The Tourist Destination Observatory (Italian acronym OTD)

1. The Tourist Destination Observatory (Italian acronym OTD, Ossevatorio Turistico di Destinazione) within the NECSTour context

NECSTour (Network of European regions for a sustainable and competitive tourism) http://www.necstour.eu was set up in 2007 with the purpose of developing and strengthening a coherent framework for the coordination of regional development programmes and research on sustainable and competitive tourism, following the European Commission Communication “Agenda for European sustainable and competitive tourism” (COM (2007) 621 final) http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52007DC0621:en:HTML. NecSTour currently involves 28 Regional Tourism Authorities associated to 30 representatives of the academic and business sectors.

In order to achieve this goal, NECSTour has committed itself to fostering the cooperation among the different Regions affiliated to the network by promoting the application and implementation of concerted and coordinated actions. Its strategy aims to:

- Implement applied research in sustainable tourism
- Share and promote each form of coordination of the projects already underway
- Exchange information and implement joint activities
- Use the European funds appropriately and responsibly

2. The setting up of the OTD

In 2010, following the EU Commission Communication “Europe, the world's No 1 tourist destination – a new political framework for tourism in Europe” (http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/tourism/files/communications/communication2010_en.pdf), NecSTour has been designated as the reference point for the definition and experimentation of an integrated model for the sustainable management of tourist destinations (i.e. through a system of indicators). Based on this system of indicators, the EU Commission will develop a label for promoting European destinations.
The OTD is the organizational model developed for NecsTour by Tuscany Region, which is one of the leading Regions of the NecsTour Executive Committee together with the Cataluña Region (ES) and the Paca Region (F).

3. **The aims of the Tourist Destination Observatory**

The OTD is a fundamental instrument for testing and defining tourist policies for territorial development since it allows to monitor the tourism-related phenomena through specific thematic areas:

- Impact of transport
- Quality of life of residents and tourists
- Quality of work
- Broadening the relationship between supply and demand with respect to the geographical and seasonal concentration of tourism
- Active conservation of the cultural and environmental heritage and of the distinctive identities of the destinations
- Reduction and optimization of natural resources use with particular reference to water and energy consumption
- Reduction of waste and improved waste management.

The main purpose of the OTDs is therefore to continuously evaluate the quality, sustainability and competitiveness of the territorial tourist reception system.

4. **Why Tuscany Region**

In 2009 Tuscany Region approved the regional project "Sustainable and competitive Tuscany" ([http://www.regione.toscana.it/regione/multimedia/RT/documents/2009/12/02/306a1e52593ee641cad5c6da6450ff23_deliberan763del792009allegatotoscana.pdf](http://www.regione.toscana.it/regione/multimedia/RT/documents/2009/12/02/306a1e52593ee641cad5c6da6450ff23_deliberan763del792009allegatotoscana.pdf)) launching a new experimental strategy for tourism development in Tuscany through the creation of Tourist Destination Observatories.

Tuscany Region has subsequently identified the first 50 pilot destinations.

5. **Why the Municipalities**

The local OTDs have been developed after a first listening and planning phase that involved municipalities, stakeholders and universities. During this first step aimed at establishing partnerships, Tuscan Universities have played a very active role. So far, in the Province of Pisa, the municipalities that have set up their own OTDs are the following:

Pisa ([www.comune.pisa.it](http://www.comune.pisa.it)), Unione Valdera ([www.unione.valdera.pi.it](http://www.unione.valdera.pi.it)), Cascina ([www.comune.cascina.pi.it](http://www.comune.cascina.pi.it)) and Pontedera ([www.comune.pontedera.pi.it](http://www.comune.pontedera.pi.it))
6. Why the Provinces

Since 2010, in accordance with the experimental activities related to the NecsTour model, Tuscany Region has involved its Provinces and the Union of Italian Provinces (UPI) of Tuscany Region in the project "Sustainable and Competitive Tuscany Tourism". The recognized role of the Provinces is to facilitate the technical and operational coordination of all the activities that have already been started by the different municipal Tourist Destination Observatories, and to extend the application of the NecsTour management model to further tourist destinations.

7. The Province of Pisa

The Province of Pisa will provide data and information related to the thematic areas regarding the Sustainability and competitiveness pillars indicated by NecsTour; validate data collected by the municipal OTDs present in its territory; carry out coordination activities.

The Province of Pisa has established its own Steering Committee. This panel is composed of experts and stakeholders, directly or indirectly involved in the tourism sector, such as hotel and farmhouse accommodation companies, tourism professions as set forth under Regional Law 42/2000; workers of the tourism industry, business and shopping companies, public service companies. As yet, the municipalities that have joined the OTD of the Province of Pisa are San Giuliano Terme and San Miniato.

8. The OTD and the fiscal federalism

To implement fiscal federalism regulations, Tuscany Region considers OTD to be the most suitable standard for the setting up and updating of the list of regional tourist sites with a view to levying the visitors' tax.