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BIDS SOUGHT FOR NEW DAM IN JORDAN

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[Text] The Jordan Valley Authority has asked companies to submit their qualifications for building the Maqarin Dam, part of a \$1 billion development project, and said it will accept tenders from August 31 next year. It expects to award the contract by January 1981 and hopes that work will be complete within five years of that date.

The dam, on the Yarmouk River, east of Lake Tiberius, is designed to store about 350 million cubic metres of water for drinking and irrigation. The first stage of the project, completed last summer at a cost of \$200 million, has provided enough water to irrigate more than 20,000 hectares. The project is being financed by international agencies including the World Bank, OPEC, the EEC, and various Arab, European and Development Funds.

In advertisements published last week, the Valley Authority said the dam would be constructed under the terms of a general unit-price type contract including escalating cost provisions.

The dam will be 150 metres high; it will require a grout curtain needing some 80 kilometres of drilling, a concrete diaphragm of about 20,000 square metres and a total length of five kms of grouting and drainage adits. It will also entail two concrete-lined spillways, power and irrigation tunnels, a 22-MW hydraulic power house and 21-km transmission line carrying 132 KW.

World Bank officials are currently in Amman to discuss finance of the dam. A Jordanian source said the government has made a series of contacts with international organisations for extra financing, but denied reports by Israeli TV that indirect contacts were carried out with Israel to divide the Yarmouk waters. The dam lies on the Jordanian-Syrian border, close to the Makhiba dam, where work stopped with the breakout of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war.

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