



BUDDING TECHPRENEURS PITCH INNOVATIVE STARTUP IDEAS AT QSTP DEMO DAY

Thirteen aspiring startups were given an opportunity to pitch their ideas to members of the local tech community at the Demo Day of the 7th cycle of Qatar Science & Technology Park's (QSTP) XLR8 program, held on December 12, 2018, at QSTP.

The flagship two-month accelerator program at QSTP - part of Qatar Foundation Research, Development and Innovation (QF RDI) - offers training and mentorship to participants, to help them bridge the gap between the creation and commercialization of a product in order to successfully develop it into a market viable solution.

On Demo Day, graduating teams presented their startup ideas to an audience of seasoned technology professionals, investors, and industry experts. The event is designed to give XLR8 participants hands-on experience of pitching their startup ideas in order to attract potential investors and launch their startups.

Welcoming participants and members of the local tech community, Yosouf Abdulrahman Saleh, Executive Director, QSTP, said: "Three years ago, we began this program to inspire and cultivate a culture of entrepreneurship in Qatar. We envisioned this program to have a significant impact not only on the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Qatar, but across the region.

"At QSTP, we strongly believe that investment in human capital is the cornerstone of developing a knowledge-based economy in Qatar. XLR8, among many other QSTP initiatives, is a testament to the confidence we have in our local talent. I am very proud to say that our graduates of the XLR8 program are already attracting significant investment, as they expand their start-ups into international markets."

This year's cohort included 13 teams that were shortlisted to join XLR8 after a highly-competitive selection process by QSTP. Teams included: 'iTaza,' an app that helps consumers buy fruits and vegetables based on their specific quality requirements and specifications; 'Therappy,' an app that connects patients to a global network of medical specialists of their choice; 'R F Que,' a B2B e-commerce app that helps businesses connect with suppliers; 'TapTapFix,' an online marketplace for home services; 'Q Ponics,' a hydroponics solution for farmers to grow food; and 'Muokata,' a device and app that makes custom brewed coffee.

"Demo Day introduced us to the tools we need to pitch our ideas and create a dialogue between our brand and potential investors," said Daniil Kumok, a member of the team that developed TapTapFix. "This is a long stretch for university freshmen, but XLR8 helped get us there.

“The experience of pitching our idea was very helpful and improved our understanding of how to bridge the gap between the ideation and fruition of our projects.”

During the two-month program, participating teams received guidance from mentors who specialize in the commercialization of tech-based innovations, and have years of real-life, hands-on experience in what it takes to launch and grow tech-based startups.

Baha Malaeb, member of the team that developed R F Que, said: “My project is an online platform for the construction business, and the XLR8 program really helped us develop it further. The concept of ‘Demo Day’ is interesting, because, while it’s the last day of the XLR8 program, it’s also the beginning of our entrepreneurial journey.”

“The steps Qatar is taking to nurture an entrepreneurial ecosystem are impressive and I am thankful for its support of entrepreneurs, especially the younger generation.”

After the pitching sessions, local tech community members were able to network with fellow attendees and visit the display booths of the graduating teams.

Since its inception in 2015, more than 300 participants have graduated from the XLR8 program and it has helped launch 19 startups, two of which have secured follow-on investment and are operating in both the regional and global markets. Through this program, QSTP contributes to Qatar’s journey towards a sustainable and diversified economy, in line with the broader vision of Qatar Foundation.

For more information on QSTP’s programs and events, please visit: www.qstp.org.qa

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Qatar Science & Technology Park

Qatar Science & Technology Park (QSTP), part of Qatar Foundation Research, Development and Innovation (QF RDI), is a Free Zone, accelerator, and incubator for tech-product development in Qatar. The park fosters an innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem in Qatar that works to accelerate commercialization of market-ready technologies to realize Qatar’s national diversification drive.

QSTP’s focus ranges across four overarching themes, comprising Energy, Environment, Health Sciences, and Information & Communication Technologies, in line with the Qatar National Research Strategy announced in 2012.

Located in Qatar Foundation's Education City, QSTP has access to the vital resources of a cluster of leading research universities. Members of QSTP's Free Zone include SMEs, international corporations, and research institutions. They are collectively committed to investing in new technology development programs, creating intellectual property, enhancing technology management skills, and developing innovative new products.

QSTP supports QF RDI's economic and human development objectives for Qatar, and is increasingly 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

Qatar Foundation Research, Development and Innovation (QF RDI)

The Qatar Foundation Research, Development, and Innovation (QF RDI) division's role is to play an integral part in identifying and addressing challenges and opportunities across ICT, energy, environment, healthcare, and agribusiness, in alignment with Qatar's national RDI strategy and priorities. QF RDI is at the forefront of Qatar's innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem, accelerating economic development through supporting the commercialization of market-ready technologies and facilitating the creation of new high-tech products and services.

QF RDI is responsible for translating Qatar's national RDI strategy into specific initiatives and actions for Qatar Foundation's (QF) RDI entities. It also directs their efforts in relation to economic value creation, knowledge transfer, and the establishment of mutually-beneficial national and international RDI partnerships. To ensure these efforts deliver maximum impact, the QF Vice President for Research, Development, and Innovation plans, coordinates, and oversees all RDI-related activities across QF.

Qatar Foundation – Unlocking Human Potential

Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF) is a non-profit organization that supports Qatar on its journey to becoming a diversified and sustainable economy. QF strives to serve the people of Qatar and beyond by providing specialized programs across its innovation-focused ecosystem of education, science and research, and community development.

QF was founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Amir, and Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser, who shared the vision to provide Qatar with quality education. Today, QF's world-class education system offers lifelong learning opportunities to community members as young as six months through to doctoral level, enabling graduates to thrive in a global environment and contribute to the nation's development.

QF is also creating a multidisciplinary innovation hub in Qatar, where homegrown researchers are working to address local and global challenges. By promoting a culture of lifelong learning and fostering social engagement through programs that embody Qatari culture, QF is committed to empowering the local community and contributing to a better world for all.

For a complete list of QF's initiatives and projects, visit www.qf.org.qa