

Evaluation of Tourism Strategy 2023 within Perspective of Transportation Strategy

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Abstract

Government participation in tourism through regulation, planning and monitoring is an important research topic in the tourism literature. Government encompasses the formal and informal institutions related with tourism and the state acts in various scales. One of the major activities is the planning phase. The state and related institutions decide upon the city, region, country needs a plan to be implemented. These plans sometimes occur in small scale basis like a district of a city and other times at a macro scale like a master or a strategic plan comprising the whole country. The strategic plans of the country might be directly related to the tourism sector or related sectors. For instance a strategic tourism plan that covers the transportation policies and strategy of the country. Tourism as a single entity cannot take place. For the tourism sector to succeed, compliance and coordination is needed with other sectors. This study within this perspective analyzes the report of Tourism Strategy of Turkey 2023 and conveys the transportation and infrastructure strategy of the report in depth analysis

Keywords: Transportation policy, tourism planning, strategic tourism plans

Tourism Strategy of Turkey – 2023: Evaluation of Transportation and Infrastructure Strategy

Khan et al. (2017: 125) highlights that the concentration of different modes of transportation including air transportation, railways transportation, and travel and transport system would helpful to advance international tourism. Contributing to knowledge on ‘what to do’ in terms of transportation policy development, whilst clearly important, is different to understanding why the policies that are in place today are the way they are, how new policies get formulated and what can, rather than could, be implemented in real-world settings (Marsden & Reardon, 2017: 238). While these models and their outputs play an increasingly more important function in transport-related decision-making processes, growing concerns emerge about their limitations, assumptions, biases, and usability (Brömmelstroeta, et al. 2017: 10). Coyle et al., (2006: 64) stated out that the purpose of transportation policy is to provide direction for determining the amount of national resources that will be dedicated to transportation and for determining the quality of service that is essential for economic activity.

In this report the researcher aimed to examine Turkish tourism policies and planning with a specific focus on Tourism Strategy of Turkey 2023. The plan is studied in detailed to monitor the integration of transportation and infrastructure policies with the requirements of tourism sector in Turkey. The report Tourism Strategy 2023 which was published in 2007 is composed of management and implementation of strategic efforts especially encouraging alternative tourism and consequently boost annual revenues long term with sustainable tourism goals (Paksoy, 2009: 875). While analyzing the report, the researcher carried out an in-depth investigation concerning on the below questions:

Evaluating the Content of the Policy & Plan

Is there identification of the stakeholders that must be included in the policy? Are the interest groups and stakeholders’ needs and interests are equally regarded?

Or are there any inequality of certain groups or people? Are the strategies that have been written directly observable? Will they have observable outcomes? Are the policies that have been defined understandable, clear, simple and unambiguous?

Are the policies realizable within capacities of government, organizations and communities? Do the strategies include social, cultural, ecological components? Do the policies show respect to community's sociocultural and environmental patterns? Is it broad in coverage of all aspects of sustainable development?

Action

Is there any implementation activity of the plan up to now? Did they apply any of these plans? Is there any proof of applying these policies and actualizing them in real life? Or do these policies just stay in words? Consequently this article evaluated the transportation objectives in Tourism Strategy 2023 report in two phases: the content suitability and the action whether the targeted objectives have been implemented or if they are in the process of implementation. The Transportation and Infrastructure Strategy part of the report contains transportation and infrastructure objectives for 2023. According to report, the main objective is to solve infrastructure and transportation problems in Aegean and Mediterranean coast. Therefore, the Mediterranean- Aegean Tourism Infrastructure and Coastal Management Project (ATAK) should be completed. According to report, for all operations, Culture and Tourism Ministry should work together with local government users in areas which have tourism potential (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2007). The report mentions that, transportation is very important for tourism and it plays a major role. The goal is to spread tourism to the whole year and to develop tourism in hinterland. After the introduction, report mentioned the objectives and plans and divided them into two:

- 1) Infrastructure Objectives
- 2) Transportation Objectives
 - a. Airway Objectives
 - b. Railway Objectives
 - c. Highway Objectives
 - d. Seaway Objectives

According to report, public investment on this objective should be minimized to energize the sector. To achieve that, the models shown below can be used:

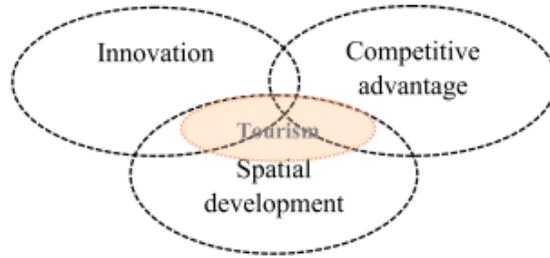
- Build – Operate – Transfer
- Build – Operate
- Design – Build – Finance – Operate
- Build – Own – Operate
- Build – Lease – Operate – Transfer
- Public – Private Sector Joint Venture

At this point; the infrastructure and transportation are important factors in tourism. Solving these problems will help the tourism develop. The financial models are suitable for this project and the models will encourage entrepreneurs in Turkey and this will build up the economy.

1) Evaluating Infrastructure Objectives

If tourist destinations want to be competitive, and to endure their competitive advantage, to attract new or repeat customers, innovation is crucial. Based on the literature review and theoretical frameworks of innovation, competitive advantage and spatial development, there is a clear interconnection among these terms. According to Borsekova et al, (2017: 41) tourism is a part of spatial structure and creates a specific part of spatial development planning. Spatial planning could be considered as a buffer mechanism between the private and public sectors for the benefit of all stakeholders (Please see Fig. 1).

Fig. 1. Interconnection among innovation, competitive advantage, tourism and spatial development (Borsekova et al, 2017: 41)



1.1. Report:

According to report; the objective is to design, engineer and construct of variety of utilities such as potable water, sewerage, waste water treatment and discharge, solid waste collection and disposal facilities with such installed capacities along the 2000 kilometers long coastal road from Çanakkale borders to Antalya – Mersin borders. Another objective is to solve infrastructure problems in the areas which have high tourism potential and in the backshore areas.

1.2. Actions:

The Law of Infrastructure Associations (“AltyapıBirlikleriYasası”) which is mentioned in the report in action planning stage legislated in 2007. Infrastructure Unities established in Aegean and Mediterranean regions under this law. These associations are managing by private sector and local government and they are financing the Project. MarmarisveÇevresiTurizm Alanı AltyapıHizmetBirliği (MARTAB), AlanyaÇevresiTurizmiGeliştirmeve Alt YapıBirliği (ALTAB), DidimTurizmAltyapıBirliği (DİTAP) are one of these unities and their aim is to make infrastructure operations like potable water, sewerage, waste water treatment and discharge in the area that they are responsible for. There are such projects that have been completed and managed by “ProjeİnşaatDaireBaşkanlığı Alt YapıProjeveUygulamaŞubeMüdürlüğü”.Below you will find some Turkish cities infrastructure details according to the information received from Ministry of Tourism and Culture. ¹

Wastewater Treatment Plants:

Antalya	Muğla	Balıkesir	Çanakkale
23	6	1	1
Total Capacity: 426,210 m3/day			
Total Investment: 85,9 million US Dollars			

Potable Water Facilities:

Antalya	Muğla	Kars	İzmir
4	2	1	1
Total Capacity: 30.500 m3			
Total Investment: 12,5 million US Dollars			

Sewerage Collection Routes:

Antalya	Muğla	Kars	İzmir
12	1	1	1
Total Length: 293.990 m.			
Total Investment: 26,1 million US Dollars			

Chairlift Facilities

There are two chairlift facilities made in Kars. Their total length is 3.735 meters and the total investment is 2,5 million US Dollars.

Slurry Trench Construction

¹<http://yigm.kulturturizm.gov.tr/TR,11547/altyapi-projeleri.html>

There are two slurry trench constructions built in İzmir Çeşme'dir to protect potable water resources. Their total length is 709 m. and the total investment is 3 million US Dollars.

Compost Facilities

There are two compost facilities and collection facilities built in Antalya, in Kemer and Manavgat. Their total capacity is 160.000 ton/year and the total investment is 10 million US Dollars. The 2015 projects that had been budgeted for tourism infrastructure are as follows. ²

- Mediterranean-Aegean Tourism Infrastructure and Coastal Management Project: 38.000.000TL.
- Tourism Area and Centers; Districts with Tourism Potential: 73.000.000 TL.
- Tourism Driven Infrastructure Applications (GAP-DAP): 26.000.000 TL.

1.3. Analysis

Most of the objectives have achieved and some of them are still under planning. The report did not detail the objectives about backshore areas and did not specify cities with high tourism potential. Even so, there are many acceptable operations made in Çanakkale, Muğla, İzmir and Antalya. Especially the legislation of the Law of Infrastructure Associations ("Altyapı Birlikleri Yasası") made the operations operational and expediter. In this year, there has been also thermal and health tourism centers infrastructure works that have been carried out especially in Nevşehir, Afyon, Yalova, Niğde and winter sport tourism centers infrastructure works in Kastamonu, Ordu, Çankırı, Erzincan, Erzurum Palandöken, Isparta Davraz, Gümüşhane, Sivas.

2) Evaluating Transportation Objectives

According to Garrison and Levinson, (2005: 397) what sets transportation systems apart from other are their connecting-enabling roles and the ways they pervade so much of life. Travel and tourism, much of it using air travel, now employ more than %10 of the world's workforce and generates the same percentage of the World's freight value is moved by air. By this point the need for a strong federal program to support airport development to handle the rapidly increasing traffic levels was widely recognized (Caves and Gosling, 1999: 3-5). Thus airways is one of the objectives that would be focused initially.

2.1. Evaluating Airway Objectives

2.1.1. Report

In the report they emphasized that air travel was important for time and security. Besides our distance to international tourism markets and our country's topography makes the air travel the best choice. With these developments tourism activity will be extended to 4 seasons all year round and travelers would have the chance to spend more time to stay in the country. All of them will have positive impacts on the tourism industry. To actualize these plans; air travel must be made widespread to each city in Turkey. The easiness of this sort of travel could also make the travelers get used to it and turn into a popular mode of transport compared to others. The report mentioned that restore and perfection actions must be done to current airports. In addition, actions to make new airports will help travelers to visit more places in shorter time that will lead to more promotions. Another specific problem is inactive airports; these areas must be restored and consequently can be reusable again. Lastly, in big cities 2 or more airports can be used to make air travel more efficient.

2.1.2. Actions

An airport in Alanya - Gazipaşa is newly done and will be in service in a couple of weeks. Correspondingly in Hakkari, Kastamonu, Bingöl, and Iğdır airports are in service. In Kütahya, Çukurova and Ordu new airports have been constructed considering the tourism potential and progressing commercial operations (TOBB, 2014: 122).

They also recommended that Bursa, Çanakkale and Edremit Körfez airports would be in use for international flights. This partially began in Bursa. Nevertheless the same comment on Çanakkale and Edremit Körfez airports could be uttered only for domestic flights. In addition, in Kütahya, the report claims that feasibility and report projects will be done for the new airport. TOBB (2014: 119) pointed out that the newly opened Kütahya airport serve 2 main cities; Afyon and Uşak that are 100 km close by in proximity.

²<http://yigm.kulturturizm.gov.tr/TR,50802/2015-yilinda-yapilacak-altyapi-calismalari.html>

2.1.3. Analysis

Additional airports can be done in Ankara and İzmir, this will help to improve both these areas and airline travel. In İstanbul – Şile, Hezarfen Ahmet Çelebi airport can be restored and used efficiently. Furthermore in the report they don't emphasize on specific airports that will be restored and which cities will have more airports. With more build-operate and transfer model more airports can be done quickly. The experience of attempts to generate new airport capacity at least in the developed world, suggests that airport entrepreneurs will face increased risk from three main uncertainties: (Caves and Gosling, 1999: 12).

- User demand and its satisfaction by the airlines in a competitive setting
- Capacity and cost implications of environmental protection
- Refusal of planning permission after lengthy preparation or duplicative permission leading to excess capacity.

Therefore extra efforts should be spent upon capacity usage. Another issue would be the design of airports. As we can consider from tourism perspective even an airport terminal can turn into an appealing place. Architectural quality of the airports can be distinguishing in this regard. As this is demonstrated by practical terminal buildings which respond to the conflicts of commercial pressure and at the same time (Blow, 1998: x). Furthermore Blow (1998: 8) adds that “space, speed, simplicity and service” must be the objective of every new and remodeled terminal. This suggestion could be utilized for the upcoming construction projects.

2.2. Evaluating Railway Objectives

High-speed trains became crucial for four major reasons: time, environment, energy consumption and reliability. Furthermore, a beautiful landscape, a historical monument or a sunny and fine sandy beach hardly becomes a successful tourist destination if transport infrastructure does not allow a convenient, comfortable and safe way to get there and return (Albalade, et al. 2017: 71). With reference to Şakar (2010: 34-35) the railways are state-owned and operated in Turkey. Some problems exist in the railways in terms of infrastructure. Investment in this sector till now has been aimed at improving standards so that rail transport can become a competitive alternative to other transport modes. According to ITF (2009), increasing cooperation within the railway companies of neighboring countries in order to provide new intermodal services is aimed as cooperation with Balkan railway companies to launch the aforementioned RO-LA services and develop intermodal services between EU and Turkey.

2.2.1. Report

In the report it is told that with recent changes railway transportation became easier, more comfortable and safer than the past. And with environmental concern this type of travelling would be an increasing trend. To develop railways and travelling; current railways will be connected to each other to make travelling easier. Also new lines and high speed railways make an interconnected transportation between cities and regions.

2.2.2. Actions

Between Ankara – Eskişehir, a new high speed railway is done and in use. This line makes transportation easier and safer between cities. And day by day it becomes popular. Also they claim that in between Ankara – Konya, Ankara – Sivas, and Ankara – İzmir, Bursa – Osmaneli, İstanbul – Antalya and Ankara – Kayseri new high speed train ways will be done. Extending a high-speed train will be a vital part of the tourism strategy. The line between İstanbul and Ankara has been started for high-speed train transportation in 2010; İstanbul-Konya and Ankara-Konya train line have been commenced as well. Subsequently, the project will be extended to Sivas, İstanbul-Bursa, İstanbul-İzmir, Ankara-İzmir and Ankara-Konya-Antalya by 2023. When the project is completed, travel from İstanbul to Antalya and İzmir will be possible via high-speed train. Between Ankara and Konya, high speed train is in use. But other lines are in construction step, some lines are connected with other lines. Another aim is to connect these lines together and make usage easier. Studies for these connections began and when these lines finish, they will finish too.

2.2.3. Analysis

In the report some activities are told but in detail there is no clear definition to what can be done to develop railways. Of course, it should not be forgotten that for a high-speed train construction a period between 5 years to 7 years is needed (Tekerek&Camcı, 2011: 40). It can be more detailed. Additionally some projects have not started yet. Especially, there is a need for İstanbul- Edirne connection as this railway has been closed for reconstruction.

There is an urgent need for action as this railway links not only İstanbul to Europe but also Turkey's main and only connection to European countries. Both for the citizens and the incoming and outgoing tourists this railway link is essential. Quicker action and more build-operate and transfer models can be used to share responsibility between the state and private sector. Besides railway transportation is not fully suitable for our country because of the geography. For this reason some regions will not have high speed trains as it is too costly as well. Moreover despite the ubiquity of the rail networks and the continuing growth of cities, there has been a gradual but profound decline in their importance as cars, and airplanes have downgraded the status of the railways (Sheppard, 1996: 74).

2.3. Evaluating Highway Objectives

According to Şakar (2010: 32) road transport plays a major role in both passenger and freight transportation in Turkey. Investments in the transportation system concentrated on road transport infrastructure and vehicles have allowed Turkey to develop one of the largest road transport fleets in Europe.

2.3.1. Report

In the report; it tries to explain our inadequate roads and how to improve them. And another case is our roads are below the average of EU countries standards. Especially considering tourism industry, the government has to extend with new roads and improve the existing ones. That's why, when the level of development is considered, our state needs to improve the standards of our roads both for drivers' comfort and safety.

2.3.2. Actions

When we do research on investments, it has been found out that our state has so many projects and some of them have priority. Like Gebze - Orhangazi - İzmir highway; for making İstanbul-İzmir transportation to lessen to 3.5 hours. Our government made this investment and their goal was finish this project in 2015. This road's tender made in 9 April 2009 by government and these projects involve making a bridge to pass indentation only 6 minutes. Another important project is Antalya-Mersin road. Our drivers say this road is "painful road" because of so many jags and it makes driving so hard. Antalya-Mersin road's goal is change this hard drive and make between Antalya and Mersin only 4 hours. And they started "AkdenizSahilYolu" Project in 2003 for defeat these difficulties. They try to make shorter road for link these important tourism cities. Government's goal was to complete this project in 2013 totally 227 kilometers along.

2.3.3. Analysis

The Gebze-Izmir Motorway has been the largest ever infrastructure project in Turkey's history. The most distinguished feature of the project is the 3.3km Izmit Bay suspension bridge. İzmir Highway and the İzmit Bay suspension has been opened. Within the Mediterranean Coast Line project, between Silifke-Anamur 158 kilometers along highway has been opened to traffic. The number of the tunnel planned was 7 and they have been increased to 22.

2.4. Evaluating Seaway Objectives

2.4.1. Report:

In the report; we can see marine travel's most important aim is to make long terms visits to our country, with going many different places. With these projects we can have more travelers in our country. For this reason; our state have so much projects to make new mega-yacht harbor and renew in İstanbul, Antalya, İzmir regions harbors. They try to growth our yacht pie and long term tourist visit.

2.4.2. Actions:

For these aims; a special project is planned; İstanbul Zeytinburnu Cruise Harbor, and these harbor will be the most big cruise harbor in İstanbul. Totally 1 million m2 area and 5 billion and 537 thousand TL annually profit is the goal of this project but it canceled and our government didn't start anything to growth these project. Another important project is İstanbul Haydarpaşa Cruise Harbor and this area is special historical building and total investment approximate 5 billion dollars. This special project's approval is passed in our parliament on 16 April 2012.

2.4.3. Analysis

Our country has very a big area to growth cruise tourism for İstanbul, but as a country we do not have enough projects to improve sea travel and we do not have profitable projects.

As a result; our government is so slow in solving the cruise problem and growth for tourism problem. Another project have same problem for start so that they should give much more interest on these project. In addition to this with more build-operate and transfer projects we can improve sea travel rapidly.

Conclusion

Turkey planned and constructed different transport networks and corridors. Turkey's accession to the EU would possibly mark the most significant enlargement so far extending the EU borders to Iraq, Syria, Iran and the Caucasus which brings new opportunities for the development of additional multimodal transport corridors and highlighting the importance of Turkey's location (Şakar, 2010: 40). According to Candemir (2009: 53) technology development and the cost of development in general, environmental deterioration surpass all the other factors in designing development policies today. These developments take place simultaneously within a context of the so-called process of globalization. Hence if Turkey places huge importance to technology development within transportation and infrastructure policy, the success in global market will also be realizable.

The probable linkages between the international tourism, air transportation, railways transportation, openness to trade, travel services and transport services in a section of selected tourists oriented countries and come to the conclusion that is, tourism is the worldwide phenomenon and there are number of stakeholders linked with tourism, therefore, it is mandatory for all of us that we have to preserve our natural environment and take care of this natural environment by suitable policy tools for consolidating the international tourism infrastructure for the progress of the peoples and for their livelihoods. (Khan et al., 2017: 134). Briefly analyzing the implementation of the policies there has been much done especially in airport constructions and high-speed train travel network. However still there is an urgent need for the link between İstanbul and Europe as this can be only done from the city Edirne that is located on the border of Turkey. Cruise travel is also lacking even Turkey has been surrounded with 3 seas. Compared to neighboring countries, Turkey participates in cruise travel quite a little by comparison. With progressing tourism policies and the development of travel infrastructure, international tourism to Turkey could enhance as the implementation of the projects could be completed entirely. As Albalate and Fageda, (2016: 174) noted transportation and tourism are closely related economic activities, so much so that promoting transportation infrastructure and guaranteeing efficient mobility are usually seen as contributing to the development of the tourism industry. Tourism is not a sole industry. It needs to cooperate with auxiliary industries and sectors and transportation sector is an absolute must.

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