

06 **innoLab** ASEF HIGHER EDUCATION

Universities' Role in Artificial Intelligence (AI) Innovation Ecosystems



OVERVIEW DOCUMENT

Background

Established in 2021, the [ASEF Higher Education Innovation Laboratory](#) (ASEFInnoLab) creates opportunities for higher education stakeholders from Asia and Europe to expand their professional network, exchange knowledge, and collaboratively build their capacity to address common global challenges. It is a unique platform for higher education stakeholders to exchange good practices and co-create new ideas moving away from business as usual and into collaboratively developing something extraordinary.

In its sixth edition, the project will bring cohorts of outstanding experts and scholars to explore universities' role in Artificial Intelligence (AI) innovation ecosystems—ASEFInnoLab's longstanding focus.

Programme Objectives

[ASEFInnoLab6](#) continues its mission of providing opportunities for academics and higher education managers from Asia and Europe to learn, network, and collaborate in the area where higher education and artificial intelligence intersects.

This project series serves as a groundbreaking platform for participants to:



Learn

Exchange and build knowledge among representatives from higher education institutions



Network

Facilitate sustainable networking and support funding opportunities



Collaborate

Create individual or joint outputs in a collaborative, supportive setting

Thematic Focus

ASEFInnoLab6 will explore its overarching theme “Universities' Role in AI Innovation Ecosystems” by focusing its work in three areas:

AI APPLICATION IN EDUCATION

We will put the spotlight on real-world AI applications developed in partnership with other HEIs or businesses. It explores successful partnerships, key enablers, and the impact of AI solutions in higher education, showcasing good practices and lessons learned. By understanding these use cases, participants will discover untapped opportunities for AI to enhance productivity, research, and the student learning journey.

AI SKILL NEEDS FOR INNOVATION

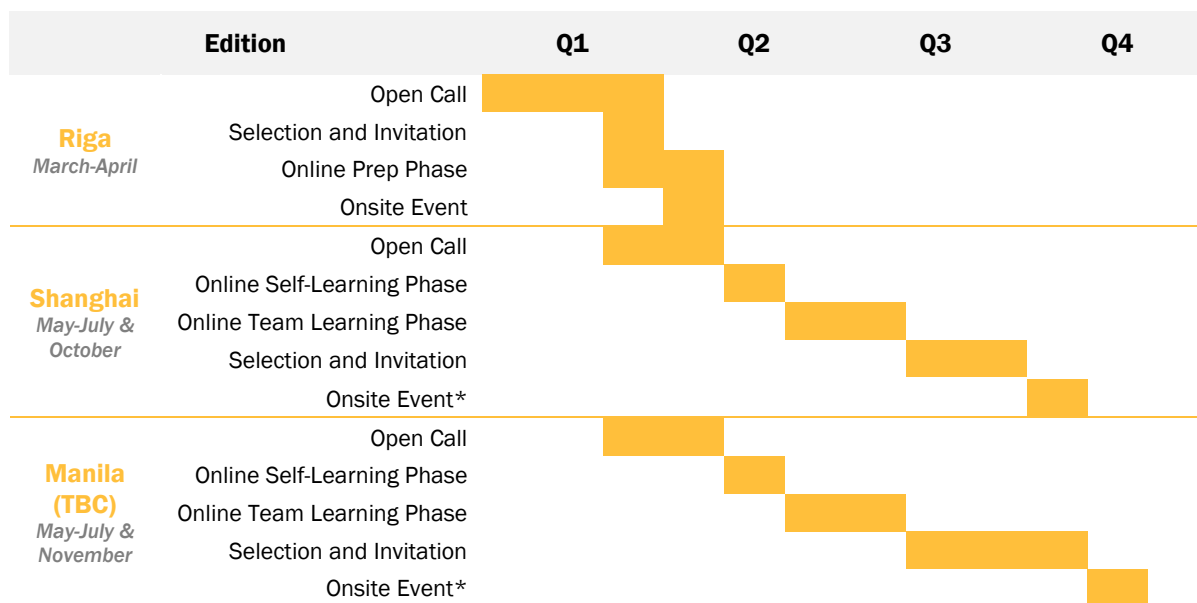
This subtheme will focus on emerging AI skill requirements and give the opportunity for participants to develop position papers outlining strategic approaches for universities to address these needs. Through this process, they will explore methodologies for anticipating AI-driven workforce demands and shaping future-ready education policies. Participants will contribute to shaping long-term vision and strategies that ensure universities remain able to meet the talent needs for innovation and progress.

AI SKILLS LITERACY

We will explore hands-on approaches to designing effective microcredential courses on AI skills literacy. Participants will work on structuring course outlines, define key learning outcomes, and implement scalable microcredentials that support AI literacy across disciplines. By the end of the programme, they will have drafted practical course frameworks that align with industry and academic needs. With this, the programme will help bridge AI knowledge gaps, enabling more professionals and students to acquire critical AI competencies in flexible and accessible ways.

Programme Timeline

Given our focused work on the three abovementioned subthemes, ASEFInnoLab6 will have three component Editions—each with its own separate cohort and topic of focus. Each Edition will be made up of an online phase and an onsite event which we will co-implement with select partners throughout the year. Below is an overview of the project timeline:



*The number of slots for the Shanghai and Manila onsite events are limited to 25 each. As such, there will be a selection process after the Team Learning Phase to determine which outstanding participants will be awarded the opportunity to join the in-person programme.

As an experiential, collaborative programme, ASEFInnoLab6 have an array of interactive sessions that will facilitate peer-to-peer learning. Online phases will feature expert talks, workshops and brainstorming, and joint/individual output creation. In addition, onsite events will have panel discussions, site visits, and provide the opportunity to polish work done during the online phase.

Target Group

ASEFInnoLab6 is for representatives from higher education institutions who spearhead AI-related activities and initiatives in their institutions.

For this year, we envision to bring together a total of 250 participants from Asia and Europe across three cohorts who meet the following criteria:

- Higher education managers, academics, researchers working with AI-related teaching, learning, research, management initiatives
- Citizens of eligible [ASEF partner countries](#)¹
- Excellent command of English (written and verbal)

Participants are **not required to have technical or coding skills**. The programme will focus on the theoretical, managerial, and organisational aspects of AI in higher education.

We will periodically announce Open Calls where interested participants can apply. Those who get selected through our screening process will have to commit to participating in the required phases of the Edition they are joining. **Please review the Open Call announcements for each Edition carefully, as they will have slightly differing selection criteria, programme design, and completion requirements.**

Key Outcomes

What will our participants get out of the programme? Knowledge, ideas, connections, and a project.

Participants will complete the programme with a key combination of knowledge and new networks, which can advance their work in various ways. The key intended outcomes of the programme are:

UNDERSTANDING OF UNIVERSITIES' ROLE IN AI INNOVATION ECOSYSTEMS

Participants will acquire new knowledge and ideas on the role of higher education in the rapidly evolving era of AI through exchanges with fellow experts from Asia and Europe.

INCREASED PROFESSIONAL NETWORK ACROSS ASIA AND EUROPE

Participants will have opportunities for interaction and cooperation with peers from different countries in Asia and Europe. Therefore, we fully expect new bilateral and multilateral partnerships to emerge.

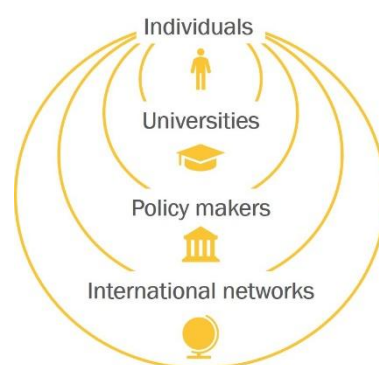
A STRONG OUTPUT CREATED IN A COLLABORATIVE ENVIRONMENT

Participants will work in different settings to create individual or joint outputs—from practical AI solutions to forward-looking position papers—in a collaborative, intercultural environment.

Impact

In the long term, the impact of ASEFINnoLab is expected to be realised on four levels:

- **Individual level:** Inspire Asia-Europe higher education academics and administrators to act and improve institutional strategies and practices in digital innovation.
- **Institutional level:** Strengthen Asia-Europe universities' role in AI innovation ecosystems.
- **Policy level:** Inform the Asia-Europe education policymakers on universities' roles and strategies in AI innovation ecosystems.
- **International level:** Support an Asia-Europe peer network to facilitate exchange on innovation and find opportunities for collaboration.



Organised by



The Asia-Europe Foundation (ASEF)

ASEF is an intergovernmental not-for-profit organisation located in Singapore. Founded in 1997, it is the only institution of the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM). ASEF promotes understanding, strengthens relationships and facilitates cooperation among the people, institutions and organisations of Asia and Europe. ASEF enhances dialogue, enables exchanges and encourages collaboration across the thematic areas of culture, education, governance, sustainable development, economy, public health and media. For more information, please visit www.ASEF.org.

¹ All ASEF projects are implemented in line with the decisions of the ASEF Board of Governors.