

# LHWP Phase 2 Oxbow Hydropower Scheme underway

Procurement for the design and construction supervision of the Oxbow Hydropower Scheme in the implementation of Phase 2 of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project (LHWP) began this week.



Source: [Lesotho Highlands Development Authority](#)

This follows the completion of further feasibility studies into the hydropower component of Phase 2, which recommended conventional hydropower as the more feasible option to meet Lesotho's energy needs. Three potential sites were identified: two on the Senqu River and the third at Oxbow on the Malibamats'o River. In November 2021, the government of Lesotho confirmed the Oxbow Hydropower Scheme and gave the go-ahead for the hydropower engineering, environmental and social impact assessment (ESIA) and the resettlement action planning (RAP) studies.

The scope of the hydropower engineering includes a 100m-high dam, two tunnels, high pressure steel penstock (pipeline), 80MW power station, 132kV transmission line, all associated infrastructure such as roads and accommodation, bulk power and telecommunications infrastructure and enviro-social components.

## Enviro-social components

Broadly, the enviro-social components will include studies on public health, cultural heritage, terrestrial ecology and water quality elements, resettlement and livelihoods restoration elements to mitigate the impact of the Oxbow Scheme on the environment and communities in the project area.

Lesotho Highlands Development Authority (LHDA) chief executive, Tente Tente, states, “The Oxbow Hydropower Scheme is the third major engineering component of Phase 2. LHDA is confident that it will attract the interest of local, regional and international consultancies with the experience and expertise to deliver engineering projects of this nature. Given its scope, it will be a significant boost to the engineering and construction sector and the economy of the region.”

“The Oxbow Hydropower Scheme increases security of power for Lesotho and will reduce the country’s dependence on electricity imports. The power generated at Oxbow adds to the additional 40% of electricity that will be generated at ‘Muela as a result of the increased flow of water from Polihali,” adds Ntsoli Maiketso, LHDA’s divisional manager, Phase 2.



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Giulia Paravicini 12 Aug 2022



## Oxbow Hydropower Scheme commissioning

Water transfer to South Africa will commence in 2028 with the completion of the Polihali Dam and Polihali Transfer Tunnel and the Oxbow Hydropower Scheme will be commissioned in 2029, one year later.

Interested firms have up to 13 March 2023 to submit their bids. Specific information on the procurement is available [here](#).

“The procurement for the associated environmental and social impact assessment (ESIA) and resettlement action planning (RAP) is taking place concurrently,” added Tente. “Interested bidders are advised to check the Phase 2 Tender Bulletin on the LHDA’s website for the Specific Procurement Notices.”

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