

ASTRON

Netherlands Institute for Radio Astronomy

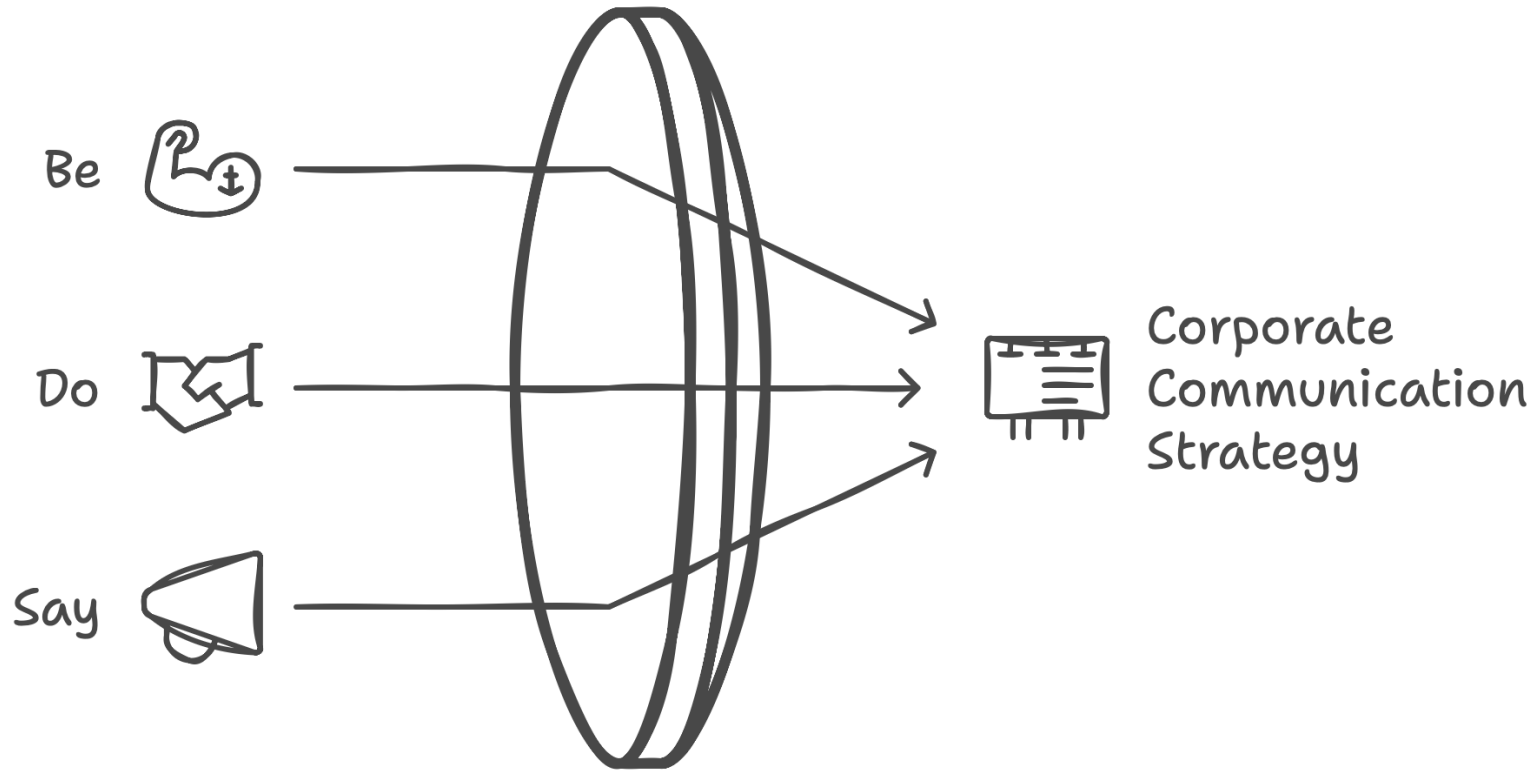
The ASTRON Compass: Uncovering our shared values

Frank Nuijens & Elise Brouwer
ASTRON

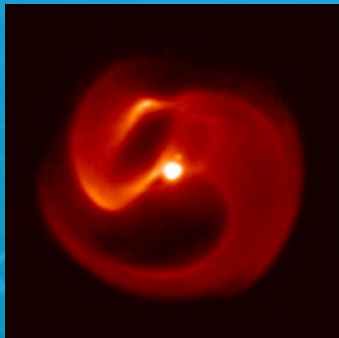


PAERI'24
Public Awareness and Engagement
with Research Infrastructures

Corporate reputation



Organisation



**Astronomy &
Operations**

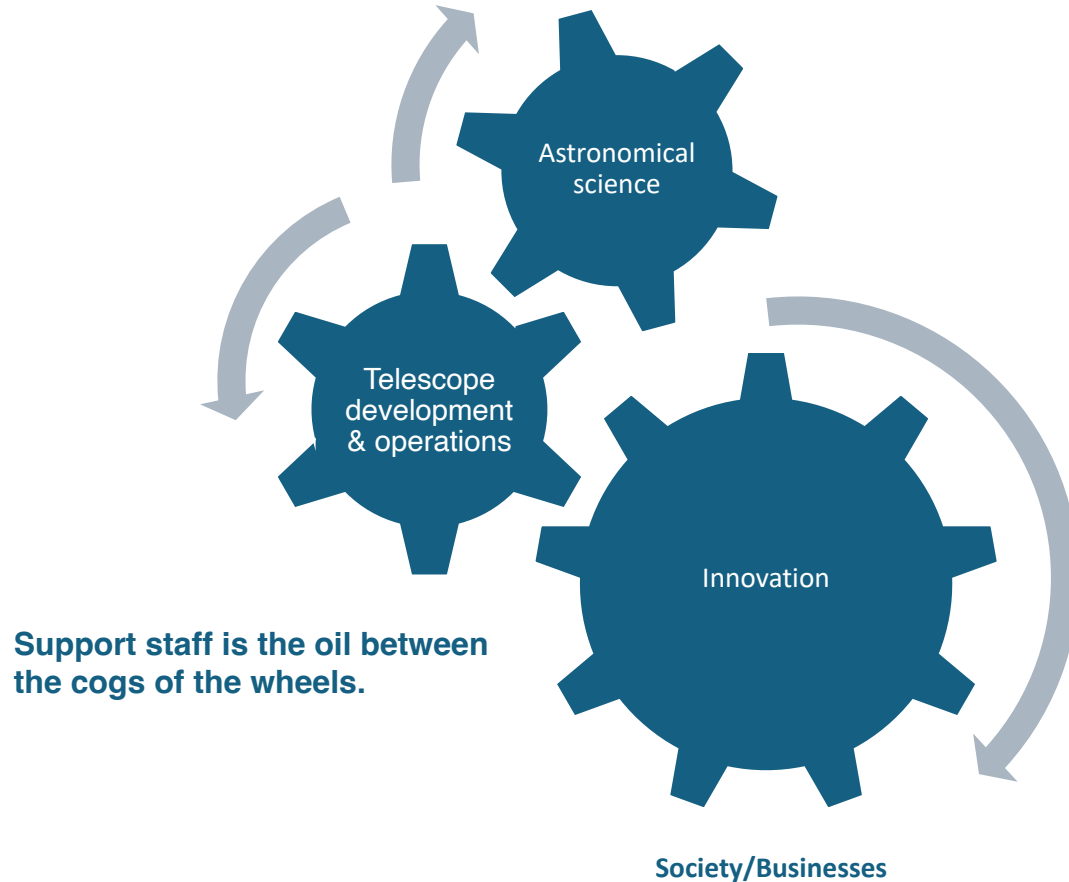
Innovation & Systems



Business Support

Making discoveries in radio astronomy happen

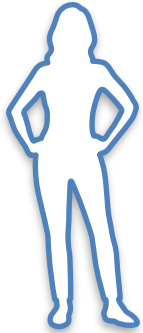
ASTRON



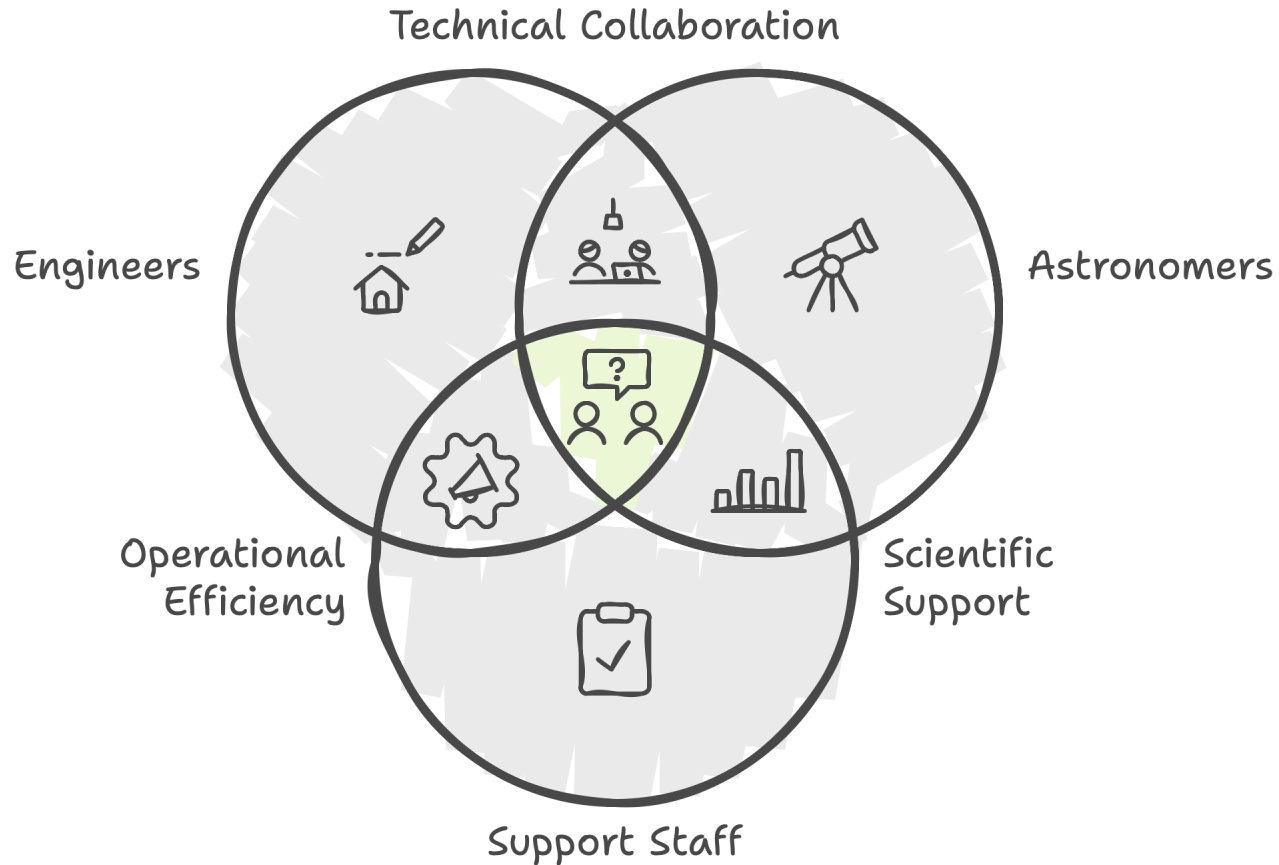
Who are we?

Our goal is to build the best radio telescopes!

Our goal is to do the best science!



Unified Mission in Radio Astronomy

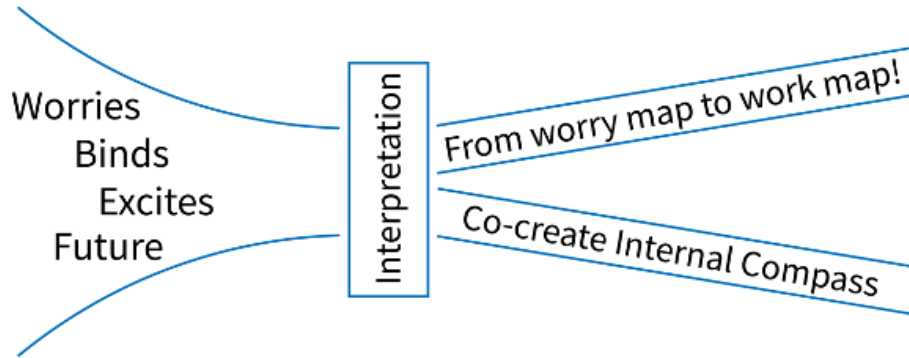


Listening sessions

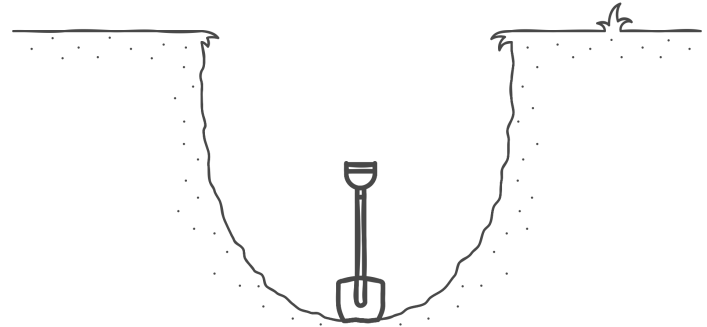
- Goal: who are we and what binds us?
- 16 sessions, total of 146 participants (**80% of the organisation**), mixed participants from all three departments in every session
- Each session: director as silent observer, Elise as moderator, me as note-taker (comments were anonymised)
- Four questions:
 - What **excites** you about working at ASTRON?
 - What **binds** you to ASTRON?
 - What **worries** you?
 - How do you see the **future** of the organisation?

Listening sessions

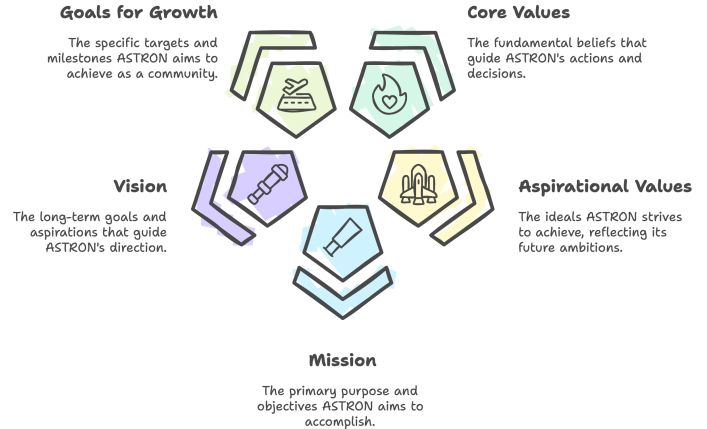
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- Discourse analysis
- Products:
 - Building blocks of the Brand House, reframed as the **ASTRON Compass**
 - Worry map, reframed as a **work map**



Staff worries indicate areas for organizational growth.



ASTRON Compass







ASTRON'S COMPASS

Making discoveries in radio astronomy happen



Our imagination is (more or less) limitless.

"We dare, we are not afraid." We believe that if we can imagine it, we can make it. We are always looking for new insights. We dare to push the boundaries of what is technically possible.



OUR DOT ON THE HORIZON

Socially engaged science

We take our responsibility. That's why we prioritize sustainability, energy reduction and footprint minimization as we strive to open new windows to the universe.

We place inclusion and equity, as well as workforce development, at the center of our efforts as a global leader in technology and astronomy.

We innovate in co-creation to solve the problems of the future for the benefit of (regional) industry and society.

HOW DOES ASTRON WANT TO IMPROVE AND DEVELOP?



We strive to set a good example and take responsibility.

We inspire, set new standards and push boundaries in all areas: astronomy, technology, social impact, inclusion and sustainability. We are non-conformist, agile and push boundaries with our science and telescopes.

We strive to be open, honest and transparent and trust each other's intentions.

We have honest conversations and discussions with mutual respect. We are accountable. We proactively express expectations. We try to understand each other. Are aware of each other's needs and trust each other's professionalism.



As engines for discoveries

Innovation
Inspiration
Inclusion
Sustainability

WHAT BINDS US?

We care about each other, help each other and our interaction is based on equity.

We appreciate each other. At ASTRON we help each other to grow and innovate together. We strive to take care of each other and be there for each other. Even when there is work pressure.

We are passionate and committed.

ASTRON employs top experts from all possible fields. "I have the feeling that we are working together towards a higher goal. Like basic science." We are proud to be the world's driving force in radio astronomy. "I get excited about the enthusiasm of my colleagues."

We are creative and curious (to be innovative).

ASTRON is the most fruitful place to develop and be innovative. We learn every day while having fun and sharing our discoveries with the world. We use creativity and technology to enable creativity in others. We solve puzzles. "Here we combine groundbreaking science with cutting-edge technology."



“Temperature scale” for core values

Our **Core Values** that we already implement

More than	Exactly right	Less than
Stress/ exhaustion	Committed	Laziness
Unfocused/ chaotic	Creative	Stagnant
Inquisitive - indecisive	Curious	Apathetic
Radical	Innovative	Conservative
Overprotective	Caring	Indifferent
Obsessive	Passionate	Apathetic

Our **Aspirational Values**: those are our future-oriented ideals we are working towards

Confusion	Transparent	Mistrust
Overexposure	Open	Secrecy
Insensitive/ invasive	Honest	Deception
Overcommitment	Responsible	Negligence

Our **Character Value**: the essence of our character

Unrealistic	Imaginative	Conformity
Recklessness/ instability	Daring	Complacency

Building support: strengthening the Be

- One-on one feedback sessions with 55 people
- Compass is lens for the question: who are we as an organisation and where do we want to go together?
 - *Organisational perspective*: does this choice/behaviour contribute to the organisation and where it wants to go?
 - *Personal perspective*: Is what I am doing good for my colleagues?
- Follow up on the initiatives to tackle the issues in the work map
 - We will start “troubleshooting” sessions soon

Bridging internal and external communications : aligning *Do* and *Say*

- Creating cohesion by sharing the common narrative
 - **Inspiration Market** to facilitate growth of cohesion



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- Internal = external
- Using Compass for recruitment, press releases and other external comms



Lessons learned

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- Addressing worries requires exploring the complexity of underlying issues
- Growth already starts when listening starts
- We have an organisation that is actively and constructively growing

Future focus

- Elise is our new advisor organisational development

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- Performing one of the most important roles of a communication professional, that of being the organisational antenna

