

Work begins on new sewage plant in north Gaza

GAZA CITY, Nov 25, 2010 (AFP) - Work to build a new sewage treatment plant in northern Gaza began on Thursday in a multi-million euro project being funded by the World Bank and several countries in Europe.

The new waste water project, which is worth an estimated 48 million euros (64 million dollars), is being built in the northern town of Beit Lahiya, a statement from the French consulate said.

An initial stage, which saw the construction of a pumping station to transfer thousands of cubic metres of waste water to nine treatment basins, was completed this summer.

Thursday's ceremony marked the start of the second stage of the project, which will see the construction of the actual plant -- a biological treatment facility with a daily capacity of 35,600 cubic metres (1.25 million cubic feet) to serve northern Gaza.

Construction of the facility will also protect groundwater sources from pollution by untreated waste water, the statement said, indicating the project would take three years to complete.

France contributed 16 million euros to the project, and the launch was attended by Frederic Desagneaux, the French consul general in Jerusalem.

As well as the World Bank, other contributors included Belgium, Sweden and the European Union.