

Contract for preliminary design of HK-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge signed

Representatives of the three sides in the Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge (HZMB) Advance Work Co-ordination Group today (March 13) in Zhuhai staged contract signing and launch ceremonies for the start of the preliminary design and investigation of the main body of the HZMB project.

The signing of the contract by the representatives of the three sides and the representative of the consortium that will undertake the preliminary design and investigation work - the China Highway Planning and Design Institute (HPDI) - marked a major step forward in the work of the HZMB project.

Led by the HPDI, the consortium comprises COWI A/S, Ove Arup & Partners Hong Kong Ltd, Shanghai Tunnel Engineering & Rail Transit Design and Research Institute and CCCC First Harbour Consultants Co Ltd. As a team, they will share information and draw on each other's expertise in project management, structural design and landscape issues. They will work together to complete the preliminary design with a view to laying a strong foundation for the subsequent construction works.

The main body of the HZMB will be about 29.6km. To the west, it lands on the artificial island off Gongbei, and to the east, it lands on the eastern artificial island for the tunnel section. It will be built according to six-lane expressway standard with vehicle speed of 100km per hour. To ensure unimpeded marine traffic of the main navigation channels towards the Guangzhou and Shenzhen ports, a tunnel will link the two artificial islands that provide bridge/tunnel switching facilities.

Based on the consensus reached earlier over the funding arrangement of the project, the Central People's Government and the three governments will take up the responsibility for the construction of the Main Bridge. The Central People's Government will shoulder part of the cost. Together with the contribution of Guangdong, the Mainland will be contributing a total of RMB 7 billion. Hong Kong and Macao will contribute RMB 6.75 billion and RMB 1.98 billion respectively. The total contribution of the three sides will be RMB 15.73 billion, about 42% of the total construction cost. The remaining funding required will be financed by loans.

The three governments will continue to work earnestly with a view to starting the construction of the HZMB project by end of 2009.

The HZMB has very important strategic value of further enhancing the economic development of Hong Kong, Macao and the Western Pearl River Delta region (Western PRD). It will significantly reduce the cost and time for people travelling and for the flow of goods between Hong

Kong and the Western PRD, accelerate the economic integration of the PRD and its neighbouring provinces and increase its competitiveness vis-a-vis countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations and other economic zones such as the Yangtze Delta region.

Regarding construction works within the Hong Kong territory, the proposed boundary crossing facilities that will fit in with the HZMB Main Bridge, together with connecting roads and the Tuen Mun-Chek Lap Kok Link as well as Tuen Mun Western Bypass, will form a strategic road network connecting Hong Kong, Macao and Shenzhen. Hong Kong's position as transportation and aviation hub will be further enhanced.

About 11,000 jobs will be created during the construction phase of the Hong Kong boundary crossing facilities and the connecting roads.

The Director of Highways, Mr Wai Chi-sing and the Project Manager/Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macao Bridge, Mr Cheng Ting-ning represented the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region Government at the contract signing ceremony. After the ceremony and briefing on the preliminary design of the project, some of the delegates proceeded to Jiuzhou Port for inspection and celebration activities.

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