

## Box 12.2: Kanal Istanbul: a testing ground for anticipatory policy-making

In February 2020, the Turkish Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure approved the zoning plan for construction of a shipping canal, in order to bypass Istanbul's busy Bosphorus Strait. A tender for the project is to be launched by the end of 2020.

For Turkey's central government, the 45 km-long canal is necessary to relieve the growing (+29% since 2006) maritime traffic in the Bosphorus: 613 million tonnes of shipping in 2018, one-quarter of which concerned oil

delivered primarily by Russian tankers. This congestion has led to waiting times of up to 30 hours for the larger ships.

For its detractors, the project is of dubious financial and technical feasibility, with a potentially severe environmental impact on the fragile ecosystems of the Marmara Sea and the inshore lagoons and lakes which provide the metropolis of 16 million inhabitants with its freshwater supply (see, for example, Dogan and Stupar, 2017; Kundak and Baypinar, 2011).

The project will be a testing ground for anticipatory policy-making. For instance, should the world move decisively away from fossil fuels in the coming decades, the problem of traffic congestion in the Bosphorus Strait will dissipate, removing one of the justifications for the canal.

*Source:* compiled by the authors

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