

UNEXPECTED TUSCANY

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EVERYBODY KNOWS THE VALUE OF THE HISTORICAL, ARTISTIC AND LANDSCAPE HERITAGE, BUT THE ROLE OF EXCELLENCE TUSCANY HAS IN INNOVATION AND IN TOP QUALITY PRODUCTION IS LITTLE KNOWN. THIS FUNCTION IS ACKNOWLEDGED BY SCORES OF FOREIGN COMPANIES DECIDING, EVERY YEAR, TO INVEST IN OUR REGION. WHAT IS THE SECRET OF THIS SUCCESS?



**A SKILFULLY MEASURED
BLEND OF REFINEMENT,
CULTURE, BALANCED
LIFESTYLES, FLEXIBILITY
AND INTEGRATION
OF PARTIES ACTIVE
ON THE TERRITORY,
SPECIALIZATION OF
RESEARCH, A THRUST
TO COOPERATION
AND INTERNATIONAL
PARTNERSHIPS.**

The authors of these “blends” are research centres and university departments, companies and institutions, supporting and helping the growth in an innovation sense, believing as much in the necessity to aim at industry as in the possibility to create new development’s opportunities. The alchemy at the root of Tuscan industry’s success produced, in the last years, an “historic” passage. The central position of new technologies but also the need to work on a short distribution chain generated a radical change: the districts, characterized by the production or processing of raw materials, are no longer the territorial reference scopes; the “clusters”, for the development of Tuscan industrial policy, are.

The logic of “clusters” allows who is aiming at Tuscany to count on an harmonic, integrated and of absolute value system, on territorial units where the interconnection between research centres, companies and institutions is really tight. In the last fifteen years, clusters derived from “new tendencies”, such as advanced telecommunications, biotechnology, robotics and renewable energies, joined the more traditional clusters (fashion, pharmacology, electronics, just to quote some examples).

The strengths and potentials of clusters’ dynamics persuade more and more companies and foreign multinationals, looking for realities that could perform



Pisa's photovoltaic park, in the industrial zone of Navicelli

the various passages of production. Most probably it is for this reason that major fashion brands, such as Gucci, Prada, Louis Vuitton, Chanel, Dior and Céline decide to locate their activities in Tuscany: for the ability to transpose, in industrial terms, the handcrafting “know-how” and for the possibility to rely on a heterogeneous chain able to get, from raw materials, to the finished product.

The cluster’s logic (as the district one) is such as to allow the progressive realignment compared to the demands of the market. A case observed in the first years of the past decade in the furniture district of Quarrata, which reacted to the crisis in its field launching strategic synergies with the nautical district.

The driving force of Tuscan economy are, on the one hand, the “innovation centres”, that is, university laboratories, research and advanced professional training centres and, on the other, the definition of mutual strategies between institutions, non-profit organizations and companies, having as their aim to:

- Build and organise a system to develop tools and plans for enterprises;
- Offer integrated advanced services and infrastructure for innovation;
- Promote and implement the coordination between the different territorial parties.

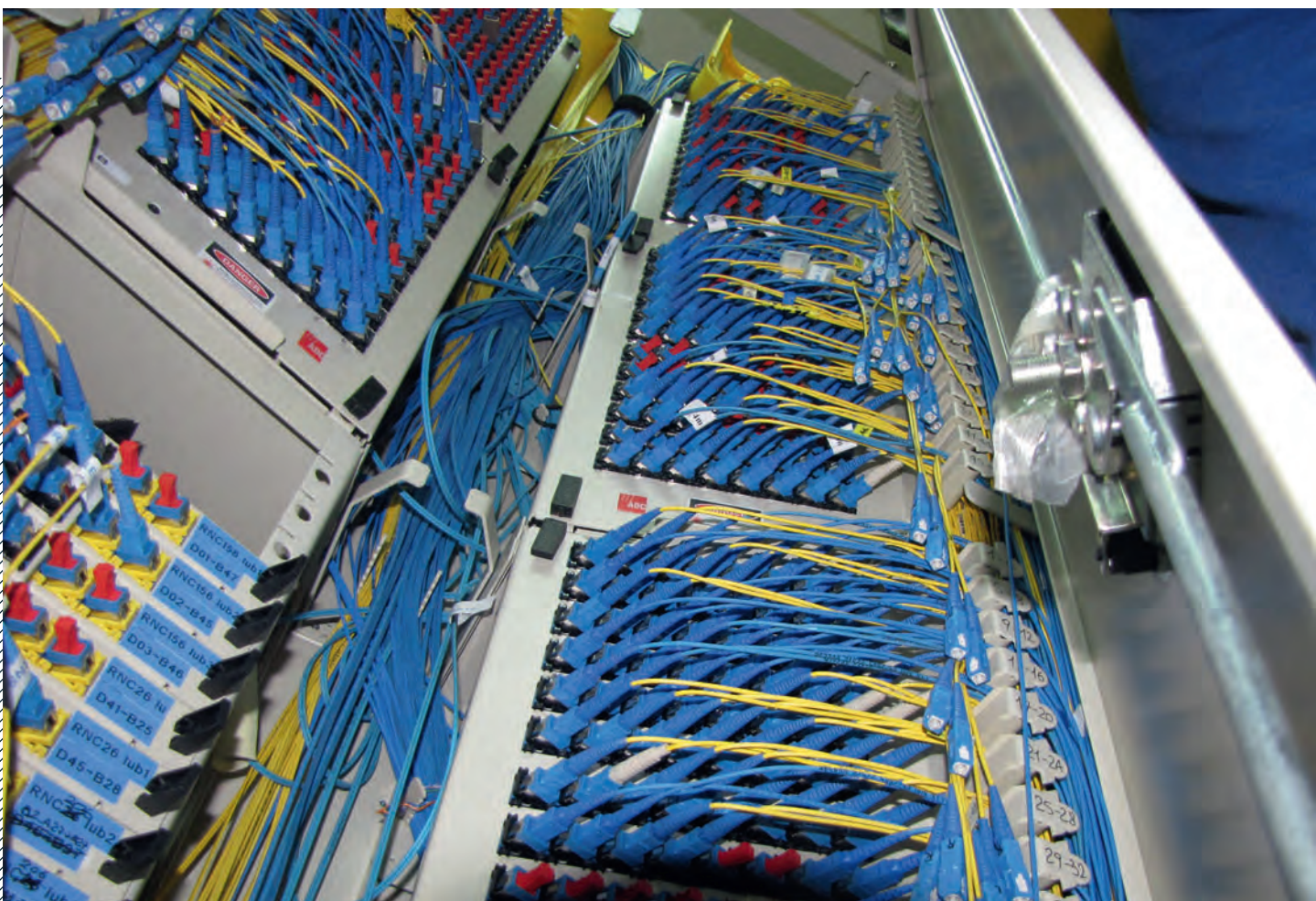
At present, the current innovation centres are the following:

POLITER – Regional centre for ICT, telecommunications and robotics is the result of the relationships between seven research centres both academic and of CNR, and more than 200 companies operating in these three fields.

The objectives of the Centre are to promote and strengthen the synergies between the actors in the field, the technological and innovation shift and to direct research on the basis of companies’ demands.

NANOXM – Regional Centre for Nanotechnologies represents one of the excellencies of the Tuscan industrial sector. In addition to the support of research centres and of developers and incubators, as the Polo of Navacchio (Pisa), it is characterised by the activity of leading companies in the field of nanomaterials, of nanotechnology applied to ICT sector, of bio-nanotechnologies of nanomedicine. The Centre aims to share research and opportunities as to integrate the know-how of professional characters, involved in planning and development’s processes.

This centre, as disclosed before, represents one of the excellent scopes and it is a reference point for a



number of companies understanding its value in terms of development and international competitiveness's facilitations. On its side, the Regione Toscana (T.N. regional government) encouraged even stronger relationships between the research and production fields to define specialized networks and webs. Among the projects of the Centre, we can mention the "Siena Solar Nanotech", one of the most innovative projects for sustainable development of second generation photovoltaic technologies with transformation processes unique in the world, and the "Colorobbia Nanomaterials" that is the development of a branch of the "Colorobbia Italia" for the design and synthesis of nanomaterials.

The development fields of nanotechnologies applied to materials are employed in textile industry, and in this case, there are several relationships between the Nanoxm and innovative companies of Prato's area, in the industry of polymeric materials and therefore of new generation packaging, as well as in medicine. In this instance, there are various research projects for antibacterial materials, biomedical products and purification technologies.

CENTO – the Regional Centre for Interiors and Furniture is a service structure able to relate with research centres, academic institutions and companies in order to develop data's platforms and label technological processes. The birth of this centre acts as an incentive towards innovation for the companies in the field.

OTIR – the Regional Centre for Fashion was defined to support the fashion industry, particularly active in Tuscany, offering services and partnership opportunities and networking to companies of the field, from the processing of raw materials to the finished product, from jewellery, shoes, textiles, leather sectors up to luxury products.

This Centre notably supports companies willing to open themselves to the foreign market and, at the same time, becomes the reference hub for who, from abroad, wants to confront with the Tuscan industrial reality.

