



ASTRA keeps moving forward!

ASTRA 1st in person partners' meeting: Vientiane, Laos

After one and a half years since the official kick-off of the ASTRA project, the partners had the chance to meet in person for the first time in **Vientiane, Laos** on the **21st and 22nd of July 2022 for the project's Management Meeting**. Steering Committee representatives from all consortium partners attended the meeting, which was hosted by the coordinator, the National University of Laos.

The consortium discussed the progress of the project, including the design of the **training materials** (WP2) that are going to be used during the capacity building phase of the project (WP3) as well as the **set up and pilot operation of the R&D Hubs in the four Universities in Laos and Thailand**. Issues regarding quality assurance and the dissemination activities were also discussed. The consortium updated the timetable and the corresponding milestones and deadlines. Next steps for the following months were set, in correspondence with the first official reporting period.

Partners agreed on the dates of the upcoming project activities, including the organisation of the three-



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week capacity building course for the managers of the newly set Hubs in Laos and Thailand that is going to take place in Italy and Greece, in November 2022.

Representatives from Thailand, Greece, and Italy appreciated the warm hospitality of the leading partner NUOL in Vientiane and agreed on setting the

dates for the **next in person meeting on 10-11 October in Thailand** in order to efficiently coordinate the official reporting and the organisation of the trainings. In the meantime, regular monthly online meetings continue as usual to follow up with the monitoring of the project progress.

Leadership Course for ASTRA Hubs' Managers (07-25 November, Florence and Athens)

The first task of ASTRA's Capacity Building Phase concerns the preparation of the HEI staff that will undertake the lead role in the set up and management of the Hub in each country. Naturally, this refers to high level academic and/or faculty staff that have the necessary authority and capacity to initiate such process within the targeted HEIs/Departments. They will benefit from an intensive Academic Leadership & Innovation course designed to help them develop and enhance existing skills and knowledge required as strategic leaders towards the goal for improved governance and more diversified funding of the HEIs in Laos and Thailand.

Each HEI from the Partner Countries will select 2 representatives who will have leading role in the management and coordination of the R&D Hub; those will be the participants of the course. The criteria of their selection will involve among others their level of seniority, their prior experience in management/coordination role, their familiarity with EU/donour funded projects, and other such aspects.

The leadership course will be carried out in two phases: the **first** and most important consists of **one week in person course in Florence, Italy on 7-11 November 2022**, hosted by the **University of Florence**. It will combine both classroom training, interactive workshops and study visit events on R&D

related leadership and fundraising in the context HEI governance and management.

On top of the above, a **two-week study visit in Athens, Greece** (hosted by the **Athens University of Economics and Business** as well as **Symplexis**) will take place for the same audience that will aim at exposing the participants to the operation of a business incubator in the university context (ACEin - Athens Center For Entrepreneurship And Innovation of the Athens University of Economics and Business) focusing on the opportunities for attracting institutional and private funds.

Save the dates!

2nd ASTRA in person management meeting:

- 10-11 Oct 2022 Phuket, Thailand

Leadership Course for ASTRA Hubs' Managers:

- 07-11 Nov 2022 – Florence, Italy
- 12-25 Nov 2022 – Athens, Greece

The expert EU partners are in the process of finalising the training materials (both online and offline) that are going to be used during the delivery of the course

(WP2). The indicative programme of the course follows below:

Training Day	Topic	Thematic sessions
Day 1 – full day	Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Leadership styles ▪ Motivation models and how to influence effectively ▪ Problem solving & conflict resolution ▪ Leadership for Strategic Change ▪ Coaching for performance
Day 2 - full day	Strategic management	Governance and Fundraising Strategy and Plan: vision, objectives, priorities, measures, outcomes, monitoring and evaluation
Day 3 - full day	Institutional fundraising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ EU programming and funding ▪ EU financial instruments ▪ Basic rules and terminology ▪ Funding from other donors
Day 4 (half-day) Leadership Course for ASTRA Hubs' Managers	Funding opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Funding opportunities in the ICT sector ▪ Funding opportunities in the social science sector ▪ Joint funding opportunities
Day 4 (half-day)	Online course	Detailed presentation of the Online Course on R&D fundraising techniques and resources in the ICT and social science sector
Day 5 (full day)	Case study	Case study exercise on strategic and action planning
2 weeks (Athens – Greece)	Study visit	Visit to ACEin - Athens Center For Entrepreneurship And Innovation of the Athens University of Economics and Business (workshops, speeches, and other hands-on exercises and practical examples of work)

Two “refreshers” webinars will follow, by using the newly developed online course materials, to ensure that the new knowledge is not only still relevant, but also that the trained staff knows how to put the new knowledge into action.

As already mentioned, the leadership course will take the form of a Training the Trainer programme so that the participants can later transfer the gained knowledge to their peers / other HEI staff and researchers (including post-graduate students).

ASTRA online course and national trainings

Once the first phase of the knowledge and expertise transfer by the partners from the Programme countries has been completed and the trainers have been equipped with the necessary skills and resources, arrangements will be made for the training of HEI staff in each targeted HEIs in Thailand and Laos. The national level training will target both academic and faculty (e.g. admin) HEI staff who share the vision and are interested and willing to contribute to the operation of the hub, incl. post-graduate students and researchers. For this purpose, each Department/ HEI will publish an invitation to the training while additional information sharing and dissemination activities will take place to ensure maximum participation.

The national trainings will be conducted based on the content of the **online course** developed by the Athens University of Economics and Business as the main training material along with several additional quizzes, examples and interactive exercises that will help participants to get introduced into different fundraising and bid management processes. The training curriculum, as also the online course, will provide step-by-step guidance on how to identify and most importantly pursue effectively institutional/ donor funds with emphasis on donor funding. To this end, the following aspects are expected to be covered:

Module	Topic	Thematic sessions
1	Understanding the basics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Higher education funding: basic rules, principles and terminology Research funding mechanisms, financial instruments and tools
2	EU programming and funding schemes in R&D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The basics of EU programming and annual planning HORIZON 2020 (opportunities in the ICT and social sector) ERASMUS+ (opportunities in the ICT and social sector)
3	How to read the Call for Proposals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Call priorities, objectives, outcomes and expected results Eligibility rules and exclusion criteria Types of activities and competitive advantages Evaluation criteria
4	How to manage the application process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparation of the technical aspects (idea generation and drafting the proposal) Addressing the administrative aspects
5	Drafting the proposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevance Quality Cost-effectiveness Added-value Sustainability and long-term impact
6	Introduction to PCM and LFA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The basics of the PCM Introduction to the LFA methodology Link between the LFA and the project cycle Understanding the elements of the LFA tool How to: preparing the LFA matrix

7	Developing a project using the LFA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Intervention logic ▪ Moving from objectives to results and activities ▪ Analysis of objectives and strategies ▪ How to: practical guidance and reflections on objective tree and choice of strategies ▪ How to: prepare a Gantt chart
8	Building strong partnerships and project consortia	<p>Part 1: How to?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Identify good partners ▪ Establish strategic collaborations ▪ Local, national or EU/ International partners <p>Part 2: Why partnering?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Advantages of working in partnership in EU projects ▪ Essential elements of a good partnership and factors of success <p>Part 3: Who is who?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The applicant ▪ Partner organisations and affiliates entities ▪ Roles and responsibilities <p>Part 4: Collaboration modalities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Partner agreement: condition and terms ▪ Rights and obligations of involved parties ▪ Conflict of interest and transparency ▪ Pre-financing and payment schedule

Next Steps

The next steps of ASTRA entail the finalization of the individual strategies for each of the four participating HEIs through the further adaptation and fine-tuning of the Regional Strategy under the coordination of Athens University of Economics and Business (WP2).

Equipment Procurement

In order to effectively set up and operate the ASTRA R&D Hubs in each of the four participating Universities in Laos and Thailand, a detailed list of necessary equipment has been elaborated. Each university has started the procurement process which is expected to be finalised by the end of the

year, according to the specific needs of each institution.

Moreover, the four ASTRA R&D Innovation & Consulting Hub's mandate & operational guides will be finalised (one for each partner University) which will serve as a basis for the operation of the newly set R&D Hubs in each university and will also include the detailed list for equipment procurement according to the specific needs of each institution.

ASTRA monthly online meetings

The consortium of ASTRA regularly meets online on a monthly basis in order to monitor and benchmark the project progress.

Partners



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University of Laos
(Laos)



Savannakhet
University
(Laos)



Prince of Songkla
University
(Thailand)



Chiang Mai
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