



## **QATAR NATIONAL RESEARCH FUND AND QATAR GENOME PROGRAMME LAUNCH SECOND CYCLE OF PATH TOWARDS PERSONALIZED MEDICINE CALL**

**Doha, Qatar, February 20, 2017** – Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF), in collaboration with Qatar Genome Programme (QGP), has launched the second cycle of the Path Towards Personalized Medicine (PPM) call, designed to support and advance research focused on providing medical treatment tailored to a patient's individual characteristics.

Building on the success of the PPM's first cycle, QNRF, part of Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D), hosted a presentation on the second cycle on February 9, 2017, aimed at benefiting from the valuable pilot-phase samples and data collated by Qatar Biobank (QBB), a member of QF, and the Qatar Genome Programme (QGP).

The personalized medical treatment that the PPM is designed to support is based on a patient's genetic profile, with the goal of improving quality of care while reducing unnecessary diagnostic testing and therapies. The call also aims to support research into the correlation between disease phenotype and genotype, allowing findings to be translated into medical products, and leading to advancements in healthcare and a wider understanding of personalized medicine among Qatar's healthcare providers and wider community.

Under the second cycle of the PPM, three new specific research priority areas – discovery; clinical and translational research; and community engagement, ethics and policy in precision medicine – will be focused upon.

"We are very excited about the second cycle of the PPM," said Dr. Asma Al-Thani, Chair of Qatar Genome Programme Committee and Board Vice Chairperson of Qatar Biobank. "A large number of high-quality proposals were submitted in the first cycle, which is clear evidence of the success of this initiative."

"PPM supports researchers in genomics and genetics who are working at research facilities in Qatar. By focusing on discovery; translational research; and community engagement, ethics and policies in precision medicine, we believe we can make advancements in the field of precision medicine in the region, through research dedicated to the distinctive features of local genetic makeup," added Dr. Al-Thani.



Dr. Abdul Sattar Al-Taie, Executive Director, QNRF, said: “PPM will guide decisions related to the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of diseases, and will provide an invaluable information resource as the foundation for personalized healthcare in Qatar. QNRF supports patient-powered research that will not only empower patients, but also researchers and medical providers to work together in developing new strategies, best practices and policies in PPM.”

One of the region’s major national genome programs, QGP – a population-based initiative using specimen and population samples gathered by QBB – is currently in its pilot phase. Its goal is to improve healthcare, encourage cutting-edge genomic research and innovation, and integrate genomics, as well as other ‘omics’ technologies into medical and research practices through building research networks across Qatar.

By providing funding opportunities for original, competitively-selected research and development at all levels and across all disciplines with an emphasis on the four pillars of the Qatar National Research Strategy, QNRF aims to enable research and development excellence in Qatar, and to help build a sustainable and diversified economy through the advancement of research and education.

Each PPM award is for up to three years. Researchers who are affiliated with an institution in Qatar, and who have a research-oriented doctorate or any of the approved terminal degrees and at least five peer-reviewed publications, are eligible to apply as lead principal investigators. The deadline for submission of applications is midday on March 8, 2017.

To register and submit a full application through the online submission system, visit <https://www.qgrants.org/>.

The call for proposals and timelines are available at <http://www.qnrf.org/en-us/Funding/Research-Programs/Thematic-Program/PPM>, and enquiries can be placed by using the QNRF support system at <http://support.qnrf.org/index.php?/Tickets/Submit>.

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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](http://www.qnrf.org)

### **About Qatar Genome Programme (QGP)**

The Qatar Genome Programme (QGP) is a national initiative aiming to map the genome of the local population. Managed by the Qatar Genome Committee, and incubated by Qatar Biobank, QGP uses a collection of samples and data from Qatar Biobank participants to identify genotype-phenotype associations relevant to the Qatari population.

From its early conception, QGP was built based on a national strategy that would lay the strong foundations required to build a unique model that would position Qatar as a leading nation in the implementation of precision medicine.

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## **Qatar Foundation – Unlocking Human Potential**

Qatar Foundation for Education, Science, and Community Development (QF) is a private, non-profit organization that is supporting Qatar on its journey from carbon economy to knowledge economy by unlocking human potential, for the benefit of not only Qatar, but the world. QF was co-founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Amir, and Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, Qatar Foundation's Chairperson. QF's work encompasses education, research and community development. World-class universities are brought to Qatar to help create an education sector in which young people can develop the attitudes and skills required for a knowledge economy.

At the same time, QF builds Qatar's innovation and technology capacity by developing and commercialising solutions through key sciences. The Foundation also works to foster a progressive society while enhancing cultural life, protecting Qatar's heritage and addressing immediate social needs in the community.

For a complete list of QF's initiatives and projects, visit <http://www.qf.org.qa>