Canal İstanbul is the Turkish project name of the artificial sea-level waterway, which is being built by the Republic of Turkey on the European side of Turkey, connecting the Black Sea to the Sea of Marmara, and hence to the Aegean and Mediterranean Seas.

Canal İstanbul would bisect the current European side of Istanbul and thus form an island between the continents of Asia and Europe (the island would have a shoreline with the Black Sea, Sea of Marmara, the new canal and the Bosphorus). The new waterway would bypass the current Bosphorus. Canal İstanbul aims to minimise shipping traffic in the Istanbul Strait. The project is intended for the 100th anniversary in 2023 of the foundation of the Turkish Republic.

**Purpose**

The main purpose of the project is to reduce the marine traffic through the Bosphorus and minimize the risks and dangers associated particularly with tankers. About 56,000 vessels pass yearly through the Istanbul Strait, among them 10,000 tankers carrying 145 million tons of crude oil. International pressure is growing to increase the marine traffic tonnage through the Turkish straits that brings risks for the security of marine navigation during the passage. The canal will further help prevent the pollution caused by cargo vessels passing through or mooring in the Sea of Marmara before the southern entrance of the Bosphorus.

The waterway will have a length of 45–50 km (28–31 mi) with a depth of 25 m (82 ft). Its width will be 150 m (490 ft) on the surface and 120 m (390 ft) at the canal bed. These dimensions will allow the largest vessels and even submarines to pass.

**Cost**

The Turkish Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan and Istanbul Metropolitan Municipality officials have stated that Canal İstanbul will cost $15–20 billion to build and that financing for the development has already been allocated by the Turkish Treasury. They further added that they would be relying entirely on national resources. It is envisaged that Turkish Armed Forces personnel would play a key role in the Canal’s development.
A 45-to-50-kilometer canal will link the inner Marmara Sea to the Black Sea, according to plans. The canal will be 25 meters deep and up to 150 meters wide. The government is planning to shift tanker traffic from the Bosphorus to Canal Istanbul to remove the risks of cargo tankers carrying dangerous loads through the Bosphorus every day. Yeditepe University Professor Mesut Caşın agrees that the project will remove the risks caused by the tankers.
Prime Minister Ahmet Davutoglu announced recently about the start date of the Istanbul Canal project, which will be by the beginning of the New Year 2016, this announcement was made according to the plan that Davutoglu has planned with the government for the year 2016.

It wasn’t very clear at the beginning of this year as where the exact location would be, but now they said it would take place between Kucukcekmece Lake and Arnavutkoy district, connecting the two seas.

It is expected that the Canal Istanbul Project will cost about 15 million dollars, where two small cities will be constructed along the banks of the canal, which will connect Marmara Sea and the Black Sea, in parallel to the Bosphorus strait. It is expected also that the new city would have a population of 500,000 people.

General Director of Turkey’s motor ways Jahet Turhan, announced earlier that the government has given his foundation the rights of a tender to build 6 hanging bridges on the Canal Istanbul, which is the biggest project in the history of Turkey.

He also said that the cost of building these bridges would be around 5 billion Turkish Lira, noting that the foundation works of these bridges would take place before the digging of the canal. He also stated that the bridges construction would be completed in a two years period from the time of the tender, and car transit on them would be free of charge.
The Istanbul canal length would be over that 40 km and 400 m width and 35 m deep. And the building around the canal wouldn’t be over 5 floors high. The new city will be planned as to represent the new modern face of Turkey, as it would have also a conference room, touristic places, public parks, and shopping centers. The architect of this city will be driven from the historic Turkish heritage, to be similar to the old buildings of Istanbul.

As president Erdogan requested earlier, that this city wouldn’t have a very dense population, but it would be equally divided on both sides of the canal. And he considered this project to be the project of this era.

Istanbul canal project would be designed to allow the ships to travel through instead of the Bosphorus strait, or to minimize the traffic on the two new existing bridges on it.

It is worth mentioning that the real estates around this area would be booming in the upcoming period, especially for lands, close to it, or the areas surrounding the canal. And now many investors are moving to buy or invest in that area.

**Government prioritizes Istanbul Canal**

The government has put priority on the long-debated Istanbul Canal project. According to the government action plan for 2016, legislation on the Istanbul Canal project - a mega construction project to build a canal between the Black Sea and the Sea of Marmara through Thrace in Istanbul - will be introduced by the end of June 2016.

The Istanbul Canal Project was proposed in 2011 during the prime ministry of current President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and is commonly referred to as the "crazy project." Originally, the project was to be put out to tender by the end of 2013. However, sources have indicated that the government is finally expected to announce a tender for the project within the next two months and start construction within one year. The project will be implemented as one of the targets for 2023, and will generate revenue by charging the vessels crossing the canal according to their tonnage. According to the finalized details of the project, a mega city will be built on the two shores of the Istanbul Canal with around 500,000 homes. The mega city’s buildings will have a maximum of six floors each, and six bridges will be built over the canal. The approximate cost for the entire project is estimated at $20 billion.

The project aims to put an end to heavy shipping traffic in the Bosporus. Approximately 150 to 160 vessels pass through the canal on a daily basis, making this project a way to offer easy access to all business centers, industrial areas and workplaces with its multiple-model approach. Bridges will support infrastructure and settlement efficiency, and reap benefits from various public transportation routes. Large intersections and fast train stops are seen in a white circle in the project
file submitted to Erdoğan, while local metro and tram stations are marked with a thicker line. Furthermore, these areas link large settlement areas with strategic business centers, and links between all other transportation methods have been shown in the project file.