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Masood Entrepreneurship Centre

MEC Update

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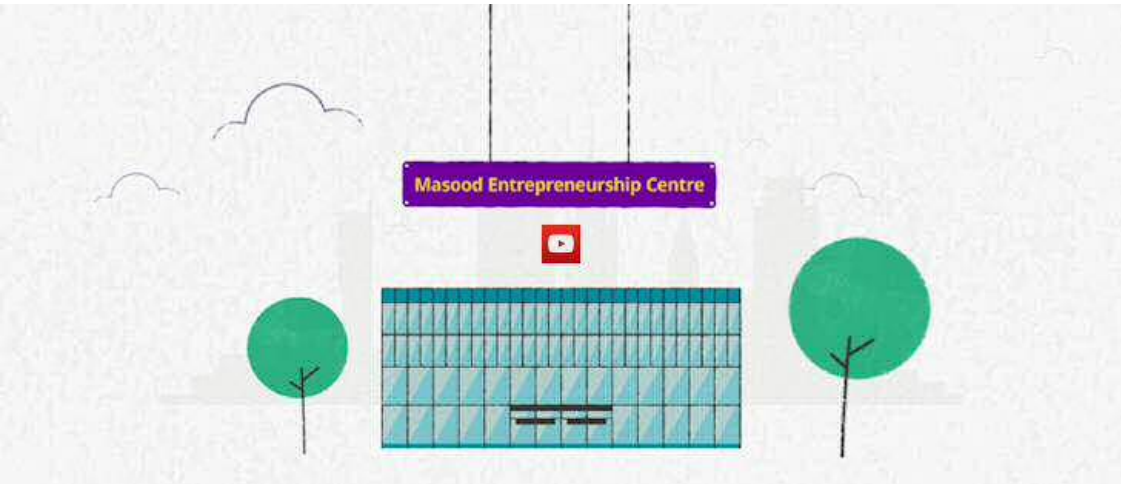


Welcome to the latest Masood Entrepreneurship Centre newsletter...

MEC News

Winners announced for the 2021 Harari Graphene Enterprise Award

Winners of the £70,000 prize fund were announced on Friday 9 July at the Masood Entrepreneurship Centre's 2021 Harari Awards celebration evening, which was streamed online.

The Eli and Britt Harari Graphene Enterprise Award, in association with Nobel Laureate Sir Andre Geim, is awarded each year to help the implementation of commercially-viable business proposals from our students, post-doctoral researchers and recent graduates, based on developing the commercial prospects of graphene and other 2D materials.

Physics alumnus and founder of global flash-memory giant, SanDisk, Dr. Eli Harari joined the event as a guest speaker, live from the USA. He described the aim of the competition, since it started in 2013, to encourage students, researchers and visionaries toward innovation and risk taking. He also highlighted Manchester's development as the 'Graphene City' and how this was reminiscent of the early years and potential of Silicon Valley.

Five outstanding teams had been shortlisted and pitched their graphene-related business proposals to a panel of professional judges in a bid to secure funding to drive their novel ideas forward.

First prize of £50,000 was awarded to Dr. Vivek Koncherry, Research Associate (Department of Materials) and his team for Space Habitat Architecture - Graphene. This venture aims to utilise the unique properties of graphene and research expertise in advanced robotics at The University of Manchester to develop an architectural scale-model of a proposed design for permanent human settlements on the Moon and Mars. Materials like graphene and composites will play a key role in space technology due to

their damage tolerance, lightweight, strength, radiation shielding, thermal and electrical conductivity.

Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (SOM) USA, the global architectural firm behind the world's tallest building, Burj Khalifa in Dubai and with experience in designing space habitation architecture, are supporting the team with design and engineering concepts.

Vivek commented: *"I am thrilled to win the prestigious Eli and Britt Harari competition and excited about manufacturing the scaled model of Space Habitat using Graphene composites as well as advanced robotics. I would like to thank The University of Manchester and its visionary leaders like Dame Nancy Rothwell, Prof. Luke Georghiou, James Baker, Lynn Sheppard, and many others who provided the platform for my dream business opportunity. I look forward to working with Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (SOM) and am open to new collaborations."*

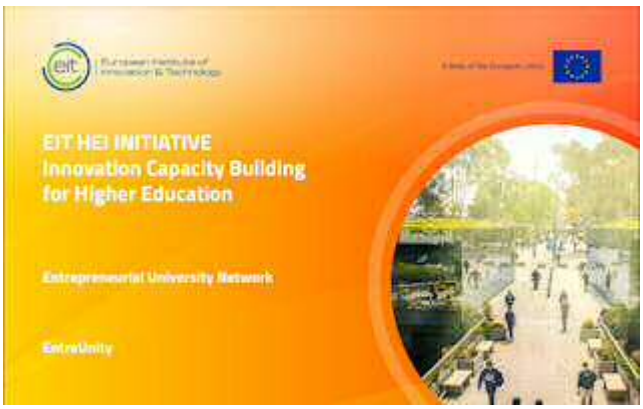
In second place and claiming the £20,000 prize were Niting Zeng and the team from CATALight 2D Technologies, using 2D materials to reduce energy consumption during wastewater treatment. By using natural sunlight to degrade pollutants in wastewater, the so-called "photocatalysis" mechanism, minimum or no extra energy input is needed by their device. Integrating novel 2D materials, this product reduces costs in many aspects of the treatment process including electricity usage, machinery investment, maintenance, and construction activities, hence reducing the overall energy consumption and operating costs in the water sector.

Niting commented: *"We are absolutely delighted to receive second place for the Eli Harari Graphene Enterprise Award! We are deeply grateful to everyone involved in the competition and are very excited to take our idea forward. We have spent the last year developing a deep understanding of what is needed for our business to expand. With this award, we can take an important step forward with prototyping and developing our product; we can now get in the lab and follow our action plan at full speed."*

The quality of the business proposals presented in this year's finals was exceptionally high. Professor Luke Georghiou, Deputy President and Deputy Vice-Chancellor, and chair of the judging panel for this year's competition said: *"Once more this competition has brought forward the very best from our students in terms of inventiveness and*

entrepreneurial flair being applied to ambitious goals. Our winners will push the boundaries through exploiting the potential of graphene in space exploration and in providing clean water in a net zero environment."

Watch a recording of the Eli Harari Graphene Enterprise Award event >>



EntreUnity - Entrepreneurial University Network

MEC is a member of EntreUnity, led by Queen's University of Belfast, one of twenty-three successful consotia awarded funding announced this week as part of the EIT's Innovation Capacity Building for Higher Education Pilot Call that invited HEIs and local partners across Europe to design institution-wide action plans to improve their entrepreneurial and innovation capacity across all institutional levels.

The EntreUnity consortium integrates the efforts of eight academic organisations and a specialist innovation management SME. The project sees the HEI as an institutional entrepreneur with a mandate to reflect on societal challenges that provides scalable platforms for affecting transformative change, moving HEI's away from the narrow research commercialisation perspective and opening up opportunities for local contextualised roles in the regional innovation ecosystem.

The project's objectives are to:

- build a network of world class entrepreneurial higher education innovation leaders, that support outstanding students and staff;
- engage in cutting-edge innovation programmes across their campuses and regions;

- develop world class solutions to global societal challenges that foster sustainable growth, create high-quality jobs and improve the quality of life of citizens;
- transform young people and create professionals able to tackle societal challenges and needs.

The Masood Entrepreneurship Centre will be developing skills and solutions for helping student and graduate start-up founders build resilient and enduring relationships and networks that move them quicker to investment, sales and business growth, bringing technology to market quicker and thus scaling businesses.

Find out more

Global Consortium of Entrepreneurship Centres (GCEC)

The Masood Entrepreneurship Centre are now members of the Global Consortium of Entrepreneurship Centres (GCEC).

With more than 225 members, the GCEC facilitates collaboration between centres to share information, develop programs and initiatives, and assist each other in advancing, strengthening, and celebrating the contributions and impact of individual centres – as well as the overall role of university-based entrepreneurship centres.

Find out more

Keep up-to-date with the latest MEC news here

Spotlight on

Manchester-based medical device startup lands £735K funding to treat brain tumours

Manchester-based QV Bioelectronics, a pioneering medical device startup developing the first-of-its-kind electric field therapy implant to treat one of the most common and aggressive type of brain tumours, glioblastoma, has recently raised £735K in an oversubscribed seed funding round to advance the development of its innovative GRACE implant.

MEC supported start-up QV Bioelectronics was founded by Christopher Bullock, a Biomedical Engineer who completed his Ph.D. on developing novel graphene biomaterials at The University of Manchester and Clinical Research Fellow Richard Fu. The team were the winners of the Eli and Britt Harari Graphene Enterprise Award in 2018.

Using advanced materials, the technology underpinning the GRACE device is designed to significantly extend patient life expectancy without negatively affecting the patients' quality of life. This technology could potentially work in conjunction with other treatment modalities to one day turn fatal adult brain cancer into a manageable chronic condition.

The funds raised will fuel the next phase of development of the GRACE device and take the innovative electric field therapy technology a few steps closer towards the clinic.

Read more

Small Business Entrepreneur of the Year finalist

Congratulations to Andrew Jervis, co-founder of ClickMechanic, who has been shortlisted from a record number of more than 4800 applications for the Small Business Entrepreneur of the Year category, representing London in the regional finals, of the Great British Entrepreneur Awards 2021.

ClickMechanic is an online marketplace where consumers can book a mechanic to fix or service their car, either at a garage or at home.

Andrew was supported through MEC and launched this venture in 2012 after completing the MEnt. Programme.

Read More

Little Inca have landed their first international nationwide retailer in Germany

The smart food brand Little Inca will now be distributed in over three hundred stores in the Kaufland chain, the third largest retailer in Germany.

Erick Vera set up Little Inca in November 2018, from a business idea developed on the MBA Programme and MECs Venture Further competition.

Little Inca is a smart food brand that incorporates plant-based ingredients like quinoa - which is scientifically proven to support gut health for babies – and other ingredients that improve the gut-brain connection which is important for normal brain development and building a strong immune system into adulthood to help prevent allergies and other diseases. The Little Inca formulas are backed by cutting-edge research and a respected science team that supports and validates the formulas and use bio-based pouches and renewable energy in the production process for a low carbon footprint.

Find out more

Competitions, awards and events

Tata Varsity Pitch Competition 2021

Are you a student or recent graduate with a business idea that could be the next big thing?

Applications are now open for this year's Tata Varsity Pitch 2021, your opportunity to compete for the prize pot of £15,000 equity free cash, with an array of opportunities to develop your business.

Tata Varsity Pitch 2021, powered by NACUE, is an annual, national early-stage business pitching competition open to any current students at a UK university or college or anyone who graduated after 2016.

Applications close at noon on Friday 3 September 2021.

Find out more

Fashion's Forgotten Workers: Risk to Resilience with Tech-Enabled Solutions

This event is part of the series of workshops organised by Aspect Innovation Fellows at the University of Manchester to showcase their projects and to share their experiences with other social scientists.

Dr. Ser-Huang Poon and Enduring Net, the charity she founded in 2019, focus on distributed technology, AI, identity and privacy in humanitarian work. Ser-Huang will present the major results arising from a Turing institute funded project examining how

homeworkers might be further supported using digital technology, and the critical role that worker collectives will play in any such solution and ways in which technology could support their formation and operation.

The webinar is an international event hosted by AMBS, Castlefield Asset Management, and several NGOs based in the UK and in India.

The webinar will explore the following issues:

- Outlining the urgent issues faced by homeworkers and other vulnerable supply chain actors.
- Considering which interventions might support these homeworkers, along with the risks of causing accidental harm.
- A consideration of the benefits that can arise from worker collectives.
- Exploring how technology can help to support the formation of these collectives and gather information to allow businesses to demonstrate genuine leadership in human rights due diligence.
- Learning how ethical investment practices could play a role in improving conditions for homeworkers and other informal workers.

Find out more and register

Masood Entrepreneurship Centre

entrepreneurship@manchester.ac.uk