

## **Consultants to brief public on progress to date**

**AMMAN** - The Ministry of Water and Irrigation will hold an open meeting today to brief the public about progress made in the Red-Dead Water Conveyance Project.

The event will be held in Amman at Le Meridien Hotel as of 9:00am, while a similar meeting for the public and people interested in the project will be held tomorrow in Aqaba at the Movenpick Hotel, a government official said on Saturday.

“The two meetings are organised by the ministry in coordination with the World Bank and the project’s consultants,” Red-Dead Project Director Fayez Batayneh told The Jordan Times yesterday.

“The project’s consultants will present up-to-date progress in the project. The public are invited to ask questions and make observations, which will be taken into consideration while implementing the two studies,” he said.

Similar meetings will be held in Palestine and Israel between June 15 and 17, according to the ministry.

The project aims at raising the water level of the shrinking Dead Sea from 408 metres to 315 metres below sea level and generating much needed potable water for its three stakeholders: Jordan, Palestine and Israel.

Led by the World Bank, the French company Coyne et Bellier is carrying out the economic feasibility study, while the British firm Environmental Resources Management is conducting the environmental impact assessment.

The two studies, costing \$15 million, were launched in May 2008 and will end in March next year, but initial results are expected this November, according to the ministry.

The Red-Dead project is part of international efforts to save the Dead Sea, which has been shrinking at the rate of one metre per year, largely due to the diversion of water from the Jordan River for agricultural and industrial use.

Over the past two decades alone, it has plunged more than 30 metres, with experts warning that it could dry up within the next 50 years.

The project, which will alleviate pressure on renewable and non-renewable water resources in the region by providing about 850 million cubic metres of potable water annually, entails the construction of a 200-kilometre canal from Aqaba on the Red Sea to the Dead Sea.