



NECSTouR

European Regions for
Competitive and Sustainable Tourism



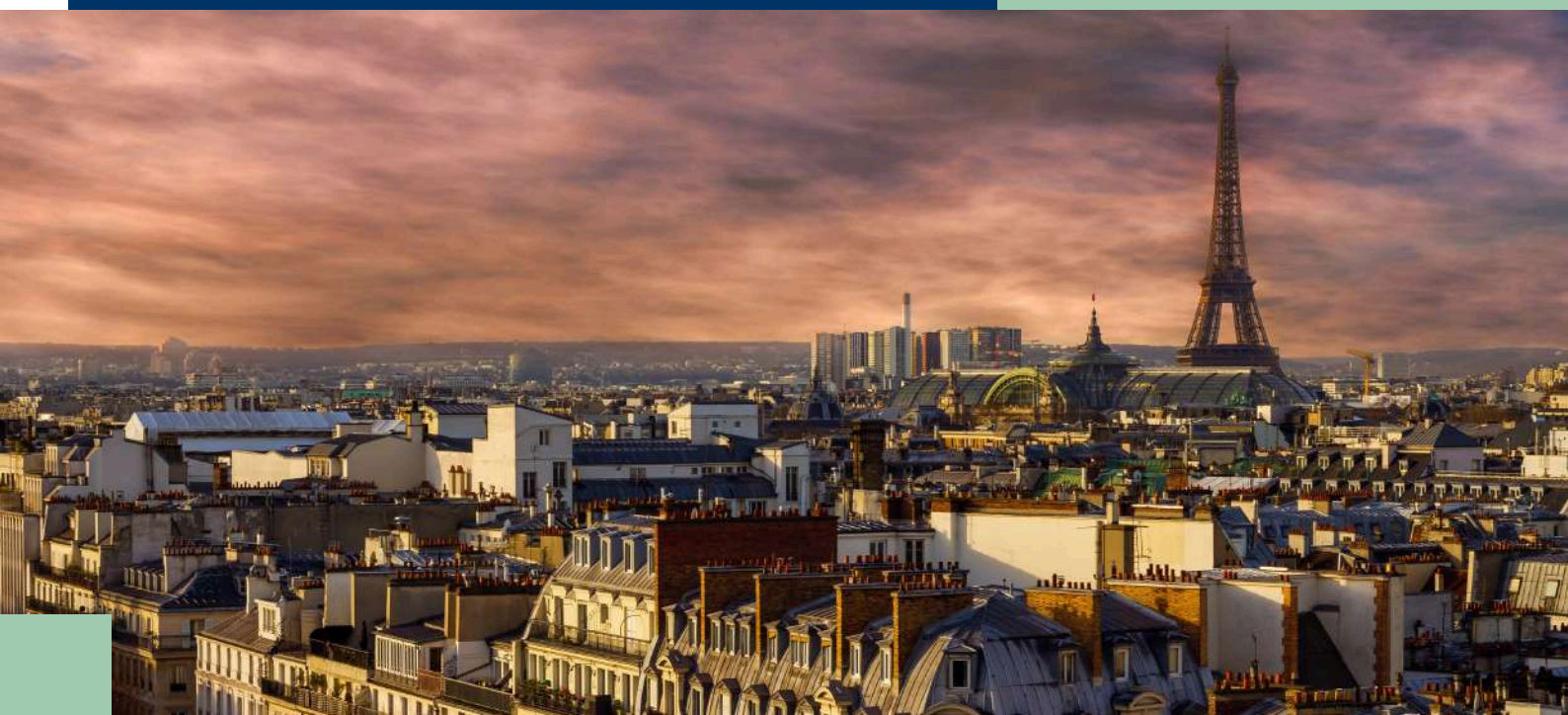
ACTIVITY REPORT **2024**

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INTRODUCTION

The NECSTouR Activity Report 2024 provides an overview of activities completed during the year and is presented to the Annual General Meeting. This document provides a snapshot of the breadth of work undertaken by the network during 2024.



**WE HOPE YOU ENJOY
READING IT!**



FOREWORD BY PRESIDENT PETER DE WILDE, VISIT FLANDERS CEO

In 2024 NECSTouR strode boldly towards the completion of its strategy planning exercise that culminated in a range of workshops and campfire sessions during the Annual General Meeting in Luleå, Swedish Lapland in May. Our Pathway to 2030 Strategy is now complete, equipped with five strategic objectives to provide focus and handrails for the journey ahead. At the same time, NECSTouR experienced some internal staff changes during the year to better position itself for the future, respond to the demands of its growing portfolio of EU projects and take advantage of the organic growth of the work of its hubs, such as the Tourism of Tomorrow Lab dealing with data and knowledge and the Climate Hub. I look forward to seeing their continued progress in the years ahead and to the launch of the new Governance Hub planned for 2025 thus completing the triumvirate of operational NECSTouR hubs that help our member regions make sense of the connections and opportunities of the sustainable tourism agenda.

As we welcomed a new European Commissioner for Transport and Tourism at the end of 2024, now is very much the time for regions to work through networks like NECSTouR to ensure that the sustainable tourism agenda has a natural sub-national connector with the EU institutions as they embark upon new mandates and with a view to the next Multiannual Financial Framework from 2028. NECSTouR brings the important voice of the regions to the EU level, performing a vital service in helping to create a sustainable tourism industry across Europe.

I would like to thank the NECSTouR Board of Directors and the Executive Team based in Brussels for their ongoing hard work and commitment to making NECSTouR the vibrant network it has become today. With the strategy now defined with a clear direction to 2030, there is much work to be completed over the coming years.



Peter De Wilde
NECSTouR President

NECSTOUR MEMBERS AND BOARD OF DIRECTORS

NECSTouR members are the core of the network and one of the most important assets for the community. Members are the key element in creating and sharing the collaborative knowledge we strive to create.



The NECSTouR Board of Directors is responsible for ensuring the professional and financial assets of the network are realised and for overseeing the work of the Executive Team according to the Work Programme and Strategy approved by NECSTouR members at the Annual General Meeting.



2024 marked the end of the previous Board mandate. NECSTouR held elections during the Annual General Meeting in Luleå to determine the composition of the new Board of Directors with Visit Flanders continuing as the President for a three year term 2024-27.

The Executive Team works hand in hand with the Board of Directors and the members to achieve the targets set by the community. In addition to the Brussels-based team, NECSTouR also manages the Tourism of Tomorrow Lab team, in charge of coaching destination managers to base tourism decision-making on systematic tourism sound measurement through the sustainability pathway and seconded staff from different member regions.

2024 IN REVIEW



The NECSTouR 2030 Pathway finalised



Live from Brussels internal members' newsletter: 18 editions completed & re-launch of the external bi-annual newsletter NEWSTouR



Information Session: Interreg Europe 3rd Call for Proposals leading to multiple successful applications by members



Annual General Meeting, Lulea, Sweden



Members' Platform Launch and webinar; Knowledge Day



ToTLab Premium Members Work Programme Conceptualisation in FITUR, Workshop in Marbella, Data Summit in Seville



CLIMATE HUB Task Force Meetings, Publication of the Blueprint for Tourism Climate Action Plans, Webinar: A guide to create your climate action plan

ONGOING PROJECTS:

- D3HUB (2023-26)
- DEPLOYTOUR (2024-27)
- Euro – Emotur (2022-24)
- Community 4 Tourism (C4T) (2022-29)

NECSTOUR PATHWAY 20230

Regenerative, data-driven and resilient tourism across European Regions



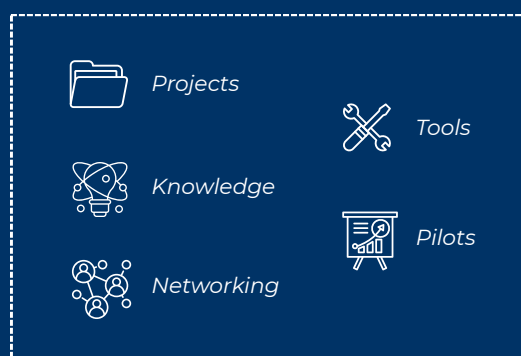
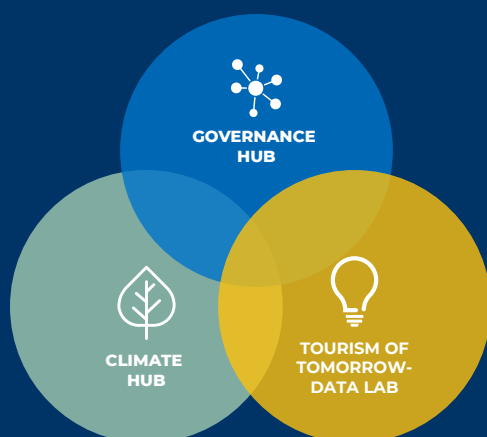
Strategic Objectives 2030

- Strengthen regional capacity for regenerative destination management.
- Support regional tourism climate action: mitigation and adaptation.
- Empower destinations to measure tourism impacts for decision-making.
- Enable regions to implement the European Tourism Agenda and Strategy.
- Double NECSTouR's network impact through collaboration and innovation.



Strategic Hubs

Empowering destination leaders deliver sustainability



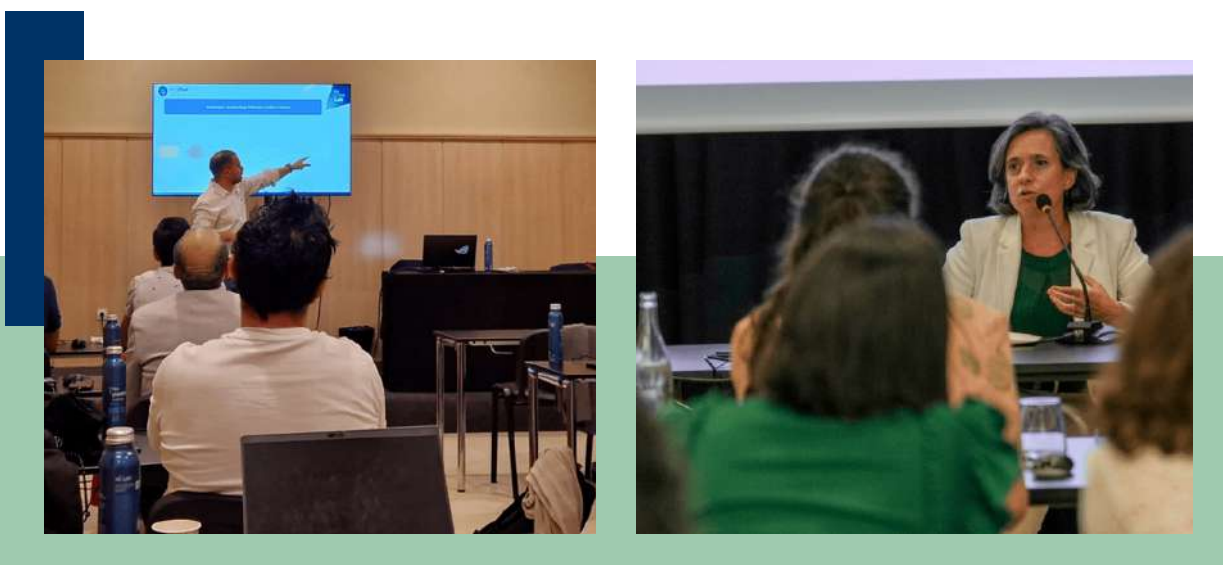
**BUILDING BETTER
EUROPEAN DESTINATIONS,
TOGETHER.**

THE TOURISM OF TOMORROW LAB PROGRAMME IN 2024

In 2024, the Tourism of Tomorrow Lab successfully executed its collaborative work programme co-created with its 11 premium members. The work programme fostered enhanced collaboration and knowledge exchange among these members. It also supported Destination Management Organisations (DMOs) by developing their data analytics capabilities alongside leveraging our European standing through active participation in EU co-funded projects, notably D3HUB and DEPLOYTOUR.

2024 has brought many successes for the Tourism of Tomorrow Lab, here you can find some of the highlights for this year.

- Delivering an **in-person workshop** in Marbella held in March where all the Premium Members started to work on the 2024 Work Programme through a series of thematic sessions and defined the scope of each integrated project, setting the stage for the collaborative work ahead.



- **A comprehensive knowledge programme** was developed to build capacity and provide training in critical areas such as data analysis and the application of AI within the tourism sector through a series of webinars. Additionally, an in-person Data Summit was held in Seville from 23-25 October delivering a two-day training workshop on data analysis and AI for data scientists from our Premium Members.

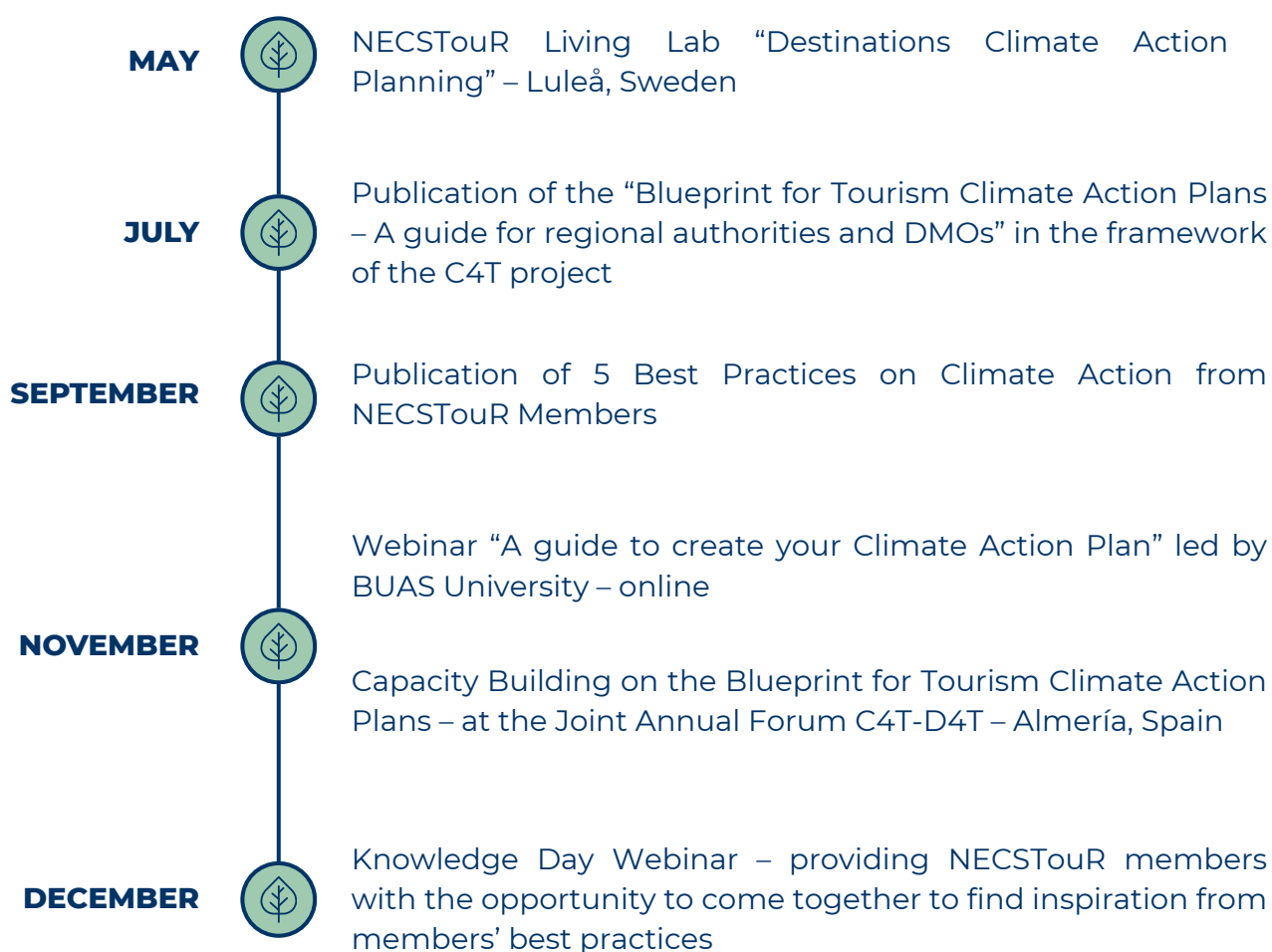
- The Living Lab session held in person on 22 May in Luleå during the NECSTouR 2024 Annual General Meeting explored a practical use case demonstrating how AI could be applied to address the challenge of sustainable tourism management in a saturated city break destination.
- **A talent map** was created to catalogue the expertise within the Premium Member network, outlining each partner's specific areas of action and contact availability for collaboration among members.
- A “**Knowledge Day**” event celebrated in December to showcase to the rest of the NECSTouR network the activities performed by the Tourism of Tomorrow Lab.
- Participation through NECSTouR in two European co-funded projects: 1) D3HUB is a strategic initiative focused on designing the future European Data Competence Centre dedicated to advancing data management capabilities within tourism destinations; 2) **DEPLOYTOUR** focuses on the critical task of deploying the European Tourism Data Space.
- Other **knowledge sharing and dissemination activities** through a series of webinars. These sessions featured Premium Members like Visit Flanders, who presented their resident perception barometre; Catalonia, who detailed their 4D marketing strategy; and Lapland, who showcased their application of AI in tourism marketing and sales.



THE CLIMATE HUB IN 2024

The Climate Hub was co-created with front-runner regions within NECSTouR and launched in 2024 as a response to the objectives set in our Climate Action Plan, with the goal of accelerating climate action in NECSTouR regions and destinations. Throughout 2024 it has served as a platform for knowledge sharing with expert-led training, identified best practices, guidelines on climate action planning, tools and methodologies for concrete action. The first year of the Climate Hub has been successful in providing members with high quality resources to support climate action planning, alongside creating a space to share best practices, enabling members to learn from each other and showcasing their initiatives. In turn, the actions taken in the Climate Hub have enabled members to align with the EU Tourism Transition Pathway and the Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism.

2024 has brought many successes for the Climate Hub which include:



EU PROJECT WORK IN 2024

D3HUB (DATA-DRIVEN-DESTINATIONS) PROJECT

The D3HUB (Data-Driven-Destinations) Project designs, tests and paves the way to create a self-sustainable European Competence Data Centre to accurately measure tourism impact for systematic decision-making based on sound data to achieve more sustainable tourism management and marketing.

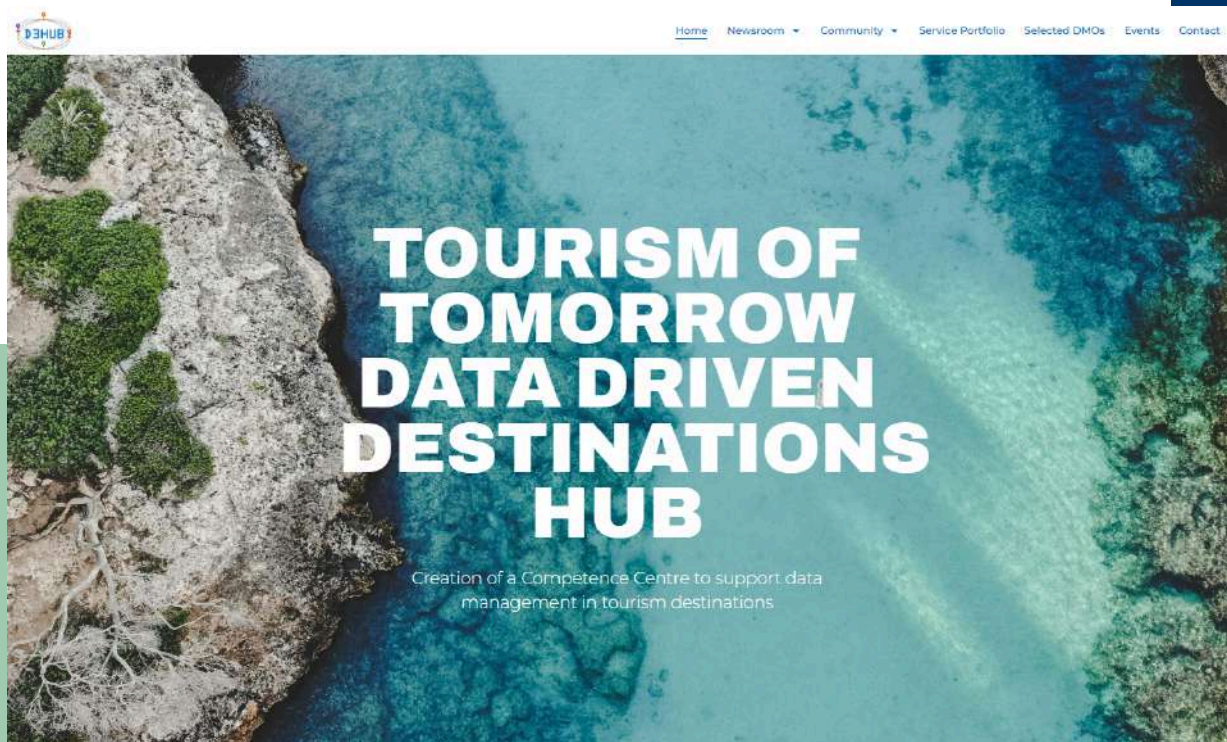
The main objectives of the project are:

- To build a knowledge support scheme for tourism destinations across the European Union.
- To provide tailor-made digital solutions and data for DMOs and tourism SMEs.
- To test the developed framework through a pilot run by a critical mass of DMOs.
- To integrate the learnings into a business plan to set up and sustain the Competence Centre.
- To upscale beyond the partnership and build a data-driven tourism community.
- To implement the Competence Centre and ensure its continuity.



The main activities performed in 2024 in the D3HUB project include:

- The design of a portfolio of services that the future Competence Centre will offer to European tourist destinations.
- The establishment of a pilot phase in the form of a peer-learning programme focused on four central clusters, outlining a variety of challenges that destinations face:
 - Managing the balance between residents, visitors, and stakeholders
 - Climate change mitigation and adaptation
 - Redistributing tourist flows in space and time
 - Supporting emerging destinations to attract quality and sustainable tourism
- Launch of an open call to recruit a group of 40 destinations to participate in the pilot phase from February 2025 to February 2026
- Definition of the business model for the future European Tourism Competence Centre



DEPLOYTOUR (DEPLOYMENT OF THE EUROPEAN TOURISM DATA SPACE) PROJECT

The DEPLOYTOUR project is being developed in the framework of the European Digital Europe Programme supported by the European Commission. DEPLOYTOUR is a 3 year project launched in October 2024 which aims to develop a trusted Common European Tourism Data Space (ETDS).

The objective of the project is to boost the competitiveness, sustainability, and resilience of the tourism sector. It addresses the challenges of fragmented and inaccessible tourism data by enhancing access to information, empowering SMEs and DMOs in their digital and green transition, and fostering innovative practices, upskilling, and productivity for a stronger and more sustainable industry.

NECSTouR, alongside 43 partners from 13 EU countries, participates in this initiative by ensuring the voices of its member regions are heard, thereby incorporating their specific requirements, needs, and priorities. Notably, NECSTouR plays a key role in defining the governance mechanisms for the future European Tourism Data Space and in developing use cases for the project's pilot programmes. It provides particular support to two Tourism of Tomorrow Lab Premium Members, Andalusia and Lapland, who are leading two of these significant pilots

DEPLOYTOUR

The Project Use Case Pilots Events Resources Contact

Developing a trusted and secure Common European Data Space for Tourism

- 43 Partners
- 13 Countries
- 03 Years
- 05 Pilots

EURO-EMOTUR

After three fruitful years, the EURO-EMOTUR project held its Final Conference in Gran Canaria in December.

EURO-EMOTUR's objective was to increase the uptake of digitalisation and innovation by tourism SMEs through transnational cooperation and capacity building. Additionally, it aimed to generate a digital innovation hub to improve competitiveness in the market through digitalisation. Euro-Emotur was also successful in introducing the concept of 'neurotourism', a discipline that explores and harnesses tourists' emotions to create unique and immersive experiences to help build a better understanding of their customers to foster deeper and more memorable connections.



The Euro-Emotur project successfully reached over 20 countries, helping more than 100 SMEs to benefit from:

- A methodology to self-assess their digital maturity
- A matchmaking process to receive personalised consultancy from specialised technology service providers
- Direct funding to implement the improvements needed for their digitalisation
- Access to the Euro-Emotur Digital Hub

Through dissemination and capitalization efforts, NECSTouR has helped maximize the impact of the project within the broader European tourism ecosystem, bridging the gap between SMEs and DMOs. The key tools and methodologies produced within Euro-Emotur will soon be shared in our Projects Hub and accessible to all members through the Members Platform.

COMMUNITY 4 TOURISM

The Community4Tourism (C4T) project contributes to the Sustainable Tourism Mission of the Interreg Euro-MED programme by supporting coordination and enhancing institutional capacity to make tourism greener, smarter and more resilient. The project facilitates the re-use of results and best practices of the community of projects, supports the transferring of successful initiatives and results and increases the coordination among the stakeholders in the Mediterranean Region and beyond that are committed to tourism governance and territorial cooperation. C4T aims to consolidate a competitive innovation ecosystem, to support a circular economy, to promote climate change adaptation, to safeguard nature and biodiversity and collaborate to the transition towards a climate-neutral and resilient society.

In 2024, NECSTouR played a leading role in delivering the “Blueprint for Tourism Climate Action Plans - A Guide for Regional Authorities and Destination Management Organisations (DMOs)”, a highly anticipated document that provides clear and adaptable guidance on how to develop a strategy for acting on climate. Furthermore, we co-organised a Capacity Building session on the Blueprint at the Sun & Blue Congress in Almería (November) to equip participants with the tools to effectively use this resource.

2024 also marked the kick-off of the MED Clusters in an in-person meeting in Rome (April), an activity of C4T aimed at the dissemination of knowledge and mainstreaming of results on different tourism-related topics. NECSTouR is coordinator together with Plan Bleu of the MED Cluster Climate Change. [AT1] [JP2] Following the kick off, we published an Orientation Paper that provides guidance on the topics and challenges that are to be addressed within the Cluster.



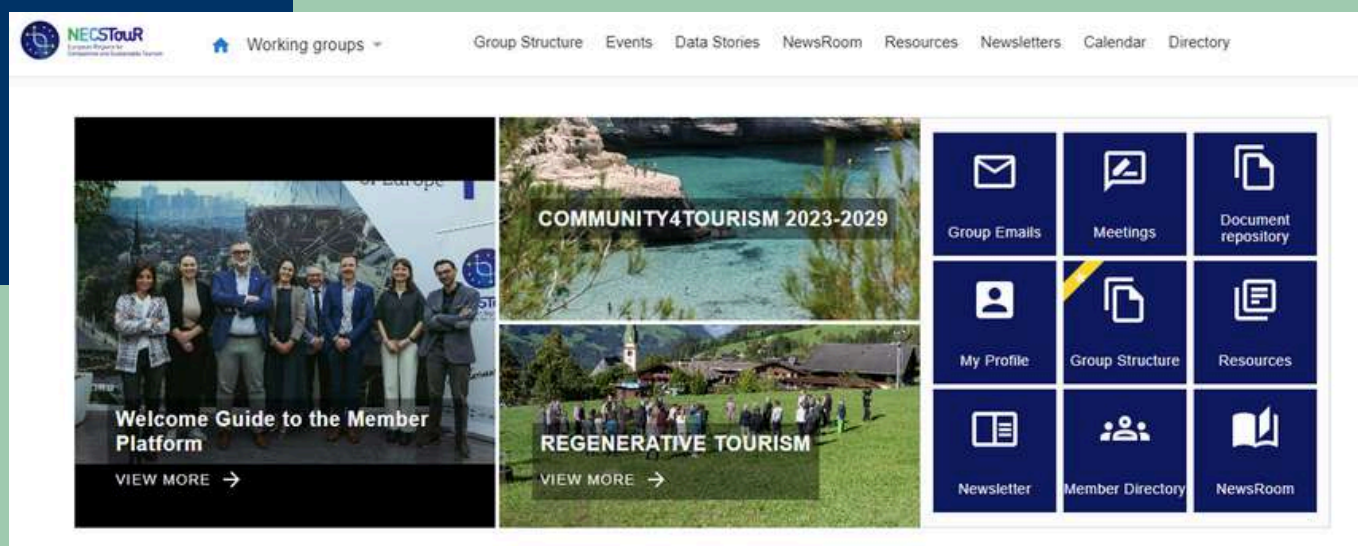
MEMBERS' PLATFORM LAUNCHED AND COMMUNICATION

The new members' platform was launched in September. It provides a space for collaboration, serves as a repository of working documents and helps deliver our communication strategy. The platform facilitates resource and information sharing among NECSTouR members. The platform provides the following benefits to members by:

- Facilitating communication between members from the different working groups.
- Providing access to documents, exclusive resources and agendas for the working groups.
- Offering a global calendar and network-related events calendar.
- Generating a members' directory.
- Collecting in one place all past newsletters.
- Providing an exclusive newsroom.

LinkedIn

- We have seen a growth in followers on LinkedIn from 3066 followers up to 4118 followers this year, a 34.31% increase, exceeding the percentage growth from 2023.
- There was a 12.25% increase in the growth of engagement with our posts in 2024, again an improvement from the previous year.



NECSTOUR'S PROJECTS HUB

NECSTouR members are the core of the network and one of the most important assets for the community. Members are the key element in creating and sharing the collaborative knowledge we strive to create.

MONITORING



Monitoring funding opportunities for sustainable tourism

Contacting Managing Authorities

COMMUNICATING



Helpful information on funding opportunities: open calls, info sessions, events and tools to reply through our "Live from Brussels."

Organization of info sessions

SUPPORTING



Provide NECSTouR's knowledge and experts

Activate the network when building partnerships

Organize info sessions on "EU programs for Sustainable Tourism Projects": analysis of the call for proposals, strategic advice and tips on winning projects.

The Executive Team monitors and shares timely information on different EU funding opportunities. It also offers support via info sessions for presenting proposals such as the one held on the final Interreg Europe call for proposals which led to many NECSTouR members gaining EU funding. In addition, NECSTouR will continue promoting collaboration opportunities and applying as partners if the occasion arises.

NECSTouR has also been an active participant in delivering selected strategic projects such as Community 4 Tourism, Euro-Emotur, D3HUB (Data-Driven-Destinations), DEPLOYTOUR and DATES.

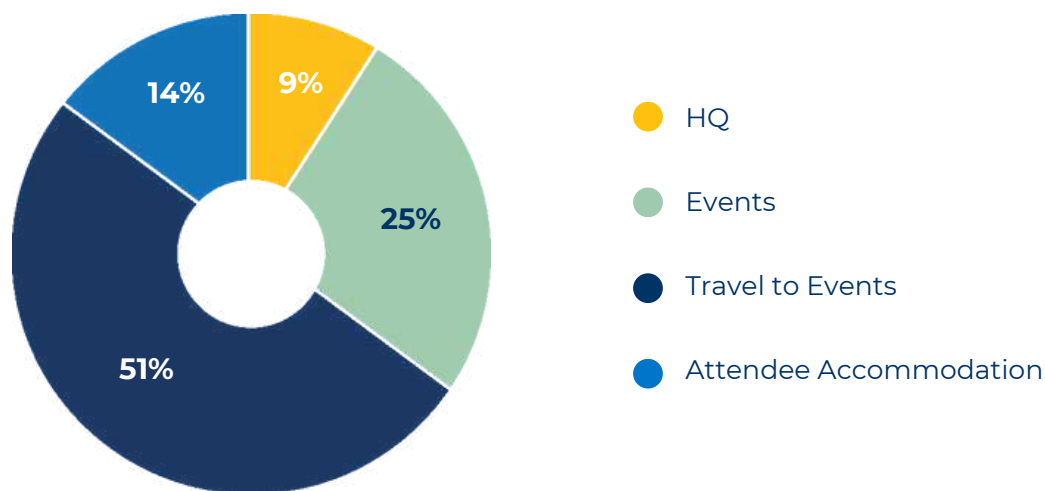
NECSTOUR'S CARBON FOOTPRINT

The third objective of NECSTouR's Climate Action Plan is to “enable NECSTouR to measure, reduce, & mitigate organisational emissions”. To achieve this goal and uphold our commitment as signatories of the UN Tourism Glasgow Declaration on Climate Action in Tourism, we started collaborating with the carbon consultancy firm ecollective to measure, reduce and report on our organisational carbon emissions.

The methodology we use follows the GHG Protocol framework ensuring a highly accurate carbon footprint assessment. It measures the greenhouse gas emissions of NECSTouR's operations in Scopes 1, 2 and 3, and includes headquarters' operations, staff business travel, and the organisation of events.

In 2024, we adopted this methodology to align with the global objective of reaching net zero by 2050 and to support the annual Glasgow Declaration Implementation Report.

The calculations from 2024 show that NECSTouR's total carbon footprint was of 128,476 kg of CO₂e, broken down into 4 main areas:



We are committed to measuring our emissions on a yearly basis whilst also taking action to reduce our footprint without compromising the impact of our work. In that sense, we have already started working in 2024 on possible actions to help us achieve our 8% reduction target, that will be implemented in 2025.

NECSTOUR OUT AND ABOUT AT KEY EVENTS

AGM IN LULEÅ



AGM IN LULEA



COMMUNITY 4 TOURISM



EURO-EMOTOUR



COMMUNITY 4 TOURISM KICK-OFF MEETING ROME



OTHER EVENTS





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