate capacity from 780 million cubic metres to 1 270, contributing towards meeting South Africa's increasing water needs. The additional flow of water from Polihali will simultaneously increase power generation within Lesotho towards meeting Lesotho's domestic needs and reducing the country's dependence on electricity imports.

The Polihali Dam is a concrete-faced rockfill dam, like the majestic Mohale Dam which was constructed in Phase I of the LHWP. It will create a reservoir on the Senqu and Khubelu rivers with a surface area of 5 053 hectares. The infrastructure also includes a spillway, a compensation outlet structure and a mini-hydropower station.

The Polihali Transfer Tunnel will transfer water by gravity from the Polihali reservoir to the Katse reservoir, the centrepiece of the LHWP. From Katse, water is transferred via the delivery tunnel to the 'Muela Hydropower Station constructed in Phase I, and then on to the Ash River outfall outside Clarence in the Free State on its way to Gauteng.

The Polihali Transfer Tunnel works also include the intake works and gate shaft at the Polihali reservoir; outlet works and gate shaft at the existing Katse reservoir, with underwater connection to the lake; access adits to the waterway and associated construction infrastructure.

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The envisaged transfer tunnel will be approximately 38 kilometres long with a nominal bore of five metres. Both tunnel boring and drill and blast methods will be used to excavate the tunnel.

Procurement for the design and construction supervision of the Oxbow Hydropower Scheme, also critical to Phase II, has recently started with March 2023 as deadline for the submission of bids for engineering, environmental and social consultants.

Phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project builds on the successful completion of Phase I in 2003.

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, Matsoku Weir, '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. Three potential sites were identified: two on the Senqu River and a third site at Oxbow on the Malibamatšo River. Lesotho has confirmed the Oxbow site as the preferred site for the Phase II hydropower investment.

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. Insert boiler plate

For additional information, please contact 'Mabasia Ntoi, Senior Public Relations Officer-Stakeholder Relations, on +266 22246000 or ntoin@lhda.org.ls. or visit www.lhda.org.ls.