

● ● ● ● **OMAN MEET SPARKS CONVERSATION ABOUT ROLE OF SCIENCE AND TECH PARKS IN THE GCC**

(13 December 2013 – Muscat, Oman) - A key technology hub in the GCC is calling for a fresh look at how science and technology parks can support technology innovators in the Arab world.

Qatar Science and Technology Park (QSTP) welcomed government institutions, industry and academia to be part of an ongoing conversation following a recent International Association of Science Parks and Areas of Innovation (IASP) gathering in Oman hosted by Knowledge Oasis Muscat (KOM). QSTP is hosting the first IASP World Conference in the Arab region next year in Doha.

“Science and technology parks have been around since the early 1950’s but all eyes are now turning to technology start-ups in the hyper-connected Middle East,” **said Head of the IASP 2014 Organizing Committee and QSTP Managing Director Hamad Al-Kuwari.** “In the GCC in particular, these hubs for innovation play a critical role in sparking meaningful collaboration between industry, government and academia. We are proud of the historic commitments made by several GCC countries to education and research and are focused on making them pay off in the form of intellectual property and viable businesses in our communities. Today, individuals have more tools at their disposal than ever before, so the need for what science and technology parks do has never been greater. The historic pace of knowledge creation is a call to action for us. Our challenge is not just to keep pace with the world’s most tech-savvy generation of innovators, but to support them further. Ahead of next year’s IASP World Conference in Doha, the science and technology park community is asking itself and innovators one thing: how can we help?”

The workshop in Muscat focused on the sustainable development of science and technology parks – from infrastructure planning to governance – while IASP World Conference in Doha will explore new models of technical, financial and administrative support that science and technology parks can offer entrepreneurs. In the GCC, science and technology parks work to ensure a return on historic investments made in education and research by aligning sectors to incubate commercialized technologies and intellectual property.

In Arab States in particular, effective incubation of science and technology-focused enterprises is a critical element of creating economic opportunity and diversification into knowledge sectors. While economic conditions, challenges and opportunities vary greatly within the Arab world, science and technology parks have a key role to play in the region. A United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization’s (UNESCO) [Science Report 2010](#) found that linkages between academia and industry in Arab States were sometimes lacking and need to be strengthened. The report cited Qatar as an example of an Arab State tackling the issue by setting up a science park and implementing a national research strategy. Historically, the region

has enjoyed bright clusters of innovation in places like Jordan. Great strides have been made more recently in places like Qatar and Oman which have taken leadership roles with respect to science and technology research. A 2012 survey by the renowned polling firm Gallup found that [one in three Qatari nationals](#) between the ages of 15 and 29 planned to start a business in the next 12 months, the highest proportion in the Arab world at that time.

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Notes to Editors:

About Qatar Science & Technology Park

Qatar Science & Technology Park (QSTP), part of Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D), is Qatar's primary incubator for technology development, fostering the environment required for accelerating commercialization of research and supporting innovation and entrepreneurship. QSTP focuses on four themes as per the Qatar National Research Strategy (QNRS) announced in 2012; Energy, Environment, Health Sciences and Information & Communication Technologies. QSTP is located in Qatar Foundation's Education City and has access to the resources of its cluster of leading research universities.

Members within the QSTP Free Zone include SMEs, international corporations and research institutions, which have collectively committed to investing in new programs, creating intellectual property, enhancing technology management skills and developing innovative new products in line with the QNRS. QSTP supports QF R&D's economic and human development objectives for Qatar and is increasingly being recognized as an international hub for applied research, innovation, incubation and entrepreneurship.

For more information, please visit the QSTP website at www.qstp.org.qa.

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

Leading Qatar's vision to become an international center for research and development excellence and innovation, QF R&D is home to Qatar Science & Technology Park (QSTP), a world-class hub for technology innovation and commercialization, as well as the Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF), a globally renowned scientific research funding organization, and prominent research institutes operating at the frontiers of science, including Qatar Biomedical Research Institute (QBRI), Qatar Computing Research Institute (QCRI) and Qatar Energy and

• • • • Environment Research Institute (QEERI).

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