The Ministry for the Economy, Investment and Small Business has awarded €100,000 in seed funding to groups of innovators and entrepreneurs that will help them move their promising ideas forward toward commercialization and creation of high-growth businesses in Malta. Award winners received their cheques from MEIB Minister Chris Cardona, at an award ceremony at TAKEOFF, the incubator of the University of Malta.

Startup teams receiving TAKEOFF Seed Fund awards were:
DiscountIF (€18,000): Startup DiscountIF’s e-commerce platform will disrupt the traditional online retail market by combining the thrill of winning a bet with the value of a discounts site, offering a unique buying promise.
Inbound Muse (€18,000): Inbound Muse will produce artificial intelligence-based software that helps businesses gain in-depth understanding and insights about their markets.
MightyBox Games (€10,000): Digital games studio MightyBox is focused on developing games for the music industry, producing titles closely attached to songs and musical artists.
Sanctuary (€6,000): Sanctuary is a developing a mobile, audio-visual tool designed to provide meditative aid to terminally ill hospital patients.
eSports Unlimited (€5,000): eSports Unlimited is a new web-based platform offering fantasy sports leagues, betting, and results analysis services for professional video games competitions (esports).

Proof-of-concept technology commercialization opportunities that received funding are:
Rib Bridge (€16,000): A University of Malta team has invented a novel ‘rib bridge’ that helps surgeons safely and effectively reconstruct chest wall after operations to remove cancers and address traumas.
Ultrawideband Antenna (€14,500): A University of Malta team has developed an ultra-wideband, ultra-low cost antenna with large market opportunities in astronomy, mobile, radar, broadcasting, aviation and earth observations.
WALNUT (€7,500): A University of Malta team is developing brain-controlled music player app for mobile devices.
HydroStorageSystem (€5,000): A University of Malta team has invented a system that combines offshore wind energy and deep sea water to produce low-cost onshore cooling for large buildings.
The International Ocean Institute (IOI) is once again offering the Elisabeth Mann Borgese Bursary (EMB Bursary) consisting of a sum of Euros 3,500 which may be used in furthering research studies over the period of a year.

The 2014-2015 Bursary will be awarded to one person or research team carrying out postgraduate studies/research in ocean, marine or maritime related studies at the University of Malta. Staff or students are to be registered with the University of Malta where research in the relevant fields is carried out.

The EMB Bursary was established by the International Ocean Institute as a means of demonstrating recognition to the host country of the IOI – Malta – for hosting the IOI Headquarters and providing facilities for staff and offices. The Bursary also constitutes a further recognition and acknowledgement of the role of Prof. E. Mann Borgese, founder of IOI, and of her considerable achievements; the Bursary is financed through the IOI. Further information and application forms may be obtained by emailing IOI Headquarters on ioihq@ioihq.org.mt or info@ioihq.org.mt. The application deadline is Friday 18 July 2014.

At the end of the Bursary period, the awardee is to present a brief paper of the attainments of the funded research to the IOI. This may be eligible for publication in the IOI's Ocean Yearbook and may also form the basis of a public presentation held as part of the World Ocean Day Celebration of IOI, the following 8th June, or on any other occasion deemed appropriate by the IOI.

Previous winners of the EMB Bursary since 2010 have worked on diverse research areas in geography, conservation genetics, maritime law and engineering within the scope of marine and maritime related studies at the University of Malta. Past work has focussed on proposed stakeholder managed Marine Protected Areas in Malta; the collection of genetic data on the bluntnose sixgill shark, Hexanchus griseus, with the aim of working on species preservation; the study of the concept of State of Disembarkation in the context of migration law and its links to principles enshrined in the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, and most recently, a study on renewable energy, notably ocean thermocline energy extraction using wind energy.

The International Ocean Institute was founded in 1972 by Elisabeth Mann Borgese as an international knowledge-based institution, devoted to the sustainable governance of the oceans. It operates through a large network of Operational Centres and Focal Points globally, with its Headquarters hosted by the Government of Malta at the premises of the University of Malta. The mission of the International Ocean Institute is to promote education, training and research to enhance the peaceful uses of ocean space and its resources, their management and regulation as well as the protection and conservation of the marine environment, guided by the principle of the Common Heritage of Mankind as enshrined in the United Nations Convention of the Law of the Sea for the benefit of humankind as a whole, with particular consideration of the poor.

Over the years, the University of Malta has given much importance to matters concerning the sea. Academic work includes the areas of governance, law and science as well as sustainability and education. Moreover, the University is host to the IMO International Maritime Law Institute, established under the auspices of the International Maritime Organization, a specialised agency of the United Nations.

Elisabeth Mann Borgese (April 24, 1918 - February 8, 2002), founded the IOI in 1972. Arvid Pardo (February 12, 1914 – June 19, 1999) – a close collaborator of Elisabeth Mann Borgese – was a Maltese diplomat, scholar, and university professor and known internationally for his work to reform the law of the sea. He proposed that the seabed constitutes part of the common heritage of mankind, a phrase that appears in Article 136 of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.
Recognition Ceremony at Valletta Campus

The Recognition Ceremony for students pursuing collaborative master degrees that make up the International Masters Programme (IMP) was held on 9 June at the Valletta Campus of the University of Malta. This occasion celebrated the completion of the taught component of each of the four collaborative masters and two dual degrees that currently make up the International Masters Programme.

Some sixty students following the M.Sc. in Sustainable Environmental Resources Management, jointly with James Madison University, the M.A. in Conflict Resolution and Mediterranean Security, jointly with George Mason, the M.A. in Transcultural Counselling, in collaboration with University of New Orleans, the M.A. in Integrated Marketing Communication with King’s Cross College of the University of London, LL.M. in Energy, Environmental and Climate Change Law, in collaboration with University of Leuven, and M.A. in Ocean Governance, in collaboration with the International Ocean Institute, received their transcripts from Prof. Juanito Camilleri, Rector of the University of Malta. Present for the ceremony were the Minister for Education and Employment, the Hon. Evarist Bartolo, University Pro-Rectors, local and overseas professors involved in the different programmes, and relatives and friends of the students. During the ceremony local and overseas students, from each programme, shared their University experience with the audience. Light refreshments followed the ceremony.

In the coming academic year another programme will be added to the International Masters Programme. This is a Doctor of Pharmacy, which will be held in collaboration with University of Illinois of Chicago.

University of Malta in Einstein Telescope Partnership

The University of Malta’s Institute of Space Science and Astronomy (ISSA), in collaboration with the Department of Physics, has recently entered into collaboration with the Einstein Telescope partnership. The gravity wave telescope is still in the design phase however it already has a broad base of member institutions across Europe.

Gravity waves produce minute changes in the background fabric of the space and time around us. The most violent of these are emitted when major astrophysical events occur such as when binary black holes coalesce. Gravity wave observatories detect such events by looking for these small changes in length. What is different about the Einstein telescope is that due to emerging quantum mechanical and seismic observation technologies its sensitivity range will be at the forefront in the field. In addition to this, the whole telescope will be built more than 100m underground to avoid noise disturbances.

The telescope design is expected to be completed by 2017 by which time a location is expected to be selected. The project is scheduled for completion by 2025. The role of ISSA is to contribute to the theoretical predictions part of the project. In order to make observations of these cataclysmic events we must have models of the way that such events emit these gravitational waves. In this way when an event is logged it can be checked against its prediction from the standard gravity theory. If deviations are found then the measurements taken may be used to modify our gravity theory thus refining our model of how the universe works.