

RESEARCH-TO-STARTUP PROGRAM BOOSTS TECH-INNOVATION IN QATAR

New Initiative by Qatar Foundation Centers

Doha, Qatar, April 29, 2017: Tech entrepreneurs, or *techpreneurs*, from all over the world are joining a weeklong startup boot-camp, organized by Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D), to help transform advanced innovative technologies into Made-in-Qatar technology products.

The boot-camp, which kicked off on April 23, is the first phase of QF R&D's Research-to-Startup (RTS) program, designed to facilitate the creation, acceleration, and scaling of startups that leverage technologies developed by the research institutes of Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU).

The boot-camp involves a condensed schedule of workshops and activities between seasoned *techpreneurs* and researchers in an attempt to boost the tech-innovation sector in Qatar. With the support of professional coaches and mentors, the program aims to establish teams to create fundable, scalable business plans for potential spun-out tech-startups.

Dr. Hamad Al Ibrahim, Executive Vice President of QF R&D and Chairman of QSTP Board, said: "Qatar Foundation supports a broad range of national and global research and development challenges, which contribute to Qatar becoming a competitive and diversified economy. For this to happen, research needs to translate into products and platforms that can impact the way we live and do business."

"Our Research-to-Startup program is designed to leverage the technologies generated by QF researchers to provide tech-entrepreneurs with ideas to trigger and fuel the creation of technology startups at QSTP, which is QF R&D's arm supporting the establishment of a local and regional innovation ecosystem."

"We are excited to work closely with Qatar Computing Research Institute of HBKU on this initiative, and we look to expand this effort in the years to come to technologies developed by all research institutes across the country," Dr. Al Ibrahim added.

President of HBKU, Dr. Ahmad M. Hasnah, commented: "Knowledge-based economies have their roots in research, and the ultimate goal of research is to get commercialized and act as a launchpad for product development companies. Therefore, we are delighted with this seamless work between QSTP and QCRI. We are hopeful the HBKU research will ultimately enrich people's lives locally and internationally."

On the technologies being discussed during the week, Dr. Hasnah elaborated: "We are familiarizing the entrepreneurs with six advanced technologies that have market potential and have received acknowledgement worldwide. For example, we have *QATS* platform, an advanced Arabic speech processing technology, including speech-to-text and dialect detection using speech signal. Another one is *Rayyan*, which is an end-to-end collaborative platform (web and mobile) to expedite the creation of systematic reviews using text-mining, machine-learning, database, and multi-facet navigation/filtering; in addition to many others."

The RTS program's call for applications was announced last January. From hundreds of applications, QSTP selected 20 *techpreneurs* from Qatar, the region, the U.S., and Europe. By providing the right environment and tools to collaborate with researchers on potential business opportunities, formulated teams are

expected to establish startups with a defined tech-product.

QF centers participating in the RTS program include: Qatar Science & Technology Park, Qatar Computing Research Institute, and QF Intellectual Property and Technology Transfer Office.

Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development (QF) is home to a unique ecosystem that promotes the development of human capital and fosters a culture of creativity and innovation, which enables local researchers and innovators, in collaboration with international talent, to address local and global research and development challenges.

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Qatar Science & Technology Park

Qatar Science & Technology Park (QSTP), part of Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D), is Qatar's primary accelerator & 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 Hamad Bin Khalifa University

Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU), a member of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development, is an emerging research university that is building its foundation upon unique collaborations with local and international partners. Located in Education City, HBKU delivers undergraduate and graduate programs through its College of Science and Engineering, College of Law and Public Policy, College of Health and Life Sciences, College of Islamic Studies, and its College of Humanities and Social Sciences. It also provides unparalleled opportunities for research and scholarship through its research institutes, and its Center of Executive Education delivers customized programs for the business community of Qatar and the region, in line with Qatar National Vision 2030.

Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D)

Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D) is charged with the Qatar National Research Strategy, dedicated to making Qatar a leading center for research and development excellence and innovation. QF R&D is home to Qatar National Research Fund, a leading scientific research funding

organization, and Qatar Science & Technology Park (QSTP), an international hub for technology innovation and commercialization.

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, research and development, and community development.

QF was founded in 1995 by His Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, the Father Emir, 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 research and development 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 <http://www.qf.org.qa>