

Matla a Metsi Joint Venture to supervise design and construction of Polihali Dam in Lesotho Highlands Water Project

The Matla a Metsi Joint Venture was recently announced the successful bidder on the design and construction supervision of the Polihali Dam - one of the two main water transfer components of phase two of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project. According to the Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA), work on the approximately R445m project is expected to commence in July.



Image source: Aurecon

Refiloe Tlali, CE of the LHDA, confirmed that the pre-qualification process had achieved its objective of yielding a shortlist of well qualified firms for the dam design while maintaining free competition amongst the bidders. “We are confident that the Matla a Metsi team has the capability, skills and experience, and depth of resources to undertake the engineering design and construction supervision of the Polihali dam,” she said.

The joint venture, which combines Lesotho, South African and international experts, comprises GIBB, Mott MacDonald Africa (both from South Africa), Tractebel Engineering SA and Coyne et Bellier (France), and LYMA Consulting Engineers (Lesotho).

Scope of services

The scope of services includes reviewing the geotechnical and other project information, the engineering design of the

Polihali Dam and appurtenant structures, the procurement of construction contracts and supervising the construction on behalf of the client. Skills development and technology transfer to Lesotho and South African nationals and the training of LHDA staff for the purposes of operating the dam are important components of the consultancy contract.

The Polihali Dam comprises a 164m-high concrete-faced rock fill dam (CFRD) on the Senqu River, a 50m-high CFRD saddle dam, a concrete side-channel spillway, a free standing compensation outlet tower and appurtenant works.

The design period will take approximately eighteen months followed by the procurement of the construction contractor. The dam construction is expected to commence in December 2019 or January 2020. The dam is envisaged to be impounded during the wet season of 2023.

Phase two of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project builds on the completion of phase one 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 two 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.

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