



Features

News on Campus

Cooperation of European Countries for the Promotion of Urban Greening Technologies

The University of Malta and Frederick Research Center of Cyprus announce the launch of the European project entitled Urban Greening Systems for the Mediterranean Region -UGreenS. The project aims to transfer knowledge in the field of Green Roofs and Living Walls and it is funded by the Lifelong Learning Programme, Leonardo Da Vinci Transfer of Innovation Programme of the European Union.

UGreenS is a partnership of a number of European research entities undertaking research in the field of green roofs, living walls and a more sustainable built environment together with Small-Medium Enterprises involved in the development and implementation of such technologies in Europe. The partnership is led by the Frederick Research Center of Cyprus and includes the University of Seville, the Agricultural University of Athens, the University of Malta, the Agricultural Research Institute of Cyprus and the companies Terabia Urbana (from Spain), as well as P. Papadopoulos Consulting Engineers, THANGKO 14 Engineering Consulting Services and Technovation Solutions from Cyprus.

The benefits of pertinent Urban Greening technologies can be categorized in environmental, aesthetic, social, and economic. Environmental benefits include the mitigation of the heat island effect, better management of urban storm-water runoff, enhancement of urban biodiversity and an improved thermal insulation of buildings. UG technologies have been reported to reduce noise pollution in cities as well as to improve the efficiency of photovoltaics installed on roofs of buildings. Further to the environmental benefits, UG technologies can significantly improve the aesthetics of city centers and other built environments whilst lending themselves to act as focal points for tighter social interactions within urban communities. Economic benefits include the improved efficiency of photovoltaic panels installed on building roofs as well as the thermal insulation of roofs in general. As a result of the aforementioned benefits, the sustainability of urban environments is significantly enhanced, contributing to the sustainable development of our built environment.

In Mediterranean countries, however, UG technologies have witnessed limited application, possibly due to either lack of knowledge, by society and the construction industry, or limited technical expertise that would support the effective implementation of UG technologies. Few organizations, in the Mediterranean, have developed expertise in the field of UG, and these include our Spanish and Greek partners. Therefore, the main objective of this project is to capitalize on the existing knowledge of aforementioned organizations, and transfer this innovative know-how to practitioners in our country.

The specific tasks of this effort include 1) the development of continuous professional development material on UG technologies that would cater to the needs of practising engineers and architects, 2) the training of a small number of architects, engineers and scientists to subsequently act as a nucleus for further dissemination of such technologies 3) the creation of demonstration pilot units and activities that would present this technology. UGreenS seeks to introduce specialized knowledge in a pragmatic / tangible way that would be of immediate use to the country's sustainable infrastructure. The contribution of UG technologies to EU's 2020 targets would be multifaceted and immense.

The project is being coordinated by Professor Christos Anastasiou. The University of Malta is represented through its Faculty for the Built Environment and its Faculty of Education. Further information may be sought from Perit Kevin Gatt by email, or by visiting the project website at www.ugreens.eu.

26 February 2014

The First Dean's Award of the Faculty for Social Wellbeing

The University of Malta's Faculty for Social Wellbeing organised the first Dean's Award ceremony on 21 February 2014. The Dean's Award honors the best students of the Faculty. There were twelve candidates eligible for the awards, seven of whom were awarded the Outstanding Master Students' Award and five whose name was placed on the Dean's List for excellence in their undergraduate studies.

The Faculty for Social Wellbeing was established by the Council of the University in July 2012. The setting up of the Faculty brought together a number of entities of the University which address different aspects of 'social wellbeing'. These were either existing departments, institutes or centres of the University, or were newly created with the establishment of the Faculty for Social Wellbeing. The Faculty comprises the departments of Counselling, Criminology, Family Studies, Gender Studies, Psychology, Social Policy and Social Work, Youth and Community Studies and the Disability Studies Unit.

This being the first Dean's Award ceremony, students who graduated from the Faculty in 2012 were also recognised for their excellence. The Social Commitment Award intended to acknowledge students' input in this area has been set up, but as there were no nominees for it this year, the Faculty expressed confidence that this award will be given in a future edition of the Dean's Award ceremony.

The Dean's Awards were supported by Agenda Bookshop, CareMalta, Copyclub, Delicata Wines, Foundation for Educational Services, Foundation for Social Welfare Services, National Commission Persons with Disability, Nectar, The Commissioner for Children, The General Soft Drinks Company Limited, The Maltese Association for the Counselling Profession and The Maltese Association of Social Workers.