



NAQQAS U FFRANKA: The EcoGozo Home Consultancy Visits

The Ministry for Gozo, in collaboration with the Institute for Sustainable Energy (ISE) of the University of Malta, is implementing a Gozo-wide information campaign known as *Naqqas u Ffranka* (Save and Reduce). This project will result in the holding of house visits to every Gozitan household by eco trainers who are providing free advice to families on ways to save on electricity and water consumption, as well as the benefits obtained from the application of energy efficiency and renewable energy methods, the recycling of grey water and proper waste management.

The EcoGozo Home Consultancy Visits project originates from the EcoGozo Action Plan and is in line with the Maltese government's aim to transform the island of Gozo into an ecological island by 2020. The proposed project was officially launched in November 2011 and is expected to be completed by the end of this year.

This project was initiated with the recruitment of 50 officers by ISE to implement the *Naqqas u Ffranka* Campaign. These officers were trained on how to perform the door-to-door consultancy visits and were subsequently assessed by ISE before

being officially certified as eco Trainers. To-date, there are eight localities where the consultancy visits have already been concluded. These are the villages of Fontana, Ghajnsielem, Ghasri, Kerzem, San Lawrenz, Xaghra, Xewkija and Zebbug. More than 5,000 families have been visited which amounts to an average of 54% of households in the identified localities having completed this EcoGozo activity. At present, visits are being held in the villages of Gharb, Munxar, Qala and Sannat, and the campaign will eventually be fulfilled with the EcoGozo Home Consultancy Visits in the localities of Marsalforn, Nadur, Rabat and Xlendi. Those households situated in localities where visits have already been completed and for some reason have not been visited yet, may contact the ISE on 21650675 or email ise@um.edu.mt to arrange an eventual appointment with an eco Trainer.

A typical visit by an eco Trainer should approximately last 30 minutes. An information booklet containing qualitative and quantitative information on EcoGozo's main trust and objectives, tips on energy and water conservation, renewable energy technologies possible and better waste management, is being

distributed to all the households during these visits.

The eco Trainer explains the information included in the booklet by giving practical ideas related to everyday chores. These range from energy conservation tips and ideas on site, such as best solutions on water conservation to be applied in the bathroom or kitchen of the respective residence. Where possible, rainwater harvesting and the use of second class water are also suggested to be implemented in order to reduce water consumption. The following are some typical, frequently asked questions and answers:

Q: What can one do so as to ensure a standard for well water to be utilised for washing or even drinking?

A: *To be safe it is recommended to disinfect water with chlorine or treat with UV lamp technology.*

Q: What type of television technology consumes less electricity - LEDs, LCDs or Plasma screens?

A: *Every TV on the market has an energy efficiency rating showing how much energy it consumes; therefore one can see these ratings, compare and choose the less energy consuming devices.*

The EcoGozo *Naqqas u Ffranka* Campaign has already been a success and the feedback received is quite positive. Overall it can be noted that residents are highly conscious on sustainability issues and are very eager to learn about and implement actions to save on electricity and water consumption, to apply energy efficiency and renewable energy methods, and to embrace proper waste management practices in their homes. This all involves a change in culture, which is happening slowly but surely. A change in mentality is the biggest leap in the right direction that will guarantee a cleaner environment for our children and a more attractive island for visitors and residents alike. Finally, this is perfectly in-line with the EcoGozo Strategy, which aims to ensure a sustainable future for our island.

Contributed by:

