

INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF SCIENCE PARKS WORLD CONFERENCE READY TO TAKE PLACE IN QATAR FOR FIRST TIME

Hosted by Qatar Foundation Research & Development's Qatar Science & Technology Park, Global Gathering Of Experts Will Focus on Arab Innovation And Incubation

Doha, 18 October 2014: The 31st International Association of Science Parks and Areas of Innovation World Conference (IASP 2014 Doha) will kick off in Doha on 19 October.

Hosted by Qatar Foundation Research & Development's Qatar Science & Technology Park (QSTP), the global gathering of science and technology park leaders is Qatar's biggest innovation event of the year, being held in the Arab World for the first time.

In support of Qatar Foundation's (QF's) mission to build and develop capacity for creativity and critical thinking through research in education and science, the conference will take place at the Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC), one of the most sophisticated convention and exhibition centres in the world, with state-of-the-art facilities, cutting edge technology and iconic design.

The four-day event will begin with a pre-conference seminar hosted by leading international experts, which will focus on helping new innovation hubs get off the ground.

Chad Hurley, Co-founder of YouTube, the world's largest and most popular video sharing site and the third most visited site globally, will open the official conference proceedings with a keynote speech to delegates, dignitaries, global innovation chiefs and students in Qatar.

Organised directly by IASP, an NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, the pre-conferences seminar will be an opportunity for those managing newly established or soon-to-be established science and technology parks to explore main concepts crucial in the inception, conceptualisation, planning and management of science parks and other areas of innovation.

Hundreds of government and private sector officials from 54 countries have already arrived in Doha for the four-day summit. For delegates, the seminar covers strategic models, incubation, marketing and communication, services and governance.

This is the 31st edition of the annual conference and the first time it has been hosted in the Arab world. Officials from Kuwait Industrial Technology Park, Knowledge Oasis Muscat, Riyadh Techno Valley and the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (UN – ESCWA) Regional Technology Centre in Jordan are participating in the landmark event.

“We welcome the world of innovation leaders to Qatar for IASP 2014 Doha, a landmark global event of critical importance for the future of knowledge creation and technology innovation in the Middle East,” said Hamad Al-Kuwari, Managing Director of QSTP and Head of the IASP 2014 Doha Organising Committee.

“For us, step one was establishing science and technology parks, innovation hubs and economic clusters, which come in many models, shapes and sizes across the region.

“Now that we have built the basic infrastructure for innovation, it is time to focus on expanding the programmes offered at these places. Hubs like QSTP offering next-level commercialisation support such as early stage prototype production, market evaluation and business modelling services, will win in the race to nurture tech businesses and intellectual property that can outlive our natural resources.”

Although science and technology parks have been around since the 1950s in places like the US and Japan, they are still relatively new in the GCC and parts of the Arab region. The United Nations Education Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) lists 31 science parks in the Middle East.

Science parks can have profound economic effects in the region. IASP speaker Usama Al Lawati of the Research Council of Oman cited a National Business Incubation Association statistic indicating that businesses supported by an incubator had a survival rate of 87 per cent after five years compared to just 47 per cent for non-incubated businesses.

In a study by BearingPoint Management and Technology Consultants, Egypt’s Smart Villages technology park, which opened in 2003, gave a 14.6 per cent boost to the country’s ICT sector in 2009, which immensely contributed to sustaining growth in the

Egyptian economy amid the global economic crisis. The last UNESCO Science Report found that links between academia and industry in Arab states could reap huge benefits from the establishment of research and technology clusters. 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.

Hundreds of government and private sector officials from 54 countries arrived in Doha this week for the four-day summit. In Qatar, the event is backed by leading businesses such as Qatar Airways, which serves as the event's official carrier. IASP 2014 Doha has also garnered interest and support from the international innovation community, with The Skolkovo Innovation Centre, a high technology business park near Moscow, Russia, signing on as IASP 2014 Doha's Gold Sponsor. A full list of conference speakers can be found here: <http://www.iasp2014doha.com/speakers-list>. Follow @QSTP on Twitter for live updates from the event.

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Notes to Editors:

About IASP 2014 Doha

IASP 2014 Doha is the 31st Annual World Conference of the International Association of Science Parks and Areas of Innovation, supported locally by Silver Sponsor Petroleum. In 2012, Qatar Science & Technology Park won a competitive bid to host the conference, marking the first time it will take place in the Arab world. QSTP was selected because of its vision to create a vibrant culture of innovation and entrepreneurship – part of a wider and profound transformation of Qatar's national economy. Hundreds of innovation leaders representing 54 countries will attend the event.

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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