

QATAR NATIONAL RESEARCH FUND ANNOUNCES

NATIONAL PRIORITIES RESEARCH PROGRAM WINNERS AT ITS ANNUAL FORUM

New Funding Programme Focuses On Qatar's Grand Challenges

Doha, 12 May 2015: Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF), a member of Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D), has awarded grants to 120 research proposals across 17 institutions in Qatar for the 8th cycle of its flagship National Priorities Research Program (NPRP).

Announced at the 7th QNRF Annual Forum held at the Qatar National Convention Centre in Doha on Tuesday, the top three results saw Qatar University awarded for 57 proposals, Texas A&M University at Qatar for 23 proposals, and Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar awarded for eight. The remaining 32 research proposals were awarded across a number of other institutions in the country, including Hamad Medical Corporation, Ministry of Environment, Gulf Organisation for Research and Development and Silatech.

Of the 120 of awarded proposals, aligned with the four pillars of the Qatar National Research Strategy, 38 per cent fall under energy and environment, 27 per cent under health and life sciences, 20 per cent under social sciences, arts and humanities, and the remaining 15 per cent under computer science and information and communications technology.

Delving into education, urban development, business innovation, culture and language, the proposals aim to research issues that will benefit the areas of engineering, water security, cyber security, road safety, diabetes, cancer, cardiovascular diseases, infectious diseases, and other priority research fields.

Through investing in cutting-edge research, QNRF is enhancing a scientific culture that supports Qatar Foundation (QF) on its mission to build Qatar's innovation and technology capacity, and helping the nation develop into a hub of excellence through QF's science and research pillar, QF R&D.

"QNRF is extremely proud of the NPRP and the role it continues to play in building Qatar's human capital in research and raising the nation's profile in the international research community," said Dr Abdul Sattar Al-Taie, Executive Director of QNRF.

"Additionally, the growing number of applications to our flagship programme shows the growing interest in research within the local community. The increasing creativity and originality evident in the proposals we receive year-on-year is a testament to the success of our programme, and by supporting work of direct relevance to Qatar and the region, QNRF continues to play a major role in the country's journey towards a knowledge-based economy."

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The 8th NPRP cycle received 869 eligible proposals, an eight per cent increase on the number of applications from the previous cycle. The awarded proposals will engage 120 Lead Principal Investigators, including several Qatari nationals.

“Each successive cycle of the NPRP has seen an increasing number of projects addressing one of Qatar’s Grand Challenges defined in 2013,” said Ms. Noor Al-Merekhi, Program Manager of the NPRP at QNRF. “In this cycle, the winning projects focus on 11 of the 12 Grand Challenges.”

Additionally, two new funding programmes were introduced by QNRF at the 7th Annual Forum. The Grand Challenges Research Program (GCRP) will be the first by QNRF to focus on a specific theme of research, ‘*The Path towards Personalised Medicine*’ which will be jointly funded by Qatar Biobank. The outcome of this inaugural cycle will pave the way to embark on in-depth research in personalised medicine – one of the niche research areas for the State of Qatar.

The second new funding programme is called the Early Career Research Award (ECRA) and aims to develop Qatar’s local scientific talent pool by providing professional research experience to Qatari and Qatar-born scientists who have recently embarked upon their research career.

Best researchers from the previous NPRP cycles were also recognised for their outstanding work, and received awards at the 7th Annual Forum with Texas A&M University at Qatar winning the three categories. The Best Researcher Award for 2015 was granted to Dr Haitham Abu-Rub in recognition of his impactful research outcome. The Best Research Project Award for 2015 was won by the project entitled ‘*Chaotic Dynamics of Distributed Parameter Systems Containing Nonlinearities*’, led by Dr Tingwen Huang. Finally, Texas A&M University at Qatar was also acknowledged as the Best Research Office in 2015 for the organisation’s excellent punctuality and compliance during pre-funding and post-funding phases.

Dr. Abdunnasser Al-Ansari, QNRF Deputy Executive Director commented: “I am personally pleased to participate in the distribution of QNRF’s prestigious annual awards during this forum. These awards were competitively granted based on research output and compliance with QNRF rules. It is remarkable to see the performance of the nominated candidates during the past year and how close and competitive the finalists were with each other.”

As QNRF’s flagship programme, the NPRP aims to support Qatari institutions by building the infrastructure necessary to support high-quality research. The programme is also a platform for local researchers to collaborate with prestigious global institutions to conduct research vital to Qatar’s development and sustainability.

For more information about the NPRP or QNRF’s various other capacity-building programmes, please visit: www.qnrf.org

Image Captions

Image 1:

Dr Abdul Sattar Al-Taie, Executive Director of QNRF, delivers the keynote speech at the 7th QNRF Annual Forum

Image 2:

Dr Abdunasser Al-Ansari, Deputy Executive Director of QNRF, announces Best Researcher, Project and Research Office awards at the 7th QNRF Annual Forum

Image 3:

Dr Abdul Sattar Al-Taie, Executive Director of QNRF, presents the Best Research University Award to Texas A&M University at Qatar at the 7th QNRF Annual Forum

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About Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D)

Leading Qatar's vision to become an international centre for research and development excellence and innovation, QF R&D is home to Qatar Science & Technology Park, a world-class hub for technology innovation and commercialisation, as well as Qatar National Research Fund, a globally renowned scientific research funding organisation.

About Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF)

Driven by the aim of fostering a culture of research in Qatar, QNRF was established in 2006 to advance knowledge and education by acting as a support system for researchers. It is a member within the Research & Development establishment at Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development.

QNRF administers funding for original, competitively selected research and furthers collaborations within academia, the public, governmental and non-governmental sectors through effective, mutually beneficial partnerships. While QNRF actively seeks internationally recognised researchers, it is dedicated to funding research that meets the needs of Qatar. For more information, visit: www.qnrf.org



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