

Media Release



SMEC South Africa awarded Huguenot Tunnel project

05 August, 2021

Engineering and infrastructure consultancy firm SMEC South Africa has been appointed by South African National Roads Agency Limited (SANRAL) to provide consulting engineering services for the commissioning of the Huguenot Tunnel North Bore and the upgrading of the Huguenot Tunnel South Bore.

The 4km tunnel, which is located on the N1 freeway (Section 1) approximately 60km north-east of Cape Town in the Western Cape Province, is a tolled tunnel that carries the freeway through the Du Toitskloof mountains that separate Paarl from Worcester. The tunnel's supporting infrastructure includes a toll plaza, a main control centre building and tunnel portal buildings that contain extensive electrical, electronic and mechanical systems required to manage and operate the tunnel and toll plaza.

SANRAL identified the need for the Huguenot Tunnel to be upgraded and cited the European Directive on Road Tunnel Safety, EU/2004/54/EC Clause 2.1.2. This clause states that when a 15-year traffic forecast shows that the volume will exceed 10 000 vehicles per day per lane, a twin-tube tunnel with unidirectional traffic shall be in place.

SMEC South Africa’s scope of work for the North Bore and South Bore includes preliminary design, detailed design, procurement and construction supervision. The design and procurement phase will take place over a period of 15 months, while construction is set to take 55 months to complete.

Works on the North Bore will include concrete lining; continually reinforced two-lane pavement with associated drainage and services; electrical, ventilation and fire-fighting systems; and upgrades to the highway on either side of the North Bore (including the design of the new Elands River Bridge and widening of the existing Molenaars River Bridge) to accommodate the two additional lanes to the North Bore. Upgrade works to the South Bore, which are dependent on the status of a current rehabilitation contract, are envisaged to address moisture ingress and structural integrity, as well as rehabilitation of fire-damaged areas. In addition, SMEC South Africa will be responsible for the design, procurement and construction supervision of two ventilation buildings and two operations buildings and associated backup facilities.

SMEC South Africa Regional Manager, Western Cape, and Functional General Manager, Roads and Highways, Jaco Engelbrecht says: “We feel honoured to have been awarded this contract by SANRAL. The Huguenot Tunnel is one of South Africa’s most iconic structures and one that remains close to our hearts at SMEC, having previously provided structural design and geotechnical services in the early 1980s. We look forward to collaborating with SANRAL to deliver a safe, aesthetically pleasing, environmentally sensitive and modern road tunnel.”

Huguenot Tunnel Facts

- The South Bore was completed and opened to traffic in March 1988
- The tunnel reduces the distance between Paarl and Worcester by 11 km
- The tunnel eliminates a climb of some 500 m over the Du Toitskloof Pass
- The tunnel has served over 100-million vehicles over the past 30 years

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Image Captions:

Image 1: SMEC South Africa awarded Huguenot Tunnel project



Image 2: SMEC South Africa Regional Manager, Western Cape, and Functional General Manager, Roads and Highways, Jaco Engelbrecht.



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About SMEC:

SMEC is a global engineering, management and development consultancy delivering innovative solutions for our clients and partners. Leveraging our 70-year history of delivering nation-building infrastructure, we provide technical expertise and advanced engineering services to resolve complex challenges across the project lifecycle, from initial concept, feasibility, planning and design through to construction, commissioning, and operation and maintenance.

In 2016, SMEC joined the Surbana Jurong Group, which is headquartered in Singapore and has a global workforce of over 16,500 employees across 120 offices in more than 40 countries in Asia, Australia, UK, the Middle East, Africa and the Americas.