

**MINISTER**

**HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, WATER AND SANITATION**

**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**NATIONAL ASSEMBLY**

**QUESTION FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**QUESTION NO.: 901**

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**Mr L J Basson (DA) to ask the Minister of Human Settlements, Water and Sanitation:**

(a) What is the current status of the Lesotho-Botswana Water Transfer project sponsored by the Orange-Senqu River Commission and (b) by what date will her department conduct public participation meetings regarding the nearly 700 kilometres of conveyance pipelines that would need to be installed through the Republic? NO1173E

**REPLY:**

(a) The Lesotho-Botswana Water Transfer (L-BWT) project feasibility study is currently being conducted in terms of a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) signed in 2017 between the governments of Botswana, Lesotho and South Africa (Namibia is an observer). The MoA relates solely to the development of a bankable feasibility study and does not constitute an implementation agreement. The study commenced in August 2018 and is expected to be completed towards the end of 2021.

The State parties mandated the Orange-Senqu River Commission (ORASECOM) to act as an implementing agent for the co-ordination, management and administration of the study, as well as to solicit donor funding for the study. In order to enhance the potential for securing donor funding, ORASECOM packaged the L-BWT study to form part of a larger overall basin-wide study titled: **Preparation of Climate Resilient Water Resources Investment Strategy and Lesotho-Botswana Water Transfer Multipurpose Project for the Orange-Senqu River Basin.**

**As far as the Screening and Pre-Feasibility Studies** (Component III of the basin-wide study) for all major infrastructure elements of the L-BWT project, namely: **the dam** on the Makhaleng River in Lesotho and **the water conveyance system are concerned, a** professional service provider (PSP) has been appointed. The scope of work for the various parts and phases of the study, the progress status and the likely completion dates for each part are as set out below. This work is divided into the following two phases:

* **Phase 1: Screening Study:** Work started on 1 August 2018 and was completed on 30 April 2020. Approval of the final study reports is expected by 31 May 2020
* **Phase 2: Pre-Feasibility Study:** Work planned to start on 1 June 2020 and to be completed by 30 November 2020.

**Detailed Feasibility Studies** (Component IV of the basin-wide study) for all major elements of the scheme, namely: Part 1: **the dam**, and Part 2: **the water conveyance system**. The scope of work includes all engineering and economic studies, as well as Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA). The stakeholder consultations will be undertaken as part of Component V of the basin-wide study. This work is divided into three parts:

* **Part 1: Feasibility Study for the Dams:** A PSP has been appointed for this part. The work will start after the completion of Pre-Feasibility studies, towards 1 December 2020 and will be completed around 30 September 2021.
* **Part 2: Feasibility Study for the Conveyance System: Scope**: A PSP for this part has not yet been appointed, but the procurement process is underway. The work is expected to start after 1 December 2020 and to be completed around 30 November 2021.
* **Part 3: Environmental and Social Impact Assessment for Part 1: Dams and Part 2; Conveyance System:** A PSP for this part has not yet been appointed, but the procurement process is underway. The work is expected to start towards 1 January 2021 and to be completed towards 31 December 2021.

(b) The planned public/stakeholder participation process will form part of the wider study’s Component V. The work for this component can commence only after at least the basic technical parameters of the potentially favourable competitive options for the dam and for the conveyance system have been defined during the pre-feasibility studies (expected after 30 November 2020).

The public/stakeholder participation activities are expected to commence after 30 November 2020 and to continue until the completion of the study around 31 December 2021. The exact dates for future stakeholder consultations will depend on the progress with the current technical feasibility studies and upon decisions reached by consensus between the State parties. These will be communicated to all stakeholders in due course

However, in preparation for the start of the stakeholder participation process, certain related activities have already commenced. The first basin-wide strategy stakeholder workshop was held in January 2019 in Lesotho. It was attended by the key authorities representing the four ORASECOM member States. The aim of the workshop was to identify the relevant project stakeholders in each country, to lay out the foundations for a Stakeholder Management Plan, as well as to agree on the establishment of a Stakeholders Forum for future engagement. A preliminary list of identified main stakeholder groups has been proposed. This list will be expanded and refined once the PSP for this task is appointed after November 2020.