

Gov't to study feasibility of Korea-Japan undersea tunnel

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The Korean government will begin its first study on the feasibility of building an undersea tunnel between Korea and Japan, government officials said yesterday.

Officials from the Ministry of Construction and Transportation said that the ministry will request that the Korea Transport Institute, Korea Research Institute for Human Settlements, or the Korea Railroad Research Institute launch a study on the project this month.

The examination will help the government to clarify its stance on the need for an undersea tunnel, they said.

The project was first brought up by Japan in the 1940s as part of its efforts to form a "pan-East Asia co-prosperity sphere," and has since been examined by Korean and Japanese civic groups over the past few years.

This is the first time the Korean government has launched its own assessment.

"The examination will focus more on finding out whether building such a tunnel is necessary because the project involves many aspects such as the public sentiment of the two countries, technical feasibility, and distribution of construction expenses," a ministry official said.

The examination will concentrate on collecting information assessed from both countries and on the necessity and technical feasibility of the project, the official said.

The government estimates the examination will take about one year and cost 70 million won.

The ministry plans to adjust its position on the project as soon as the results come out and decide



on the actual construction with the Japanese government.

If constructed, the Korea-Japan undersea tunnel will be 235 km in length, linking Busan to Geoje Island to Japan's Tsushima to Ikido and then to Kyushu, which is four times longer than the 50 km Channel Tunnel linking England and France and the 51.9 km Seikan Tunnel in northern Japan.

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