

REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AGENCIES IN TURKEY

Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) in Turkey were founded pursuant to Law 5949 in order to develop cooperation between the public sector, private sector, and NGOs. They also serve to ensure the effective use of resources, to accelerate regional development, to reveal the local potential, and to ensure the sustainable development of the region in parallel with the national policy and to reduce interregional and intra-regional disparities.¹

The *Nomenclature of Territorial Units for Statistics* (NUTS), a classification of the subdivisions of countries for statistical purposes which divides Turkey's territory into five hierarchical levels, was applied within the framework of the European Union in 2002. Regional Development Agencies, as new territorial entities at regional level, were established based on this classification in 2006.²

26 Regional Development Agencies have been founded in Turkey since 2006. They work on the principle of regionalisation and *good governance*, aiming to use resources efficiently and productively and reduce exceptional disparities. According to this concept, each RDA prepares a *Regional Plan* that specifies priority topics and determines the Agency's strategy, consulting their regional through a participatory process. In each Agency, a SWOT³ analysis of sectors and region is applied so that the potentials and requirements of regions can be determined. Then this data is used in order to prepare the *Regional Plans*.⁴

Regional Development Agencies are defined as regional bodies that are neither a part of central nor local authorities, that use innovation as a political instrument and aim for local development, financed by the public authority. In contrast to the top-down approach that focuses on infrastructure and financial support, RDAs implement a bottom-up approach that covers a single region and they target increased competitiveness among enterprises in that region by supporting educational policies and novelties.⁵ Their fundamental principles are to encourage sectors where the region is able to compete with other regions on a global scale, to grow employment and exports, and to support enterprises with high added value.⁶

¹ Kalkınma Ajanslarının Kuruluşu, Koordinasyonu ve Görevleri Hakkında Kanun, Kanun n°5949, Resmi Gazete, 08/02/2006.

² Kalkınma Ajanslarının Kuruluşu, Koordinasyonu ve Görevleri Hakkında Kanun, Kanun n°5949, Resmi Gazete, 08/02/2006.

³ SWOT analysis (or SWOT matrix) is a strategic planning technique used to help a person or organization identify the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats related to business competition or project planning. "SWOT Analysis: Discover New Opportunities, Manage and Eliminate Threats". www.mindtools.com. 1006. Retrieved 24 February 2018.

⁴ Pre Regional Development Plan 2010, Karacadağ Development Agency

⁵ Henrik Halkier, Regional Development Agencies and Multilevel Governance: European Perspectives, Regional Development and Governance Symposium , Ankara, 2009, pp.4-5.

⁶ Activity report 2015, Karacadağ Development Agency, 2015, pp.22-24.