



NEWSLETTER, ISSUE 4 | APRIL 2023

ASTRA enters its next phase!

ASTRA Transnational Capacity Building

In November 2022, the **Transnational Capacity Building programme** for the managers of the ASTRA R&D Hubs took place. **13 Representatives** from the four participating Universities from Laos (NUOL, SKU) and Thailand (PSU, CMU) travelled to Europe to participate in an **intensive three-week training** designed by the expert European partners (UniFi, Symplexis and AUEB).

7-11 NOVEMBER 2022, FLORENCE, ITALY

The first week of the training took place in **Florence, Italy on 7-11 November 2022** hosted by the University of Florence. It focused on transferring the knowledge and expertise on the conduction of Research and Development activities in the field of Social Sciences to the upcoming R&D managers.

Strategic and Institutional Management approaches were presented, alongside specific methods on proposal development for pursuing institutional funding opportunities.

The online course developed by AUEB and targeted at staff members to be included in the operation of the ASTRA R&D Hubs was also showcased.

All participants highly appreciated the learning process as the results of the evaluation showed.

14-25 NOVEMBER 2022, ATHENS, GREECE

The second round of the transnational training programme took place in Greece, hosted by Symplexis and AUEB. It included **two full weeks of**



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info@symplexis.eu
symplexis.eu

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presentations, interactive workshops and exercises as well as **study visits** to reputable University R&D Centres.

The focus was on enhancing the knowledge and skills of the ASTRA R&D Hubs managers on Leadership, Management, and on the pursuit of public and private fundraising opportunities. The overall Programme and curriculum were designed by Symplexis.

The participants were engaged in interactive exercises based on real life scenarios regarding i) effective leadership methods, ii) preparation of applications for EU funded opportunities, and iii) administrative and financial processes.

Moreover, cultural activities and study visits were organized in places of interest in Athens, during which the participants had the chance to improve their intercultural skills and meet with experts from

Greek Universities who already run Research and Development Centres successfully.



As with the first week, all participants highly appreciated the capacity building programme and found it extremely beneficial for their upcoming work as the managers and leaders of the R&D Hubs to be established in each University.

ASTRA National Trainings

After their participation in the Transnational Capacity Building Course on Leadership, the ASTRA R&D Hubs managers **organized trainings targeted at the university staff in their respective countries**.

Four (4) national trainings were delivered in early 2023 in each of the participating Universities from Laos and Thailand, based on the content of the developed online course as the main training material. The course content was supplemented by additional quizzes, presentations, examples and interactive exercises that helped the participants to get introduced into different fundraising and bid management processes. A step-by-step guidance on how to identify and most importantly pursue effectively institutional/ donor funds was presented to the staff that is going to be involved in the operation of the R&D Hub.

In total 72 University staff members were engaged in the training opportunity, exceeding the target numbers set in the initial proposal. A thorough evaluation showcased that the vast majority of participants appreciated the training and found it valuable for their professional development and useful in view to the operation of the R&D Hub.

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF LAOS

ASTRA National Training at the National University of Laos (NUOL) was organized during **23-25 January 2023**. A series of training and workshops on R&D Fundraising Techniques and Resources in the ICT and Social Science Sectors were delivered to 15 faculty members and administrative staff of Faculties of Economics and Business Management, Engineering, and Natural Sciences. After the training, key outcomes of the training consist of two concept ideas

discussed and proposed in the workshop and participants' increased awareness of funding opportunities at the national and regional levels. Also, participants are willing to prepare actual funding applications with the support of ASTRA experts and senior faculty members.



CHIANG MAI UNIVERSITY, THAILAND

Office of Research Administration, Chiang Mai University held a training under the topic of "R&D Fundraising Techniques and Resources in the ICT and Social Science Sector" during **January 11-13, 2023** at CMU Innovation Learning Center. The training program focused on proposal preparation for



funding calls from the beginning through to the submission. A total of 22 participants including academic and administrative staff from 8 faculties and 6 departments attended the training. A discussion about the operation direction, roles and functions of the CMU ASTRA Research and Innovation Hub which is to be established by the end of March, 2023 has been addressed.

PRINCE OF SONGKLA UNIVERSITY, THAILAND

ASTRA National Trainings at Prince of Songkla University (Phuket Campus) were held during **18-20th January 2023**. A series of training and workshops on R&D Fundraising Techniques and Resources in the ICT and Social Science Sectors were delivered to 20 faculty members and administrative staff of Social Sciences and ICT faculties. Key outcomes of the training include three concept ideas proposed in the workshops, and participants' increased awareness of funding opportunities.



SAVANNAKHET UNIVERSITY, LAOS

The national training under Erasmus+ ASTRA project was held with duration of 3 days, from **1st - 3rd February 2023** at the building of SKU Library, room no. ADB, Savannakhet University (Naxeng campus). 15 faculty members and administrative staff of Social Sciences and ICT faculties (including Faculty of

Education, faculty of Linguistics and Humanities, Faculty of Business Administration, and Faculty of Information and Technology were trained on R&D Fundraising Techniques and Resources in the ICT and Social Science. All eight modules were delivered together to 15 SKU staff with all its details including.



ASTRA 2nd in person partners' meeting, Florence, Italy

The **second in person Management meeting** of the ASTRA project took place on **08-10 February 2023 in Florence, Italy**, hosted by the University of Florence.

Representatives from all partners summarised the progress achieved so far and agreed on the next steps by setting concrete deadlines and guidelines for the completion of the upcoming tasks.



The management meeting marked the commencement of the final implementation year of

the project. Partners discussed the practicalities of the national trainings' delivery, as well as the organisation of the official launch events of the ASTRA R&D Hubs in the respective Universities.

Throughout 2023, the ASTRA Managers will undertake the responsibility of running the ASTRA Hubs by proceeding with the services provision outlined in the Operational Guidelines.



By the end of the year, the Hubs will demonstrate the work that they have done and will officially be embedded in the services portfolio of the four participating Universities.

Next Steps

The next steps of ASTRA entail the organisation of the official launch events in the four participating Universities in Laos and Thailand during which the respective Legal Representatives will sign the Hubs' Operational Mandate, thus officially embedding it in the service portfolio of the University.

After the event each ASTRA Hub team, under the guidance of the trained ASTRA Managers and the support from the EU expert partners, will follow the individual strategies and the Operational Guidelines

by providing the foreseen services related to ICT and social sciences funding opportunities.

By the end of the year, each Hub will demonstrate the work done and will pursue at least one international funding opportunity in the fields of ICT and/or social sciences.

ASTRA MONTHLY ONLINE MEETINGS

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

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info@symplexis.eu
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(Laos)



Savannakhet
University
(Laos)



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University
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