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Experts: Qatar Entering New Era of Solar Energy

GreenGulf's Omran Al Kuwari and QEERI's Mohammad Khaleel look to Qatar's solar future at QSTP's latest TECHtalk

Doha – Qatar Science & Technology Park (QSTP), part of Qatar Foundation Research and Development (QF R&D), recently hosted a new edition of its acclaimed TECHtalk series, featuring high profile experts from Qatar's renewable energy sector.

QSTP is Qatar's primary incubator for technology development, and supports QF R&D by fostering the environment required for accelerating commercialisation of research and supporting innovation and entrepreneurship.

Mr. Omran Al Kuwari, Co-founder and CEO of GreenGulf, and Dr. Mohammad Khaleel, Executive Director of Qatar Environment and Energy Research Institute (QEERI), observed that Qatar is entering a new era of solar technology with at least one Qatari firm leading the way.

Al Kuwari kicked off the talk, offering a concise history of Qatar's solar scene, culminating in the 2014 launch of Kahramaa's first tender in a major national solar project. He also gave insights into where the industry is headed, in line with the Qatar National Vision 2030. His talk indicated that firms and institutions in Qatar have become important players in technology development and innovation.

Companies like GreenGulf are the product of Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development's (QF) unique and comprehensive cycle of education, research and commercialisation, which helps to deliver economic diversification and innovative home-grown technology that will benefit the country and the rest of the world.

Al Kuwari said: "I am delighted to join Qatar Science & Technology Park's TECHtalk, which has become a powerful platform for discussing important issues related to development, creativity, innovation and commercialisation that benefits Qatar. We are seeing the beginning of a new era of interest in solar energy and we are trying to use this moment to advance the industry and implement clean solutions in Qatar."

Ever since GreenGulf – a successful home-grown Qatari startup supported by QSTP – installed the country's first solar photovoltaic (PV) system on the roof of the Qatar National Convention Centre (QNCC), solar initiatives have steadily garnered momentum. The number of firms and institutions in Qatar's solar ecosystem have rapidly multiplied in the past three years, with GreenGulf leading the way. According to Al Kuwari, the total installed solar capacity in the country at the moment is about 4 Megawatts. Of this, GreenGulf is responsible for approximately 3.5 Megawatts, since its inception in 2009.

Al Kuwari also provided an update on QSTP's and GreenGulf's flagship Solar Test Facility project. Since the facility was launched in 2012, it has gathered valuable data on how 30 different solar technologies perform, helping the industry optimise the performance of solar technologies in a region with abundant solar energy and challenging environmental conditions.

Commenting on the promise and critical importance of solar energy in Qatar, Dr. Khaleel said: "We have a great opportunity to benefit from solar energy in Qatar, and QEERI is committed to supporting Qatar's solar journey through innovation and creativity. We must work to take advantage of solar energy at this moment, because it doesn't require massive new infrastructure – just the will and hard work needed to reach what we aspire to."

The talk was followed by a question and answer session where the experts engaged a packed room of researchers and students. Audience members raised important questions about solar technology and Qatar's renewable energy future.

QSTP's TECHtalks continue to be a sought-after forum for knowledge-transfer to technology focused entrepreneurs, SMEs and professionals in Qatar. It is one of several on-going QSTP programs supporting technology development, innovation and commercialisation in Qatar.

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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 commercialisation 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 commercialisation, 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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