



2025 CLIMATE AND HEALTH POLICY PRIORITIES FOR TÜRKİYE

This document summarises key priority areas of focus for Türkiye, supported by evidence from the 2025 Global Report of the Lancet Countdown.

IMPLEMENT TÜRKİYE'S CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN FOR HEALTH

1

Türkiye must urgently implement its Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan (2024–2030) at a national scale to protect health from escalating climate risks. This requires annual national health and climate risk assessments, ring-fenced adaptation funding, and strong coordination between the Ministry of Health, local authorities, and research institutions. This will strengthen preparedness, protect vulnerable groups, and safeguard health services from the impacts of extreme heat and weather events.

Climate impacts are already straining health in Türkiye. In 2024, people in Türkiye were exposed to 33.6 heatwave days each, on average. Of these, 27.3 (81%) would not have been expected to occur without climate change. **(Indicator 1.1.1)**. From 2014 to 2023, individuals were exposed to a moderate or higher risk of heat stress for around 255 hours per year if taking part in light outdoor activities such as walking **(Indicator 1.1.2)**. In 2024, 642.9 million labour hours were lost due to heat, with agriculture accounting for 53% of the losses **(Indicator 1.1.3)**.

Although Türkiye's Adaptation Strategy recognises these health risks, implementation remains uneven across regions and underfunded nationally. Without sustained investment and transparent monitoring, vulnerable populations will remain unprotected. Establishing consistent national reporting, early warning integration, and local adaptation plans aligned with the Strategy will ensure evidence-based and timely responses.

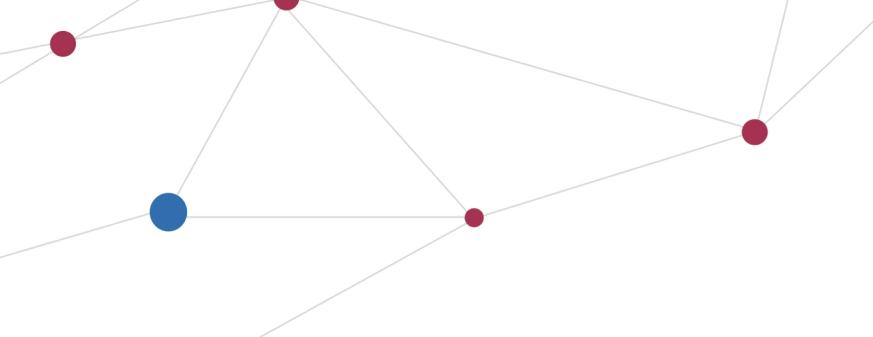
Nationwide delivery of Türkiye's Programme and Action Plan to Reduce Health Impacts of Climate Change¹, supported by dedicated funding, data sharing, and capacity building, would translate research into action, ensuring the health system is resilient, responsive, and prepared for future climate shocks.

ENSURE HEALTH PREPAREDNESS IN NATIONAL MULTI-HAZARD EARLY WARNING SYSTEMS

2

Türkiye must strengthen the health sector's preparedness for climate-related emergencies by integrating health risks into national multi-hazard early warning and response systems. This includes training responders, embedding health-risk communication, and ensuring targeted protection for vulnerable groups in high-risk settings. A coordinated, health-informed warning system will reduce preventable deaths and reinforce public confidence in health services during climate crises.

Escalating climate hazards demand stronger preparedness. Between 2020–2024, Türkiye experienced an average of 74 days per year of high wildfire risk **(Indicator 1.2.1)**, while 86% of land area faced at least one



month of extreme drought annually (**Indicator 1.2.2**). Wildfire smoke has driven surges in respiratory and cardiovascular illness, particularly among older adults and those with chronic conditions, while prolonged drought has reduced agricultural yields and water quality, raising risks of gastrointestinal infection, malnutrition, and vector-borne disease. As indicated above, exposure to heatwaves is also growing, putting people at risk of heat-related illness and death.

Health considerations must be embedded within all national early-warning frameworks so that the National Medical Rescue Team (UMKE), the Health Disaster Coordination Center (SAKOM), and local responders can act on real-time, health-specific alerts. The newly developed Infectious Disease Surveillance and Early Warning System (IZCI) should be fully operationalised and used effectively across national and local levels. Priority actions include public awareness campaigns, targeted protection for vulnerable populations in communal settings, and surge training for emergency responders.

While the 2024–2030 Climate Change Adaptation Strategy and Action Plan includes the development of a public health early-warning system, integrating this within the national multi-hazard framework would ensure coordinated preparedness across all sectors. Embedding health into Türkiye's multi-hazard early-warning systems will enable faster, coordinated responses, protect lives during climate-related disasters, and strengthen resilience across the health sector.

ACCELERATE THE CLEAN ENERGY TRANSITION TO CUT AIR POLLUTION AND PROTECT HEALTH

3

Türkiye must rapidly shift from coal and fossil fuels to renewable and low-carbon energy sources to reduce harmful air pollution and protect public health. Prioritizing clean energy expansion like wind and solar power will help meet climate goals, lower respiratory and cardiovascular disease rates, and ensure reliable energy access for critical services such as hospitals. A faster clean energy transition would deliver major health, economic, and environmental benefits by cutting emissions, reducing healthcare costs, and strengthening energy security.

Despite commitments to peak emissions by 2038 and reach net zero by 2053, Türkiye's greenhouse gas emissions continue to rise. As of 2022, coal supplied 26% of total energy and 34% of electricity generation (**Indicator 3.1.1**). This persistent reliance on expensive and polluting coal undermines climate goals and exposes communities to dangerous levels of air pollution—a leading driver of premature mortality.

Evidence from Türkiye links increases in NO₂ and PM_{2.5} concentrations to higher hospital admissions for respiratory diseases, with a 10 µg/m³ rise in PM_{2.5} associated with an 8% increase in acute bronchitis cases². Similarly, higher SO₂ and PM₁₀ levels correlate with increased emergency visits and hospitalisations for cardiovascular and respiratory conditions³.

Phasing out coal and scaling up renewable energy will simultaneously reduce premature deaths, lower healthcare costs, and advance climate goals. It will also make energy more affordable, and less vulnerable to international geopolitical shocks. Integrating health evidence into energy policy, through clear timelines for coal phase-down, investment in renewables, and equitable access to clean electricity, will help Türkiye build a healthier, more sustainable, and climate-resilient future.

Accelerating Action

Türkiye must link climate and health actions to phase out coal, expand wind and solar power, and strengthen health-sector preparedness through national risk assessments. Prioritising clean, reliable energy for hospitals and vulnerable communities will cut air pollution, lower disease burdens, and improve energy security through coordinated leadership and evidence-based planning.

References

1. https://hsgm.saglik.gov.tr/depo/Yayinlarimiz/Eylem_Planlari/Iklim_Degisikligi_Eylem_Plani.pdf
2. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.scs.2021.103040>
3. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00420-021-01769-w>

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