

**PRESS RELEASE**  
**For immediate publication**

## **QATAR NATIONAL RESEARCH FUND SUPPORTS STUDY OF INFECTIOUS DISEASES THROUGH NEW INTERNATIONAL JOINT FUNDING PROGRAMME**

***Collaboration Addresses Emerging Viral Diseases Affecting The Middle East And North Africa***

**14 June 2014**

**Doha, Qatar:** Qatar National Research Fund, (QNRF) a member of Qatar Foundation Research and Development, has teamed up with the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID) of the National Institute of Health (NIH) to co-sponsor a joint-funding programme.

In partnership with CRDF Global, the 2014 U.S-Qatar-MENA Collaborative Research Grant Competition will support teams of leading scientists from Qatar, the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region and the United States. Their research projects will focus on one or more endemic and emerging viral infectious diseases affecting the MENA region including MERS, hepatitis C and E, influenza and HIV/AIDS among others.

Commenting on the importance of the joint-funding programme, QNRF's Executive Director, Dr Abdul Sattar Al-Taie, said: "Our goal with this new joint-funding programme is to foster new biomedical research collaborations between leading researchers from Qatar, other MENA countries, and the United States.

"We want to bring the best minds of the world together to solve critical issues of direct relevance to the MENA region which will also add to global knowledge about endemic and emerging viral infectious diseases."

The announcement of the collaboration was made at a recent QNRF-sponsored workshop entitled 'The Endemic and Emerging Viral Diseases of Priority in the Middle East and North Africa,' held at the Four Seasons Hotel in Doha.

International medical and public health experts and researchers from renowned global and regional institutions gathered for the four-day workshop, and are among those eligible for funding under the new programme. They include scientists from The Johns Hopkins University and Harvard University in the United States, Toulouse University in France, and representatives from some of the MENA region's leading institutions including Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar, the American University of Beirut, Tripoli Medical Centre in Libya, Cairo University in Egypt, and the University of Jordan.

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Remarking on the programme and partnership with QNRF, Mr. F. Gray Handley, Associate Director for International Research Affairs for NIAID and NIH said: “We are very pleased to be working with the Qatar National Research Fund, together providing an opportunity that will expand infectious disease research cooperation involving U.S. and Qatari scientists.

“Through these collaborative research activities, we hope there will be new discoveries that help prevent, diagnose and treat infectious diseases of importance in the region, including HIV/AIDS, MERS coronavirus, influenza, viral hepatitis and other diseases caused by viruses.”

Awarded teams will receive up to US\$40,000 to cover research costs over a one-year period. Each team must include a researcher who either attended, or works at, an institution that attended the workshop, and must be led by a Principal Investigator (PI) who holds a Ph.D., M.D., or has equivalent experience. Competing teams are requested to submit their proposals by 18 August 2014.

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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 the Qatar National Research Fund, a globally renowned scientific research funding organisation, and prominent research institutes operating at the frontiers of science, including Qatar Biomedical Research Institute, Qatar Computing Research Institute and Qatar Energy and Environment Research Institute.

### **About Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF)**

Driven by the aim of fostering a culture of research in Qatar, Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF) was established in 2006 to advance knowledge and education by acting as a support system for researchers. It is a centre 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, private, 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](http://www.qnrf.org)

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