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Regional Governance and Fundraising Strategy

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Abbreviation Table	
ASEAN	Association of Southeast Asian Nations
EU	European Union
PE	Public Engagement
UN	United Nations

Governance and Fundraising Strategy and Plan (Regional)

Introduction

This deliverable evaluates the outcomes of the field and desk research conducted in WP1 in order to, first and foremost, propose a shared Governance and Fundraising Strategy and Plan for the Southeast Asian partner universities. The key priorities, goals, and objectives for the modernization of higher education governance and management systems in Southeast Asia, with an emphasis on Thailand and Laos, will be discussed. In the short, medium, and long term, a shared strategy scope and vision is offered, which is linked to specific priority areas and, in turn, strategic objectives, measures, and expected outcomes. This Strategy is accompanied by a multi-year Plan (3-5 years) that details the activities that should be undertaken in each phase, the persons or authorities/structures concerned, the implementation timeframe, the tangible and intangible results, and the performance and impact indicators.

The priorities are listed on the next pages and a detailed description of them is provided.

Results of WP1 Research

This section is dedicated to summarising the research report in order to build on the key issues and recommendations identified for improving financial sustainability and securing additional funding for the four partner institutions in Laos and Thailand. More specifically, the figure below summarises the methodology of the deliverable and the recommended actions.

Research Report: Regulation, needs and skills to develop fundraising for Social Science and ITC Faculties / Departments in National University of Laos, Savannakhet, Chiang May and Prince of Songkla			
The report is divided into four sections. The three first sections reconstruct the picture of the two countries' university systems, and Section 4 is dedicated to the detection of critical points and the suggestion of specific improvement actions. For this report, two research actions were carried out: desk research and field research.			
1. Rules and organizations in each university	2. Academic and administrative staff: skills and public engagement	3. Fundraising activities in the four universities of Laos and Thailand	4. Issues & recommendations for improving fundraising
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regulation and management • International agreements • Budget 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruitment and career development • Administrative staff recruitment • Workload • Assessment • Skills needs • Public Engagement • Network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research system • Funding procedures • Funders • NUOL Publications in national/international journals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key areas whose improvement would produce a new set-up of the 4 universities in terms of fundraising capacity, research, PE quality • Recommended actions
Improvement suggestions and Recommended Actions			
a) Reduce the time spent on bureaucracy required for research projects approval through an online research application management platform; b) Establish a research administrative office dedicated both to research fundraising and networking; c) Build a specific key performance indicator (KPI) for accessing internal funding, composed of three indicators with different weights, depending on the institution's: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • number of publications in peer-reviewed journals and publishers; • number and amount of funds won nationally or internationally; • individual PE performance. d) Public Engagement (PE) networks building it is recommended: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • whereas this activity is not institutionalized, to create an administrative office to collect information concerning the different forms of E; • to include PE as one of the activities which are recognized for of academic career track; • create a database of all stakeholders. 			

Figure 1 Overview of WP1 Research Report

Furthermore, some professors/researchers express dissatisfaction with the time it takes to apply for research grants and the bureaucracy (in the Prince of Songkla University academic staff focus group, this issue appears even more pronounced). In order to simplify the research process, an online platform is suggested that allows the electronic signature of the document within a predetermined time frame. Moreover, this way administrative employees committed to research management could be aware of any sort of proposal made by researchers and follow the process from the beginning to the end. Another important issue identified is that many scholars recognize the fact that they learn about funding opportunities for projects and research too late. Because of this, researchers do not have the necessary time to design comprehensive and competitive proposals. To this end, it is proposed the creation of a research administrative office with the competence of keeping track of all fundraising opportunities, both locally and worldwide, and passing information along to all researchers and professors. In addition, Asian Universities should gathering information so as to improve their research networks. A database system that collects information on potential research partners could be a possible solution and a beneficial tool for them to develop their research connections.

In addition, it seems that public engagement(PE) activities are limited. PE is also important since the university can gain prestige and recognition. Based on the report there are three types of recommendations. Firstly, given the fact that this activity is not institutionalised within the university the establishment of an administrative office to collect data on the various forms of PE in which the academic staff can participate is

recommended. Secondly, include PE as an important pillar for the evaluation of Universities and thirdly develop indicators and a database system so that faculties or departments can be ranked based on all PE performances by each academic staff member.

Furthermore, as it seems in general there is no transparent and meritocratic way of managing internal research funds. Consequently, it is suggested a new method that takes into account the following factors. Firstly, the number of peer-reviewed publications in English or their native language in peer-reviewed journals and publishers. Secondly, the number and amount of funds earned in national and worldwide competitions and the individual PE performance. In this way, it will increase the motivation of researchers to seek external sources of funding as well.

Another possible barrier to the expansion of additional research activities is that Asian University systems' workload is higher than that of Western public institutions. This combined with the fact that many professors work in private universities due to low salaries there is not enough time for research. Researchers should be given incentives and time to increase their income through external research funding.

Based on the survey report, there are certain skills of university human resources that need improvement. The figure below shows the proposed training activities which will contribute to upgrading the skills of the people.

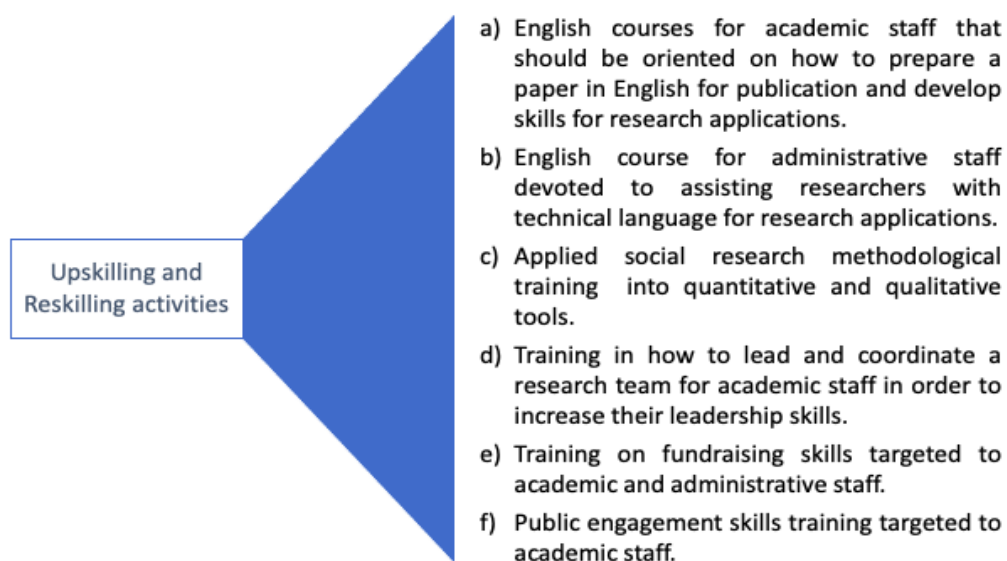


Figure 2 Upskilling and Reskilling proposed activities

Taking everything into consideration, any proposed adjustments should be evaluated in light of the national setting as well as the specific university context in which they will be implemented.

Common Strategy

The nine pillars of the common strategy

1. TOWARDS INTERNATIONALISATION

A sole focus should be given on the internationalisation strategy, with an emphasis on the continuous progress and the further development of intra-Asian and international cooperation. Strategic objectives of the international strategy should centre on:

- the constant improvement of quality of services offered to incoming and outgoing students and teaching and administrative staff;
- the increase of courses taught in English in order to facilitate inbound student and staff mobility;
- the encouragement of foreign students to take local language courses which are offered, free of charge;
- the enhancement of teaching staff mobility in numbers and levels of satisfaction and performance;
- the increase of outgoing student participation in Erasmus/ASEAN placements;
- the establishment of more collaboration with institutions from European and other countries;
- the establishment of joint degree (BA/Msc/PhD) programs among the ASEAN countries;
- the strengthening of links and collaboration with the business world at international level;
- the proper implementation of Erasmus+ Program initiatives Inter-institutional agreements between EU Member states HEIs and Asian HEIs.
- the encouragement of Lifelong Learning;
- the continuation/establishment of Quality assurance systems which includes the internal and the external evaluation;
- the initiation of research activities and contributions in science aiming at excellence.

As part of the internationalisation strategy Universities should aim to participate either as coordinators or as partners in educational and research scientific projects at national and international (European Union – Funded) level. They should be represented in international organisations, associations, academic networks, knowledge alliances, partnerships and students' educational exhibitions and fora. The selection of the partners should be based on the research interests, study programs and academic backgrounds of the HEIs.

The expected impact of such a strategy addresses the objectives that the Southeast Asian partner universities strive to achieve, such as:

- further development of their influence at global level with extensive collaboration on educational, academic and training matters;
- increase of their relationships at international level aiming at students and staff mobility with good quality and updated study programs, that are properly designed and attractive for both their EU and non-EU partners;
- commencement or expansion of university-business cooperation and partnership;
- enhancement of effectiveness and relevance of teaching and research training, and provision to graduates with the knowledge and fundamental transferable skills they need to excel in high-skill positions around the world;
- increase of chances for students and staff aimed at fostering cross-border collaboration in order to improve higher education performance through updated and innovative study programs;
- strengthening of the "knowledge triangle", linking education, research and innovation cooperating with countries from all over the world;
- attracting students and faculty from international universities and research centres, providing high-quality services and academic standards, and put in place appropriate measures to foster excellence;
- increase of the number, or creation, of courses taught in English, thus providing more study possibilities and increasing inbound student mobility.

The objectives and the impact of the strategy have been designed following the international agreements of the universities (National University of Laos, Savannakhet University, Chiang Mai University, Prince of Songkia University) as described in the WP1 Needs and Assessment Report.

2.SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY - THIRD MISSION

Another important mission of the university is its third mission and its social responsibility. Through this, the transfer and the use of the research results into the society is understood. Whereby, social responsibility stands for the role of the university as a drive for social change.

Social Responsibility describes the way in which a University makes a difference to the social and economic well-being of its community through teaching, research, public events and/or public activities.

Social responsibility activities should also capture the University's vision towards motivating its communities to research, teach and share their ideas. Such a vision may include:

- the rising popularity of social responsibility, as well as its active promotion within international projects and organisations like the United Nations Global Compact and the European Union;
- the increasing competition in the education industry that is prompting Universities to look for new methods to obtain a competitive advantage by venturing into unknown territory in order to boost their reputation;
- the growing and thickening network of university stakeholders, whose evaluation and support – or lack of it – that is becoming increasingly important for the conditions under which such bodies/university operate;
- the widening gap between educational paradigms and market need for new skills, notably those connected to the growth of organisational social responsibility policies;
- the expansion of Universities and their campuses in terms of size, that leads to significant resource consumption, such as electricity and water, and consequently an increase in their environmental impact, as well as the growing awareness of the university in this respect.

Social Responsibility sectors that should be addressed within a University include, but are not limited to:

1. Social Inclusion

Students, professors and all the relevant stakeholders on the campus, and related communities, should be engaged with, involved in, and motivated by the University, so as for it to better understand social inclusion and how it can encourage inclusive and successful solutions.

2. Health and Wellbeing

Through the whole spectrum of activities, the University should listen to and engage with its communities to support and inspire breakthroughs in health, wellness, and social care through intensive research and studies in this sector. Patient and public participation should also be looked into and in important areas as designated by the Sustainable Development Goal 3 of the United Nations: Good health and wellbeing, especially in the battle against communicable and non-communicable illnesses.

Furthermore, the good health and wellbeing of University's staff, students and communities, both locally and globally, is an important aspect as well. Activities, groups or clubs engaging and promoting wellbeing is a good way to start, as well as provision of in-campus health advisors, both for physical and psychological conditions.

3. Environmental Sustainability

Increasing greenhouse gas emissions, increasing temperatures, and the loss of nature and biodiversity pose a serious danger to humans and the ecosystems in which they live. The Universities should lead the way to a more sustainable world via its research, teaching, operations, engagement, and people. The University's mission for environmental sustainability could include usage of its whole spectrum of possible expertise and influence to promote a world that is ecologically sustainable.¹ (<https://eua.eu/issues/14:green-transition.html>)²

4. Engaging the Public

Public engagement is the connection, sharing and involvement of the public with the University's work and vision towards achieving its overall goals on Social Responsibility. The University should listen to and collaborate with a variety of audiences to exchange ideas and encourage discussion, debate, and innovation in order to carry out meaningful involvement. Partnerships, cooperation, inclusivity, and reflection which are important concepts that can guide the strategy. Patient involvement in research and teaching, volunteering, mutual collaborations, citizen science, festivals, extending participation, and policy engagement are just a few ideas for the aforementioned to be achieved.

For a more holistic Social Responsibility strategy one can turn to the [UNs' 17 Sustainable Development Goals \(SDGs\)](#)¹ both for inspiration and for fundraising opportunities. In short, the 17 SDGs are:

1. No Poverty
2. Zero Hunger
3. Good Health and Well-Being
4. Quality Education
5. Gender Equality
6. Clean Water and Sanitation
7. Affordable and Clean Energy
8. Decent Work and Economic Growth
9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
10. Reduced Inequalities
11. Sustainable Cities and Communities
12. Responsible Consumption and Production
13. Climate Action
14. Life Below Water
15. Life on Land
16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions

¹

² <https://eua.eu/issues/14:green-transition.html>

17. Partnerships

As a governance strategy the universities should state in their mission statement their commitment to engage with more public activities. The universities should be actors of change in their society. Their work should focus on the SDGs mentioned above and develop some further actions like SDGs days.

In Thailand and Laos there are already some initiatives like educating the younger generation on how to save money or training the pupils how to be more better hosts but these efforts need to be intensified and also further supported.

3. TRANSFORMING DIGITALLY

The future path to sustainable education management is validated by digital transformation in the global education industry. Gaining a sustainable position for universities necessitates their ability to respond to macro-environmental changes, as well as incorporating significant trends into their digital transformation strategy.

The basic motivation for a University's digital transformation strategy is its struggle for the highest possible quality for an education that enables student experiences that are such that can provide students with the ability to comply with the international industry demands.

Virtual and Independent Learning

In the middle of the 2019 pandemic, virtual learning became increasingly vital for Universities. Beyond the IT tool and instrumentalization, it is of high importance to broaden the critical position of virtual learning. As a result, Universities must investigate ways to combine humanistic aspects with virtual learning in order to ensure cooperation and engagement, which would otherwise be lost in face-to-face learning.

With the slow passing of the pandemic, a new opportunity has been also given to Universities to embody blended learning, meaning both virtual and physical. The post COVID reality has given the chance to the Universities to focus on this newly founded blended learning, which is a mix of self-paced computer study, online communication, and face-to-face instruction. Virtual learning has also created an online platform for students to construct powerful informal networks (study groups), which they utilize to share information and communicate with one another.

At the same time, Universities' usual learning processes were halted. Therefore, they had no choice but to redesign an adaptable learning mechanism that connects diverse geographical locations, courses, and time zones. Universities have benefited greatly from autonomous online-based learning systems/mechanisms in this context. The goal of

autonomous learning is to motivate students to master a variety of important courses in order to enter the workforce. It specifically addresses:

5. learning material;
6. technical expertise, and;
7. other skills.

Ideally, Universities would create an autonomous learning model that aligns students' study programs with the increasing demands of the industrialised world. As a result, developing an empirical learning design pattern becomes necessary. Institutions must develop their own autonomous learning model in order to motivate students to learn and expand employment chances.

Finally, a holistic digital transformation strategy is intended to:

- raise overall income;
- improve productivity;
- create value through creative methods, and;
- promote a brand reputation and originality.
- engage all the relevant stakeholders
- inform the public about current and future actions

To handle complicated transformation plans, universities must define digital transformation management procedures. Therefore they should develop agile, practical, and scalable digital transformation plans that serve as the central ideology that connects all aspects of the university. The use and integration of digital technology allows them to expand beyond their traditional virtual boundaries, impacting course portfolios, delivery models, and the university's whole value chain.

As stated on the WP1 needs assessment report, it is time to train the academic/non-academic personnel to acquire proper digitalization skills and further their research innovation skills. In order for this to happen the universities should create proper plans and consult with their education and/or life-long learning department/unit.

4. INTENSIFICATION AND ENHANCEMENT OF RESEARCH

As established in the results stemming from WP1 of the ASTRA Erasmus+ Project, Southeast Asian partner Universities have an extensive need for research fortification and support. In general, a University should be defined by its research quality while at the same time it should pay attention to enhancing and refining it to make it more exciting, motivating, and life-changing.

Excellent research is rooted in key intellectual disciplines and individual researchers' abilities to contribute at the highest level, as well as the University's ability to support said researchers in order for them to achieve their greatest potential. Furthermore, in order to address big global concerns, propose novel answers, or promote an international viewpoint, researchers need to cross academic boundaries. Supporting concentrated intellectual activity and stimulating multidisciplinary research are considered as complementary processes, resulting in a unique and dynamic overall approach from the University.

A University with needs such as the ones presented by this project's partners has to set specific goals. The most important goals a University should set include, but are not limited to:

Goal 1: To strengthen its status as a research-intensive institution and to be recognized globally for the quality and relevance of its research.

Goal 2: To be a partner of choice for both EU and non-EU funded projects and a beacon of good practice in innovation and impact, and to be outstanding in its approach of cooperation.

These two goals help Universities prioritise research, innovation and partnerships. This can be achieved by:

1. An R&D Hub in each Asian University that will house staff for constant EU and non-EU funded research proposal scouting and their further dissemination to the suitable researchers for participation. Such a Hub will help scale-up specialized research programs and increase external awareness.
2. Establishment of tenure-track fellowships for early- and mid-career researchers to strengthen research and leadership abilities in areas where each university has the potential to develop an international competitive scale and impact.
3. Increase the number of PhD students and establishing the University as a complete resource for improving PhD training.
4. Develop postgraduate research training ties with international institutions and industry partners, such as joint/dual PhD degrees or agreements utilizing its existing network located nationally and/or internationally.

5. TEACHING AND LEARNING

Higher Education teaching and learning is growing as a concept around the world. Teaching and learning should further explore the important issues of skills development

and digital literacy. As the European Commission is promoting the transversal key competences for all its citizens it is now time for the Asian universities in Thailand and Laos to focus on the objectives of digital literacy, innovation and entrepreneurship. The student-centred learning instead of the teacher-driven provision should be the shift that is aimed and looked after. The universities should form a clear digitalization strategy with a clear focus on teaching and learning.

A provision for digital tools to be used during the teaching and learning should be made. The universities should make sure that the professors are equipped with learning methods that are necessary for the current post COVID-19 reality.

Teaching should be available to take place on-line/on-site or in a hybrid or blended form. Extra emphasis should also be given on Entrepreneurial teaching and learning. In entrepreneurial teaching and learning the following examples should be provided: Case study, group discussion, action learning, seminar, web-based learning, recorded group discussion, group project, formal lectures, guest speakers.

A peer-learning system is suggested so as the experienced professors can support the younger members of the staff in their teaching and learning activities. The peers can be established by the university management and some further initiatives (ratio on teaching) in order to assist the younger professors. This measure is cost-effective and it will give the chance on the region to learn to engage with the internal and the external stakeholders.

In some cases where support is given by the Ministry of Education or the Quality Assurance Agency, then the professors should make sure that the knowledge is shared. The administrative staff can create the minutes of the meeting and share it within the close group of the academic staff.

In the regional part of the document, it is realized that the country context varies between Laos and Thailand and therefore in the national plans, further instructions on how to advance teaching and learning is going to be given.

6. GOVERNANCE MODERNIZATION

The universities should establish a stronger executive committee and a new governing body. The individual institutions should promote their own reforms while the ministry can oversee their works.

The Governing boards have different names in the different countries like board of directors, university council or board of trustees. The composition, the authority and the roles of these members can vary.

Taking the example of Thailand we should underline that the university council is the highest governing body. The university council is nominated by the members of the university and the chairperson who is appointed by the King. However the introduction of further stakeholders in the university council should be further examined and if applicable be implemented in the local context.

As the country context varies, it is recommended that an advisory board is established, where its members are external stakeholders or alumni that are interested in the internationalisation and the further development of the university.

In the national plans further instructions are going to be given by the universities.

7.FUNDING & PEOPLE SUPPORT

The finances of the institutions in the South East-Asian countries has been a complex issue. First the method of government budget allocation should change from line-item budget to a lump-sum budget or block grant. This will have as a result a greater authority over its use from the universities. Secondly the HEIs should be allowed to generate their own income. This income should come from tuitions, donations and self-generated revenues. International donors should also be given an extra emphasis since they can provide extra funding at the university.

Universities should set specific strategic aims in order to achieve their priorities but also further embed their values and behaviours. The different stakeholders within the different universities should feel that they act in a progressive, collaborative and healthy working environment. In order for this to happen a rewarding system of the staff should be created. This system can be linked on supporting the staff's potential and carrer aspirations.

Moreover the university should invest in its own people. They should try to attract the best staff from within the country and the diaspora. A focus on research , teaching and engagement should be secured. Investing in all the people across the academic and professional service communities will ensure we create a truly global and sustainable university.

The objective should be a collaborative and healthy working environment for the staff and the students.

The universities should be given the option to finance in a more autonomous way their finances. Having to follow all the regulations by the Ministry of Finance every time they are going to apply for a new project or a research initiative, might be a disadvantage for the interested staff.

Donations should be able to be used in an autonomous way. The Rectorate body can be in charge of monitoring the money distribution and the fundraising efforts.

8. EXCHANGING KNOWLEDGE

Through knowledge exchange, the universities can make a positive difference to the environment, the economy and their local societies. They should ensure that academics, students and support staff, at all career stages, across all disciplines, and from all parts of the society have the opportunity and support to use knowledge exchange to reach beyond the academy, and be recognised and rewarded for their contributions in this sphere alongside research and teaching.

The research and teaching culture and practice should be open, connected, and proactive, promoting mutually beneficial exchanges of knowledge and expertise with those beyond the academy, and fostering engagement, innovation and entrepreneurship for the benefit of all society.

Equality, diversity and inclusion are fundamental to knowledge exchange at the Universities. They should ensure knowledge exchange opportunities and their benefits should be available to all of their communities, and that every member of the University feels able to access the support they need to develop and sustain their knowledge exchange activities and ambitions. Groups within the university should be formulated in order to listen and learn what the barriers are to engagement, and take steps to break them down.

It is vital that through the internal channels of communication, the university management but also the faculty members can share opportunities, calls and opportunities for cooperation. Moreover the creation of an internal newsletter might be a way to make sure that the information is properly disseminated. Databases and communication channels have been located both in Laos and Thailand.

9. IMPACT

Universities should have key relationships and collaborations with their national Parliaments and their Governments. In order for their impact to be elevated a connection with the unions, the civil society organisations and trans-national activist networks;

important museums and cultural institutions UN and international agencies such as UNICEF and the World Bank; Ministers of Foreign Affairs in various countries; NGOs and philanthropic donors should be established.

A key objective is to foster and support the relationships and collaborations with key actors beyond academia, and promote and celebrate success stories of collaboration and co-production of research which have led to positive change and long-lasting impact and mutual benefits.

Universities should be committed to developing genuinely mutual partnerships with colleagues in other countries. The members of the staff should participate in training in Africa, Asia and the Middle East, as well as the EU so as to expand opportunities for engagement in transnational as well as local research and influencing initiatives that tackle global challenges. Universities should prioritise creating opportunities for those who tend to be marginalised – such as women and ethnic or religious minorities – reversing hierarchies of knowledge and expertise, decolonising and democratising research collaboration.

All this can be achieved through specialist training and development programmes and workshops on research impact, public engagement and knowledge exchange, but also through peer-to-peer exchange and mentoring. Universities should seek to create a network of impact champions in the departments and Schools who can support the process of developing and nurturing the capacities of the researchers to engage in taking their research out of the academy and using it to make a difference.

Multi-Year Plan

WP Description: multi-year Plan (3-5 years) specifying the activities that should be taken in each given phase, the persons or authorities/ structures responsible, the time period of implementation, the tangible and intangible outcomes and the indicators for measuring performance and impact.

Designing a multi-year plan can be a challenging task for many universities in Thailand and Laos. Nevertheless it is essential to try and design some important milestones that are feasible in the local context.

In the first 3 years the further enhancement of the research administrative offices should be achieved. These offices assist in informing the members of the administrative and academic staff about the different opportunities that exist in a national and international context. The offices are going to be later incorporated in the new Hub which will be further elaborated on the task 2.3. The offices in each university and within the first 3 years will create an online application system/portal where the university members can log in and find all the relevant informations for open calls in a national and international

level. This application system/portal will make sure that the funding process is more transparent and that funding also within the university is visible. At the same time the offices and later the Hub will be responsible for the public engagement activities of the university. It is of great importance for the Asian universities to raise their public engagement but also contribute actively to the problems of their local societies. These procedures are going to be administered by the University Council. The outcomes of this office are going to address several of the needs of the universities. The professors and the administrative staff would be better organised and they will make sure that they can compete for ASEAN and EU funding. Moreover they will be aware of different activities that are organized in the campus along with opportunities for further disseminating their research.

Once this office are running the next step could be the R&D Hub in each Asian University. This hub will be the place where researchers and academics can meet so as to further develop their research projects but also increase their external awareness. As mentioned above and with the establishment of the Hub, the establishment of tenure-track fellowship should be given extra emphasis. This move will benefit the universities since it is going to bring them to an international equivalent. The structure of a tenure-track fellowship will also motivate new PhD students and supervisors.

These steps in the regional context would be of great use and they will make the universities outgoing, international and socially aware. As for the national recommendations an additional plan is going to be written.