

HBKU's QEERI Solar Test Facility Celebrates Five Years of Energy Research

Doha, April 1, 2018 – The Solar Test Facility (STF), which is operated by the Qatar Environment and Energy Research Institute (QEERI), part of Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), has celebrated five years of testing different photovoltaic modules and providing hard evidence of which technologies perform best in Qatar's climate. The large-scale field testing is a key asset at QEERI and plays a vital role in the institute's contributions towards tackling Qatar's energy security grand challenge.

The STF is a 35,000-square meter test site at Qatar Science and Technology Park (QSTP). Inaugurated in 2012 by Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, chairperson of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development (QF), it performs a detailed and long-term evaluation of solar technologies in Qatar's harsh climate. In 2016, the STF came under the umbrella of QEERI, and its research agenda is being expanded to soiling mitigation, battery storage, concentrating solar power, and a pilot micro-grid.

Over the last five years, the performance of 30 photovoltaic technologies - both commercially available and prototypes - have been tested in terms of their energy yield, response to soiling, and reliability. Daily dust and rain measurements for five years have precisely quantified the soiling rate, and allowed different cleaning strategies to be simulated. Soiling-mitigation technologies such as coatings and machines continue to be tested.

Dr. Marc Vermeersch, QEERI's executive director, said: "The STF at QEERI is a state-of-the-art facility that enables our scientists to study solar technologies in real-world conditions, and with real-time data. This is crucial as it will help us to develop and deploy solar devices that are ideally suited for Qatar's environment and industry."

QEERI marked the fifth anniversary of the STF with an event which saw the presence of numerous dignitaries and stakeholders, including His Excellency Sheikh Mishal Jabor Al Thani, Director, Energy Affairs Department, Ministry of Energy and Industry; Dr Richard O Kennedy, Vice President of QF Research, Development and Innovation; Dr Erik Steneham, Executive Director, Research Strategy and Impact Management, QF; Dr Abdul Sattar Al Taie, Executive Director, Qatar National Research Fund; Dr Frans Van Der Boom, Executive Director, Policy, Planning and Evaluation, QF Research and Development; Dr Ahmed Elmagarmid, Executive Director, Qatar Computing Research Institute at HBKU; Dr Nabeel Al Salem, Executive Director Operations, QF Research and Development; Dr Santiago Banales, Managing Director, Iberdrola QSTP; Engineer Ali Al Malki, Head of Customer Services, Kahramaa; and Engineer Ahmed Al Said, Parks and Free Zone Director, QSTP.

The guests were given an insight into the various elements at the STF including PV testing, trackers and inverters, and the upcoming micro-grid project.

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About Hamad Bin Khalifa University
Innovating Today, Shaping Tomorrow

Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development (QF), was founded in 2010 as a research-intensive university that acts as a catalyst for transformative change in Qatar and the region while having global impact. Located in Education City, HBKU is committed to building and cultivating human capacity through an enriching academic experience, innovative ecosystem, and unique partnerships. HBKU delivers multidisciplinary undergraduate and graduate programs through its colleges, and provides opportunities for research and scholarship through its institutes and centers. For more information about HBKU, visit www.hbku.edu.qa.