

Lesotho Highlands Project to deliver water to SA in 2026

According to human settlements, water and sanitation minister Lindiwe Sisulu, the Lesotho Highlands Water Project's second phase is expected to deliver water to South Africa by 2026. She said this while outlining budget priorities for the Water and Sanitation Department during a virtual session of the National Assembly on Thursday, 23 July.



“I am glad to report that I, together with my counterpart from the Kingdom of Lesotho, did a sod turning event that marked the construction of the Lesotho Highlands Water Project Phase II.

“This project is aimed at achieving water security and delivering water to South Africa by November 2026,” she said.

Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant programme

Sisulu said, meanwhile, that since the inception of the Regional Bulk Infrastructure Grant programme in 2007, about 3.1 million households have benefitted from water and sanitation projects that have been implemented.

“In this financial year, we are committing R3bn (under schedule 6b) to continue with the implementation of 136 bulk water and sanitation projects, and R2bn under schedule 5b to implement 69 projects.”

Both schedule 5b and 6b are municipal grants, which fall under the regional bulk infrastructure grant. Schedule 5b is a

direct grant, where the national department gives money directly to municipalities to manage; whereas, a schedule 6b is an indirect grant, whereby the national department is fully responsible for the project to be funded.

Addressing MPs, Sisulu said the department will prioritise connecting its water resources to the water supply systems servicing the un-served communities.

“I, therefore, call upon all Water Services Authorities to prioritise the operations and maintenance of grant-funded infrastructure by committing at least 10% of their operating budget to the maintenance of infrastructure under their jurisdiction.

“Through the minister of COGTA [Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs], we would like to see this amount ring-fenced. This will ensure that water services remain in an operable state, rendering a reliable service to our communities and minimising water losses.”

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