

# Tourism Policy in Turkey's Development Plans<sup>1</sup>

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## Abstract

*Five-year development plans prepared by the Ministry of Development, formerly known as State Planning Organization (SPO), are the main policy documents indicating the growth Turkey will realize in economic, social and cultural fields in the long-term. Tourism is one of the elements to be considered in the development of a country. A country's tourism policy is first prepared in the development plans. While preparing the tourism policy, precautions towards all kinds of tourism activities are referred. The existing state of the tourism and the state it should be are given. Tourism activities are continuously diversifying. The purpose of this study is to reveal the tourism policies in the development plans, to determine the existing state of the tourism sector and the targets for future. Also, another purpose is to emphasize the problems the sector faces as well as possible problems that could arise in the future. Suggestions are given towards these problems.*

**Keywords:** Tourism Policy, Development Plans, Tourism Activities, Tourism Investments.

## 1. Introduction

Tourism means travelling for vacation, fun, sightseeing (Oktayer, Susam & Çak, 2007:13) and all of the events caused by the temporary accommodation of people (Maviş & Akoğlan, 1997:4). An individual who carry out these activities is named 'tourist'. Historical remains of ancient civilizations, geographical vegetation, natural beauties, lifestyles of local communities, customs and traditions and shelters have always been the center of attractions for centuries. On the other hand, as tourism is a global activity including different kinds of people, communities, religions, origins, languages and countries, it contributes to the peace in the world. In addition to these, tourism sector has direct and indirect contributions to the development of countries as it supports production, commerce, currency and employment. For instance, accommodation costs, promenade charges, payments for restaurants, transportation and gifts are some of the direct income items. As tourism activities use human labour, it helps the fight against unemployment. The biggest amount of foreign capital enters Turkish economy through tourism sector (Oktayer et al., 2007:167). Today, tourism activities in Turkey have been increasing quite fast as the country has a highly significant tourism potential with its historical heritage, culture, arts, natural beauties, gastronomy, hospitality and hotels that are beyond world standards.

## 2. Tourism Types

Every day, new tourism types emerge depending on the requests of spreading tourism activities to twelve months. In parallel with the diversification of tourism, income amount increases. On the other hand, the number of tourists increases as new tourism activities focus on the interests, wishes and choices of different tourists.

Main tourism types are (Oktayer et al., 2007:129-144):

1. Sea and yacht tourism: It requires clean sea and long sea shores. Sea water is good for health, strengthens body and increases the resistance of body against diseases. Touristic services for yacht owners and yachting trips for tourists are significant tourism activities.
2. Religious tourism: Travels of tourists to religious belief centres.
3. Health and Thermal tourism: Depends on the use of thermal water for treatment.

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4. Convention tourism: Made of national and international congresses.
5. Echo tourism: Tourism in mountainous and woodlands for nature lovers.
6. Tableland tourism: Using tablelands in high altitudes for tourism activities.
7. Cave tourism: Visiting geological structures like caves.
8. Hunting tourism: Hunting of wild animals for fun.
9. Botany tourism: Based on observing plant diversity.
10. Mountain tourism: It is for tourists who love mountaineering.
11. River tourism: Rafting and canoe activities on rivers.
12. Winter tourism: Activities in ski resorts.

### ***3. Turkey's Tourism Policy Pre-Planned Period***

Before the planned period of Turkey (1923-1963) highways, harbours and recreation areas were insufficient and studies about tourism were very limited. The world economic depression in 1929 and the Second World War that started in 1939 and continued for six years negatively affected tourism. Organization of tourism in public administration started in 1934 with the establishment of Tourism Bureau as a part of Economy Ministry. In Turkey, public improvement practices that started in 1950s contributed to the tourism sector as it started substructure and superstructure investments and supported restoration of historical artefacts (Oktayer et al., 2007:43). One of the significant developments in this period was Tourism Industry Promotion Law which went in effect in 1953. Another important development was establishing of Ministry of Tourism in 1957. Tourism's main development occurred in the planned period.

### ***4. Turkey's Tourism Policy at Planned Period***

In Turkey, with the new constitution accepted in 1961, development plans started. Development plans that centres the economic plans of the country, had been guiding for private sector while they were obligatory for public sector. Thanks to the development plans, present situation of country's resources were determined and fruitful utilization was ensured.

The concept of policy is a general guide for making decision (Yağcı, 2007:194). Tourism policies included in the development plans, determined activities about the development of tourism. With these policies, duties of public and private sectors were determined (Şahin, 1990:111). Incomes through tourism were maximized and costs were minimized (Olalı, 1990:30). Tourism sector was included in ten different development plans in the time period between the years 1963 and 2018. In all of the plans, it was mentioned that the country would industrialize and develop and tourism activities would accelerate this development (Oktayer et al., 2007:44).

#### **4.1. The First Five-Year Development Plan (1963 — 1967)**

In order to ensure the fast development of tourism, necessary basic costs should be planned and advertisements should be carried out. Overnight stay facilities should be established (SPO, 1963:425). As sources for tourism sector are limited, regions that would probably give fast results should be used and developed for tourism activities. Foreign and domestic tourism should be supported and promoted (SPO, 1963:428). An organization that would carry out and control necessary duties for the country's tourism development should be established as soon as possible (SPO, 1963:427). Customs and exchange processes should be eased and information offices for advertising should be opened (SPO, 1963:428). Tourism incomes should be more than outcomes in this plan period (SPO, 1963:510).

The most important tourism projects of the period are (SPO, 1963:427):

- a) Hotels, holiday villages and camps that will develop tourism should be established,
- b) Natural and historical resources should be protected and beautified and national parks that can be used as touristic attractions should be established.
- c) All kinds of transportation between Turkey and the Balkans, Greece, Italy and Israel should be increased.
- d) Tourism personnel should be educated properly.
- e) Food, drinks and gifts in touristic places should be produced regionally and the sales of them should be organized and supported.

#### **4.2. The Second Five-Year Development Plan (1968 — 1972)**

It is expected that tourism will be a significant source of income in the second five-year development plan (SPO, 1968:93). As tourism is a labour-intensive sector, it increases the level of employment (SPO, 1968:602). But in this period, tourism education which would support this couldn't be brought to the expected level (SPO, 1968:594) and the developments that were supposed to be completed couldn't be achieved in the first plan period (SPO, 1968:31). Coordination among different public and private organizations in terms of tourism couldn't be ensured (SPO, 1968:594). Increase in tourism incomes, foreign tourist number and average consumption were expected. Investments that were predicted would firstly be made on increasing accommodation capacity and accommodation facilities. In the second plan period, the basic principle of tourism policy is to develop mass tourism through legal and financial conveniences. It is stated that, accommodation facilities should be established on areas that have high touristic potential in the shape of giving service to mass tourism. High capacity resorts investments should especially be supported (SPO, 1968:299).

The basis of tourism policy to be followed in the Second five-year development plan (SPO, 1968:593):

- a) Foreign tourism income and domestic tourism movements should be supported and developed.
- b) Touristic advertisings should be improved.
- c) As a part of the investment policy in tourism sector, substructure facilities and sample facilities should be analysed by the public sector and other touristic facility investments should be made by private sector.
- d) Tourism investments should be especially made on special areas in regions that have high tourism potential (Marmara, Aegean and Antalya regions), transportation and accommodation proper for mass tourism should be ensured.
- e) Environment health should be ensured and food control should be carried out properly in order to develop tourism activities.
- f) Different international cooperation chances especially with Mediterranean countries should be searched.
- g) In the second five-year development plan period, priority should be given to areas that have accommodation facilities in terms of protecting natural, historical and archaeological values and monuments.

#### **4.3. The Third Five-Year Development Plan (1973 — 1977)**

Economic recession because of the petrol depression during 1970s interrupted the tourism movements. Goals in the plan couldn't be achieved. Number of tourists, tourism incomes and development in accommodation facilities were below the plan goals (SPO, 1972:614).

It is mentioned in the third five-year plan that, tourism investments should be especially made on special areas in regions that have high tourism potential (Marmara, Aegean and Antalya regions) and accommodation facilities proper for mass tourism should be established (SPO, 1972:618). Building airport, enhancing highways, establishing water, electric and sewerage systems, building berths are some of the items included in the substructure investments. Making investments on national parks and historical artifacts shall be continued (SPO, 1972:619).

Private sector should be the basis for tourism investment and management. Investment and leadership of public should focus on the role of guiding the private sector (SPO, 1972:619). Moving investments on other areas should be carried out in parallel with the number of tourists (SPO, 1972:898). Employees who had studied in tourism and hotel management schools were insufficient in terms of quality and quantity. On the other hand, it wasn't possible to enable them work in the fields that they studied. So, Tourism and hotel management high schools should be established (SPO, 1972:713). In order to increase tourism potential, underground and overland historical artifacts should be carefully protected (SPO, 1972:1003). Credit facility of the sector should be increased and foreign capital investment management should be started

#### **4.4. The Fourth Five-Year Development Plan (1979 — 1983)**

Opportunities to increase foreign travel in touristic facilities of public should be created and used (SPO, 1979:243). Camps and accommodation facilities of public enterprise should be known and used by more tourists (SPO, 1979:243). Necessary arrangements should be made in order to enable the young attend in national and international tourism activities and organizations (SPO, 1979:287). Big touristic accommodation facilities for mass tourism should be a significant goal and present facilities should be developed. In this context, foreign investments should be supported on the condition that these facilities have at least 500 beds (SPO, 1979:243).

Because of insufficient bed capacity in accommodation facilities and high costs domestic tourists prefer foreign countries (SPO, 1979:430). Rural and urban areas proper for tourism should be determined, historical places and significant war monumental areas should be protected and they should be prepared for tourism (SPO, 1979:297). House tourism should be supported (SPO, 1979:660). In this period, tourism education policy should be reviewed, changed and enforced in a way that it meets the requirements of a successful tourism (SPO, 1979:432).

#### **4.5. The Fifth Five-Year Development Plan (1985 — 1989)**

The state should especially focus on developing the substructure of thermal, yacht and winter tourism (SPO, 1984:198). Developing and enhancing infrastructure and increasing accommodation capacity should be supported and especially foreign capital should be encouraged (SPO, 1984:42).

The basis of tourism policy to be followed in the Fifth five-year development plan (SPO, 1984:120):

- 1) Turkey's natural, historical, archaeological and cultural assets, winter, hunting and water sports, festival, health and youth tourism potential should be developed by taking care of the ecological balance and environment.
- 2) Turkey should improve relations with Balkans and Third world countries besides OECD and OPEC countries.
- 3) Personal tourism shouldn't be ignored while focusing on mass tourism. Workers should have holiday and rest properly.
- 4) Tourism resources inventory that involve natural and cultural environment values should be prepared.
- 5) Using credit should be preferred instead of Tourism bank's direct investment.

#### **4.6. The Sixth Five-Year Development Plan (1990 — 1994)**

In this period, it is mentioned that public resources spared for tourism sector should be spent for developing education and technical substructure (SPO, 1989:352). Tourism substructure and infrastructure should be improved in terms of quality and quantity. Present accommodation facilities should be improved in terms of room capacity and quality (SPO, 1989:3). Natural and cultural values should be protected and developed for tourism (SPO, 1989:39). The general tourism policies to be followed in this development plan period are (SPO, 1989:281-282):

- 1) Tourism incentive policies should be prepared in order to improve winter, hunting, water sports and festivals, health, convention, thermal and golf tourism.
- 2) The number of workers in tourism sector should be increased; their knowledge and abilities should be improved. Lodging industry and related schools should be opened in order to have enough workers.
- 3) Tour operators for domestic travel agencies should be encouraged and supported.
- 4) Touristic facility management should be developed; small capacity facilities and family hostel management should be supported.
- 5) The best conditions for the community's holiday should be ensured.

#### **4.7. The Seventh Five-Year Development Plan (1996 — 2000)**

In this plan period, accommodation investments were slowed, substructure and renovation investments were encouraged. Promotion and marketing processes were developed. Touristic facility buildings were taking long time and this had a significantly negative effect on tourism sector. On the other hand, problems resulting from not being able to diversify tourism continued (SPO, 1995:162). General tourism policies to be followed in this development plan period are (SPO, 1989:162):

- 1) Basic goals of the sector are to develop a highly efficient and significant tourism economy, to enrich natural and cultural values and ensure persistence
- 2) Seasonal and geographic distribution of tourism should be planned; golf, winter, mountain, tableland, thermal, health, yacht, trailer, cruise, convention and game-fun tourism should be improved by taking consumer preferences into consideration.
- 3) Depending on the new tendencies in demand structure, small scale facilities should be supported and developed.
- 4) Certification system should be started in order to increase service quality.
- 5) Association of tourist guides should be established in order to increase the professional efficiency of the sector's workers (SPO, 1995:164).

#### **4.8. The Eight Five-Year Development Plan (2001 — 2005)**

There is a need to reform the sectors of advertising and marketing in tourism (SPO, 2000:166). Regions that have potential in terms of tourism should be taken into consideration and they should be developed (SPO, 2000:167).

General tourism policies to be followed in this development plan period are (SPO, 2000:167-168):

- 1) The basic goal is to increase the share of Turkey in the world tourism incomes.
- 2) Marketing, air transportation and increasing quality should be the main goals of tourism incentives.
- 3) Labour force quality should be improved and international standards should be ensured in tourism establishments.
- 4) Physical environment, archaeological sites and historical places should be protected. In order to improve ecotourism, national parks and similar places should be extended (SPO, 2000:140).

#### **4.9. The Ninth Five-Year Development Plan (2007 — 2013)**

Making use of tourism potential in terms of increasing the prosperity and development is the basic goal of this period. Economic and social development by increasing tourism in the regions that weren't popular before is the basic goal, economic and social development of these areas should be prioritized (SPO, 2006:81).

In this period, cultural activities should be extended, relations with world countries -especially with the ones with whom we had a common history- should be improved, cultural assets in the country and abroad should be determined, and their restoration, maintenance and repairing activities should continue (SPO, 2006:45). Competitive advantage of Turkey in terms of service quality and geothermal resources should be taken into consideration and health tourism should be supported (SPO, 2006:82). In tourism incentives, marketing sector, air transportation and total quality improvement of present products should be prioritized (SPO, 2006:82). On the other hand, all of the investments on the sector should be controlled in order to protect and improve natural, historical and social environment.

#### **4.10. The Tenth Five-Year Development Plan (2014 — 2018)**

Skilled labour, facility and service quality in tourism are the basic goals of the period; making the sector an international brand and giving service to a higher income group are the other goals (Ministry of Development, 2013:114). There have been significant developments in tourism sector starting from the beginning of planned periods until today.

It is necessary to generalize the studies about professional information system and give this opportunity to all of the workers in the sector (Ministry of Development, 2013:113). Although foreign tourist number and tourism income has been increasing continually, income level per tourist is still low (Ministry of Development, 2013:22). For instance, it is expected that there will be an increase in health expenses in the long term, and based on this expectation it can be said that, there is an opportunity to increase health tourism (Ministry of Development, 2013:11). In line with the world tendencies, it is expected that tourism demand will be based on comfort and adventure motives (Ministry of Development, 2013:114).

### **5. Result and Suggestions**

Tourism in Turkey is the sector that has the biggest competitive power in foreign market. For instance, the country has a significant amount of carpet, leather, manufacture of ready-made clothes, jewellery and handicrafts products (Specialization Commission Report, 2007:14). The country has young, energetic, dynamic and well-educated human resources in this sector.

In the above mentioned five-years development plans, policies that are to be followed can be summarized as:

- 1) It is mentioned in all of the development plan periods that, advertisement costs and promotion expenses (SPO, 1963:425; SPO, 1963:428) are one of the most significant ways to improve tourism in the country (SPO, 1968:593). This fact is still valuable in tourism activities.
- 2) In order to diversify tourism, state especially supports conference, thermal, yacht, hunting, water sports and youth tourism activities (SPO, 1984:198).
- 3) Increasing tourism income through increasing the number of tourists, overnight stay and average expense amount is always a good and useful approach (SPO, 1963:510; SPO, 1968:299)

4) In order to use the limited resources, it is always a correct and valuable policy to firstly support and develop the substructure and infrastructure in the regions that have tourism potential (SPO, 1963:428; SPO, 1968:299).

5) Public support substructure facilities while private sectors support infrastructure facilities, which are liberal economy, practices (SPO, 1972:204).

6) Restoring and protecting historical assets, using forests that have touristic potential, sea, lake and river banks for general public welfare (SPO, 1979:243) are ideal practices. In the second five-year development plan it is mentioned that environment, health and food controls are significant; these are correct universal values (SPO, 1968:593).

7) In parallel with the development in foreign tourism, there has been an effort to increase domestic tourism by giving opportunity to public workers (SPO, 1979:243; SPO, 1984:120); this shows that correct target group is chosen.

8) Advisory jurisdiction about increasing transportation opportunities between Turkey and Mediterranean countries, mentioned in the development plans, OECD, OPEC countries, Balkans, Greece and Italy and developing tourism (SPO, 1963:427; SPO, 1968:593; SPO, 1984:120) is still valid today. This shows that commission members worked in development plan are aware of the significance of the issue.

9) Mentioning the education of tourism personnel in all of the development plan periods is another significant policy (SPO, 1963:427; SPO, 1972:713; SPO, 1979:432; SPO, 1989:281). Associate and undergraduate degree tourism education means that this policy has always been important for tourism.

10) In the fifth four-year development plan, it is mentioned that family boarding houses and facilities that are owned by families should be encouraged (SPO, 1979:660). This is still an instrument to ensure rural development.

According to the points mentioned in the above mentioned development plans, these are the suggestions for improving tourism sector:

1) Tourism practices should be diversified in terms of natural and cultural values and spread to twelve months of the year.

2) Tourists' demands and expectations should be met, service quality should be improved and environmental health should be protected.

3) Incentives for tourism investments should continue.

4) Value added tax and special consumption tax rates in tourism practices should be decreased.

5) Promotion and marketing in tourism should be diversified.

6) In order to decrease the dependency on European and Russian tourists, different countries, especially Arabs, Chinese and Japan tourists should be chosen as target markets. Through this, silk-road tourism can be started (İlkin & Dinçer, 1991:105)

7) Fairs, conventions, festivals and sports should be prioritized in order to develop tourism (Sezgin, 2001:73-74). Visual, written and social media spreading promotion and advertisement of touristic organizations is significant.

8) Family facilities in village and forest ecotourism activities should be encouraged and improved.

9) Travel agencies and tour operators, which are entrepreneurship types, should be encouraged. These educations should firstly be given in public education centres.

10) It should always be remembered that tourism sector is easily affected by natural disasters, wars, terror incidents, epidemics and economic crises.

As a result, Turkey will have voice in international tourism as long as it develops and actuates the tourism potential it has.

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