

World Bank to use Emerald Book for underground works contracts

International engineering federation FIDIC has extended its licensing terms to allow the World Bank (WB) to use the Emerald Book (Conditions of Contract for Underground Works) for all WB-financed underground works contracts.

The move expands the scope of the original 2019 agreement which allowed the WB to adopt the use of six FIDIC standard contracts for projects it finances until 2024. Now the agreement includes the Emerald Book form of contract for WB-financed tunnelling and underground works contracts for which invitations to bid are published on the WB website by 31 December 2024.

"The Emerald Book addresses several critical areas that should lead to the smoother running of contracts in the growing tunnelling and underground works sector," commented FIDIC CEO Dr Nelson Ogunshakin. "The bank's move will help to command the respect and authority of the tunnel engineering and construction sector and further underline the fact that both clients and contractors can use this contract with confidence."

The Emerald Book is the first form of contract specifically developed for tunnelling that is recognised internationally. It was originally launched in May 2019 at the World Tunnel Congress in Naples as a joint initiative between FIDIC and the International Tunnelling and Underground Space Association (ITA-AITES).

The book identified three unique features of underground works:

- Excavation method and ground support
- Physical access to the works
- The land beneath the alignment.

It also recognised the difficulty of predicting ground conditions with any certainty and so highlighted the need for balanced risk-sharing /allocation, as well as dealing with unforeseen ground conditions.

ITA-ALTES president Jenny Yan said: "We at the ITA welcome the World Bank's decision to utilise advanced and proven contractual mechanisms to deal with subsurface construction risks more fairly and efficiently. The Emerald Book will make dam projects with significant underground works components more efficient to deliver and thereby support sustainable global hydropower energy initiatives."