

# THE RECENT DEVELOPMENT PLANS OF TURKEY AND POLICY TOOLS FOR REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

**Özbek O.**

*Pamukkale University, Denizli, Turkey*

In the last two development plans of Turkey, the Ninth (2007-2013) introduced in 2006 and the Tenth (2014-2018) Development Plan introduced in 2014, a number of new policy tools for regional development planning characterize the agenda of spatial planning in the second decade of 2000s in Turkey. While the first plan puts emphasis on the administrative and strategic concerns of regional development, the second plan dwells on sustainable development and metropolitan governance.

With the introduction of the Ninth Development Plan (2007-2013) of Turkey, which is the first development plan abandoning a pre-determined vision (five years), the institutional priorities of integration with the European Union are included within the strategic framework of the plan. In the report of this plan, the importance of institutional restructuring to implement a holistic development strategy is addressed at both regional and sub-regional levels. As a new attempt to strengthen the institutional structure of spatial planning in Turkey, «the preparation of a regional development strategy at the national level» aims both to build cooperation among the national spatial and economic development efforts and to provide an institutional framework for lower level plans and strategies. With a number of concepts and approaches, the Ninth Development Plan of Turkey attempts to address a problem of spatial scale and implementation tools both in the formulation of regional development strategies and in the determination of institutional tasks in the spatial planning system: local devolution, regional prioritization, holistic development strategy, new rural planning strategy and subnational (provincial) planning. In the report of the Ninth Development Plan of Turkey, local devolution is highlighted as an important policy area in the determination of different levels of spatial planning. Both the institutional developments at local level and the changes in the approaches to development at national level signify the necessity of a new planning mechanism providing coordination between the local and national planning authorities in Turkey. Here, the coordination among different planning levels and the determination of tasks and responsibilities in the preparation and implementation of spatial plans appears to be the important topics in the devolution. The report of the Ninth Development Plan also emphasizes the necessity of a redefinition of the tasks, power relationships and responsibilities between local and central initiatives in terms of institutional cooperation and supervision in regional and local development. In Turkey, the socio-economic imbalances between rural and urban settlements and regions fuelled by rural-urban migration make necessary the implementation of «a holistic spatial development policy» including local measures to be taken to overcome particular regional problems. In the establishment of a holistic approach to the «management and monitoring» of development

and spatial plans, to determine the interscale planning tools and standards and to implement a «deconcentration principle» appear as the important tasks to carry out.

With new institutional arrangements and acts, subnational level becomes a prominent scale in the introduction of spatial development strategies in Turkey. In this sense, the state's efforts aim at providing a suitable regulatory environment for the promotion of local initiatives in regional planning in a collaborative manner. According to the Ninth Development Plan of Turkey, in the preparation of regional development plans in Turkey, local initiatives and regional partnerships will jointly determine the course of regional economic development and cooperation.

Related to the implementation ways of the new spatial development strategy in Turkey is a central issue which concerns regional prioritization. In the Ninth Development Plan, regional «prioritization» is suggested as a major policy tool in both creation of new regional centers and restructuring of the hierarchy of regional economic relations in favor of the less developed regions and provinces in Turkey. The Ninth Development Plan also highlights how regional prioritization will be used as the main strategic tool for establishing new settlement hierarchy in the planning of rural areas. At this point, it is pointed out that the characteristics of rural areas and the needs of rural communities will determine the principles of this new rural planning strategy. In the preparation of rural development plans, «rural centers, tourism areas, nature conservation areas and disaster-prone areas» are priority areas. In rural areas, «participatory and cost-sharing pilot projects» that aim at both promoting cooperation among local initiatives and supporting «local entrepreneurship» will be launched. The implementation scope of «the most successful projects» will be extended nationwide.

The Tenth (2014-2018) Development Plan of Turkey introduced in 2014 considerably rests on the strategic framework of the preceding plan. Especially, local devolution and regional prioritization based on a growth pole strategy characterized the strategic framework of the Tenth Plan. The widespread concerns of sustainable development and new planning and governance models for metropolitan development are other key topics addressed in the latest development plan.

The main spatial approach of the Tenth Development Plan centers on sustainable development and livability. Here, some of the important topics include economic growth, competitiveness, pre-disaster planning, social interaction, cultural values and environmental soundness. Under a title of «Livable Spaces and Sustainable Environment» in the report of the plan, the priorities of environmental protection, the concerns of urban and rural living quality and the elimination of regional disparities are addressed. According to the initiatives of the plan, a new settlement order and organization in Turkey is needed to reveal a realistic portrait of regional income distribution. The convergence of regional borders with the real socio-economic status of urban and rural settlements is considered as an important task for the reorganization of regional territorial system. Another key policy area addressed in the Tenth Plan is metropolitan governance. For ensuring an efficient public administration and local governance, the plan draws attention to a need for new planning, organization and service supply models in the metropolitan areas, whose numbers recently grew from 16 to 30 in recent years. The plan also high-

lights the importance of governmental funding in especially assisted regions (most provinces of the Eastern Black Sea, Eastern and Southeastern Anatolia regions). The plan aims to enable a better implementation of new investment subsidy and regional evaluation system launched in 2012 and based on the six provincial levels of socio-economic development. This new system can be seen as a reinterpretation, or extension, of already existing policy tool of Turkish development planning, «priority regions for development» since 1968.