

Editorial

Xjenza: The First Issue

The need has long been felt among scientists in Malta for a local outlet for their work, particularly for work dealing with local issues that might not readily find acceptance by an international journal. It was from this need that the idea for the journal, *Xjenza*, was conceived about eighteen months ago. An idea put forward by a member of The Malta Chamber of Scientists. This proposal was later approved by the Council of the same Chamber. Since there was an encouraging response to a first call for submission of papers, it was decided to go ahead with the ambitious venture. What you see in front of you today is the fruit of six months hard work which led to the publication of this first issue of *Xjenza*.

All the research articles in this journal have been subjected to peer review. It is editorial policy to set high standards of peer review which should lead to equally high standards of scientific research. This does not mean that editorial policy will be solely about publishing the best work of established scientists; it will also be our policy to encourage young scientists with promising new lines of research to put pen to paper. In this way, *Xjenza* will provide a suitable training ground for young scientists seeking their first publication. Apart from original research articles, review articles on topical issues will also be featured.

Xjenza will be featuring a section devoted to current research profiles which will serve to increase awareness among members of the Chamber and the public of the scientific research being done in Malta in the various disciplines of science. This section may include abstracts of papers already published in international journals. The Editorial Board welcomes submissions from scientists in Malta specifying their research interest and activities to ensure that the journal presents an opportunity to all researchers across the many scientific disciplines to feature on a regular basis. It is hoped that over time *Xjenza* would serve as a record of Maltese scientific development and achievement.

Xjenza will also serve as a forum for the initiation and development of debate among the Maltese scientific community on the central scientific issues of the day. It will be a matter for the Editorial Board to solicit contributions in this regard. The issues of debate will tend to be those identified within and reflecting the agenda of the Malta Chamber of Scientists, but not exclusively so, as the range of issues might well include a debate on the role of the Chamber itself. The journal will also carry a section on the activities of the Malta Chamber of Scientists. In subsequent issues, a correspondence column will be included in which we

hope to publish letters from readers relating to articles featured in previous issues or on any topic of interest to our readers. We also welcome feedback from readers on how, perhaps, we could improve the journal (assuming that such a thing is possible!). Any readers with ideas for a new section should let us know. So please write in with all your comments. We assure you that we are all grown-up women and men and not take criticism and ideas for change very well.

Another objective of *Xjenza* is to forge links between local scientists and Maltese scientists working abroad. A register of Maltese scientists working abroad will be compiled with a view to familiarising local colleagues with their work and encouraging cross-border Maltese collaboration. Attracting papers from such persons abroad would help in this familiarisation process but more importantly these scientists could be asked to act as referees for papers submitted to the journal. Such a register is being compiled. Readers who know of Maltese scientists working abroad and of their research interests, are asked to write in with these details. Who knows what projects and other benefits might be spawned in this way?

Since some of the articles published in this issue had been pending for some time because of a few editing problems, it was not possible this time round to include dates for submission and acceptance of these articles. It will become standard practice from the next issue of *Xjenza* which is planned for early 1997, by which time we also anticipate being on the Internet.

The first issue of *Xjenza* has come into being as a result of the support and dedication offered by my colleagues: Dr. Martin Ebejer, Dr. Richard Muscat, Dr. Emmanuel Sinagra and Dr. Christian A. Scerri. When spirits were low, they were always there with words of encouragement spurring me on. For this, and especially for their hard work, I do thank them.

I would also like to thank the many sponsors who have made this journal something akin to a viable proposition.

Finally I would like to call on all Maltese scientists. *Xjenza* is really your journal! **Make it come to life!**

We look forward to receiving the best work from you.

**ANGELA XUEREB
EDITOR**