

MCA and the University of Malta to collaborate on Innovation in Communications: Seed fund award launched

Today, a collaboration between the Malta Communications Authority (MCA) and the University of Malta was announced. The collaboration is aimed at stimulating and supporting initiatives that bridge the gap between research, innovation and entrepreneurship in fields related to communication technologies and their applications.

Recent technological advances have brought about waves of disruption hitting market leaders hard in sectors such as telecoms, media and retail. In an age of fast pace disruption, convergence and consolidation, surviving and thriving is only possible through foresight, innovation and entrepreneurship. The collaboration is specifically aimed towards making joint contributions towards the development of an agile Maltese digital economy, able to respond to what the future may hold.

Through formal agreements, the MCA and the University have already, and plan to continue, implementing joint initiatives that target specifically innovation in communications. Four research projects were supported financially by the MCA and today the MCA TAKEOFF Award was also launched during the press conference. The scheme will be supporting two local start-ups to develop an innovative business idea with a view to eventual commercialisation. Under this scheme the MCA will be making available a seed fund of up to €40,000. The University will be hosting the start-ups at its campus-based TAKEOFF Business Incubator.

Dr Edward Woods, Chairman of the MCA, stated that “it is imperative for an Authority responsible for the advancement of communications to look beyond the present market context, which can often distract policy from seeking long term objectives”. He added that “The future of Malta’s economic and social success relies on the ability to innovate, specialise and seek excellence specifically in the development and application of ICT”. Dr Woods stated that the “collaborating with the University will give the Authority access to knowledge and expertise from a broad spectrum of disciplines”. Professor Juanito Camilleri, Rector of the University of Malta, welcomed the agreement as an opportunity to bridge academia with the industry and the public sector. He said that “academia can have a strong role to play in the country’s development when its contributions are relevant, accessible and lead to tangible innovation”.

The MCA further announced that it will be supporting a research project led by Dr Kristian Zarb Adami that aims to develop a low-cost Ultrawideband Antenna through a financial contribution of €5,500. The antenna is one of the technologies being proposed for consideration for the Square Kilometre Array (SKA) project, which will be the world’s largest radio telescope.

Individuals or start-ups interested in submitting a proposal under the MCA TAKEOFF Award are encouraged to download details from www.mca.org.mt. Proposals must be based on a strong business case and tied to a communications technology or related applications. Academics wishing to put forward research proposals that include collaboration with the MCA are invited to contact the Knowledge Transfer Office at the University of Malta on knowledgetransfer@um.edu.mt

For further information, you are kindly requested to contact:

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Standing Left: University Rector Profs. Juanito Camilleri

Standing Right: MCA Chairman, Dr. Edward Woods

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