

Potential master developers submit qualification documents



AMMAN - The Ministry of Water and Irrigation is currently evaluating qualification documents submitted by international consortia interested in serving as the master developer of the Jordan Red Sea Project (JRSP), a government official said on Wednesday.

The ministry and its consultants received the qualification documents on March 1 and are currently studying them to determine which consortia adhere to our conditions, JRSP Director Fayez Batayneh said yesterday.

The JRSP, to be implemented in five phases, aims to address the country's severe water shortage by desalinating 210 million cubic metres (mcm) of water by 2018 in its first phase, and expanding to 700mcm annually in later phases.

The first phase entails conveying water from the Red Sea through pipelines to a desalination facility that will be built in Aqaba. Water generated from the plant will be distributed to the port city and development projects in the area.

The aim of the project is to secure an affordable water supply for Jordan while saving the Dead Sea from extinction and supporting widespread economic growth, according to Ministry of Water and Irrigation officials.

"Evaluation of the qualification documents is expected to take a month... the next stage will involve submitting a request for proposals," Batayneh told The Jordan Times over the phone yesterday.

In addition to providing much needed water to the country, the JRSP entails an economic development programme that includes the establishment of gated communities, resorts and industries among other projects, according to the ministry.

Under the JRSP, 2.150mcm of water will be extracted from the Red Sea every year; 930mcm will be desalinated and 1.220mcm will be channelled into the shrinking Dead Sea, in addition to generating 180 megawatts of electricity from projected hydropower stations.