

Lesotho Highlands Phase II to be completed in 2023

By [Amukelani Chauke](#)

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JOHANNESBURG: The Lesotho Highlands Development Authority says it expects Phase II of the Lesotho Highlands Project to be completed by mid-2023.



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The second phase of the major infrastructure project is expected to cost around R11.2 billion and will see the construction of Polihali Dam, a tunnel and several developments around it.

The project is a joint-programme between South Africa and Lesotho.

Mark Matchett, the Phase II executive manager, made the announcement on Monday, 23 June, when the authority held a briefing session to update stakeholders on the progress of the project.

"We are about to embark on a procurement process. This will run for a fairly intensive six- to nine-month period and during this time, we hope to have procured most of the design contracts. Towards the middle to the end of next year, we hope to be in a position to start procuring contracts for the construction works," he said.

Matchett said the dam and tunnel designs were envisaged to start during the first or second quarter of next year, while construction was expected to commence during the third or fourth quarter of next year.

Matchett said they could get to the minimum operating level by 2022, if there is sufficient rain.

"If all goes well ... we are looking at completion by the year 2023," he said.

Presenting the scope of the project, Matchett said components such as the environmental studies, mitigation plans, resettlements and compensations had already commenced, and that they were expected to be completed by the end of October or November.

He said 2,500 workers are expected in the area at the height of the project. A township will be established and an existing lodge will be developed to meet the accommodation demand.

Tente Tente, the divisional manager of the Phase II project, said an anti-corruption policy was in place to ensure that no underhanded tactics were practiced throughout the tendering process.

He also said that no monopolies will be tolerated and that companies need to give special consideration to partnering up with other companies that do not fall under their stables, as bids from the same entities will not be considered.

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