



ROADMAP AND RESOURCES FOR THE STARTUP JOURNEY

ENTREPRENEUR'S GUIDEBOOK

Presented by Qatar Foundation

Research, Development, and Innovation

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ABOUT

the Office of Industry Development and Knowledge Transfer (IDKT): Our QF RDI Partnerships

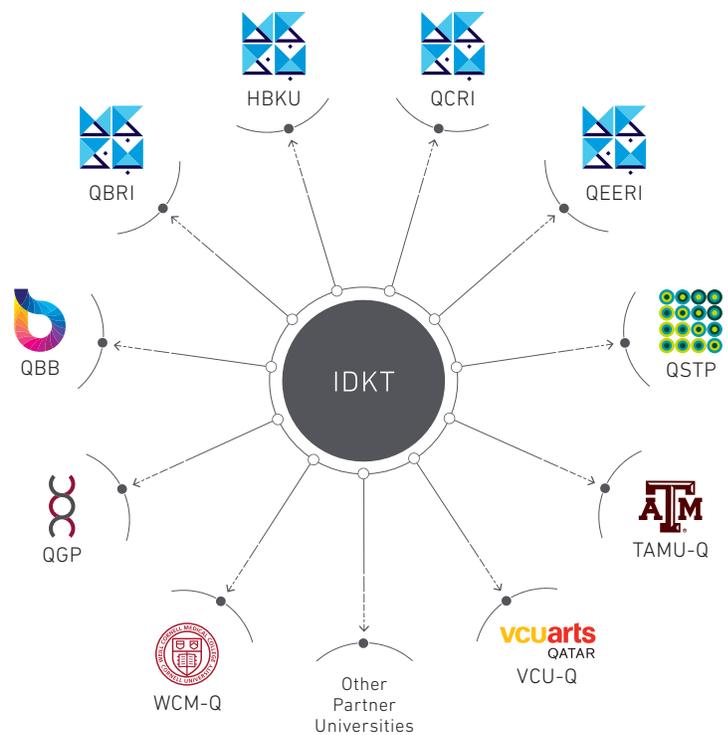


As the gateway to Qatar Foundation’s (QF’s) Research, Development, and Innovation (RDI) activities, IDKT plays a central coordinating role at the heart of the nation’s robust innovation and entrepreneurship ecosystem.

IDKT identifies, protects, and commercializes intellectual property (IP) developed at QF institutions. We also focus on empowering entrepreneurs and expanding the knowledge-based economy, working collaboratively with the Qatar Science and Technology Park (QSTP).

QSTP provides incubation, funding, training, mentorship, and connectivity to regional and global tech innovation ecosystems to take their products to market. For the latest information about QSTP’s offerings, visit <https://qstp.org.qa>.

With a commitment to transforming our economy, IDKT and QSTP help entrepreneurs use QF knowledge and technology to create new businesses in Qatar, the region, and the world.



Visit <https://www.qf.org.qa/IDKT> for more information about accessing Qatar Foundation’s innovation ecosystem.

COMMERCIALIZATION

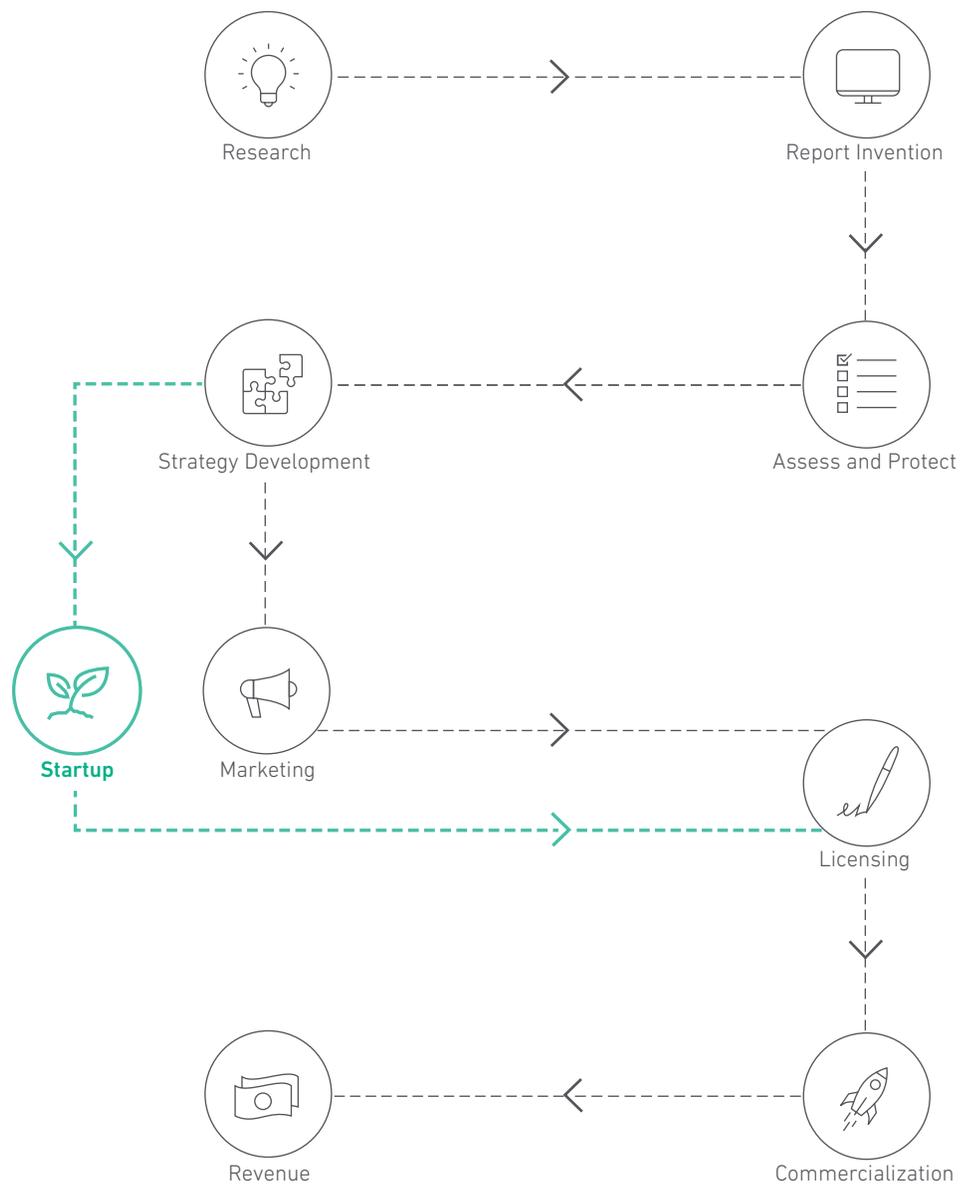
of QF Technology and the Role of Startups



Research, development, and innovation are of strategic importance and value to building a sustainable and diversified economy in Qatar. To help create economic and social impacts from QF research, IDKT facilitates the process of commercializing QF innovations.

As shown in the flow chart below, startups are one path to licensing and commercialization success.

This guidebook provides a roadmap for the startup path of the commercialization journey, including information about QF support that is available along the way.



Visit <https://www.qf.org.qa/IDKT/for-researchers> for more information about how commercialization works at Qatar Foundation.

What Kind of ENTREPRENEUR ARE YOU?



Below is information about some of the QF-specific details of launching a startup. For answers to many frequently asked questions (FAQ) about becoming an entrepreneur—from deciding whether to start a business to achieving your exit strategy—go to <https://www.qf.org.qa/IDKT/for-entrepreneurs> and view our FAQ resource.

IF YOU ARE AN INDEPENDENT ENTREPRENEUR...

IDKT and QSTP support Qatar's entrepreneurs as they bring QF's new technologies into the global marketplace as well as other Qatar-based entrepreneurs and inventors. Our goal is to connect you with opportunities for incubation, training, mentorship, intellectual property (technology), and funding.

Research to Startup Program

This QSTP program is designed to create spinouts based on QF-owned research results. It matches experienced entrepreneurs with high-potential technologies. Eligible participants tend to be serial entrepreneurs with the skills and experience to take new products and companies to market.

Visit <https://qstp.org.qa/research-to-startup/> for more information.

IF YOU ARE A QF RESEARCHER...

Researchers interested in launching a startup company based on their work should begin by reviewing QF's policies regarding intellectual property (IP), innovation and entrepreneurship, and conflict of interest/conflict of commitment. See <https://www.qf.org.qa/IDKT/info-bank> for more information.

As the originator of the research, you would be the center of the company from the outset and are expected to play an active role. While this role may not require full-time commitment in the short term, it will require you to have the flexibility to balance your commitment to the new company with your other commitments.

As the company matures, your role may shift. Depending on the sustainability of the company, you may begin to play an advisory role or act as a consultant to the startup.

Technology Development Fund

This fund provides QF researchers the opportunity to advance a technology from prototype to the ready-for-market level within 6 to 12 months. To be eligible, you must have submitted a technology disclosure with IDKT and be selected to apply for funding.

Contact IDKT@qf.org.qa for more information.

IF YOU ARE A QF STUDENT...

Graduate students are subject to QF's policies regarding intellectual property (IP), innovation and entrepreneurship, and conflict of interest/conflict of commitment. See <https://www.qf.org.qa/IDKT/info-bank> for more information.

Innovation Mindset Education

QSTP offers a 10-day intensive Arab Innovation Academy to teach best practices in innovation and entrepreneurship to juniors, seniors, and graduate students at QF institutions. This partnership between QSTP and the European Innovation Academy (EIA) is a hands-on program that introduces participants to accelerated modes of experiential learning, including how to develop and launch a tech startup in a real marketplace with actual customer feedback.

Visit <https://qstp.org.qa/innovation-mindset-education/> for more information.

IF YOU ARE AN ARAB BETWEEN 18 AND 35 YEARS OLD...

Consider applying to the Stars of Science edutainment TV show, which is designed to empower young Arab entrepreneurs from any country to become prominent global entrepreneurs. Prospective candidates participate in pitching sessions, and selected projects undergo a secondary review. The finalists join the show and proceed through a four-stage elimination: from proof of concept through prototype testing.

The prizes for the four remaining finalists—ranging from 50,000 USD to 600,000 USD—are awarded based on the jury and online voting by the audience.

Visit <https://www.starsofscience.com> for more information.

Apply for QF RDI's Innovation Coupon
Innovation Coupon funding program is a QF RDI initiative that supports grassroots ideas of Qatar's researchers as well as entrepreneurs who are willing to develop a business around an innovative technology or new tech product or service. The program provides the financial and technical support to help them scale their ideas and make them market ready. To learn more visit <https://www.qf.org.qa/innovation-coupon>.



WHAT TO CONSIDER

When Launching a Startup



All successful startups have several key characteristics. As you think about launching a startup, consider these requirements.

TECHNOLOGY CONSIDERATIONS

- A unique technology that solves a market problem in a new or a better way
- Protected intellectual property (IP) with clear ownership and broad coverage
- A clear and substantial value proposition—that is, what the product does for the target customer
- A prototype that can demonstrate what the technology/product does
- An understanding of what development is needed to bring a product to market

COMPANY CONSIDERATIONS

- A founding team with agreements in place and clear distribution of equity and responsibilities
- Committed core team with relevant skills and experience to run the company:
 - Technical knowledge of the product or service
 - Marketing
 - Sales
 - Finance, including the ability to attract investments
- Risk/Benefit incentivization for team members
- Business model and pricing to create an expected return on investment that investors will accept ([see page 10](#))

MARKET CONSIDERATIONS

- A clear market with identified customers who have a need for what the startup offers and view it as offering significant value
- A large enough market to sustain and grow the business
- A clear understanding of who the competitors are
- Insight into other influential factors such as culture, environment, location, etc.

KEEP IN MIND

Not all research is suitable for commercialization as a new business. In addition, when assessing QF technology and developing the commercialization strategy, IDKT will evaluate whether greater social and economic returns are expected via a startup or by licensing to an established company.

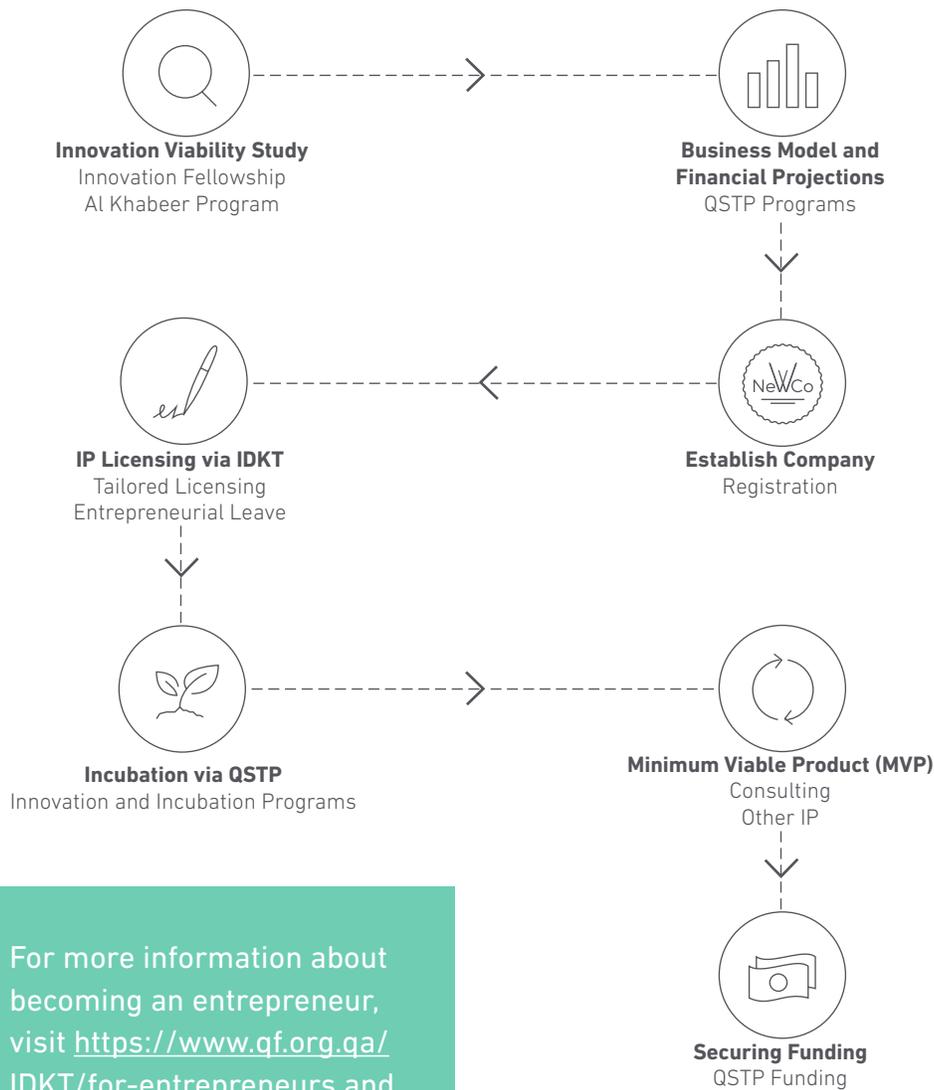
Visit <https://www.qf.org.qa/IDKT/for-entrepreneurs> for more information and answers to frequently asked questions (FAQ).

LAUNCHING A STARTUP:

An Overview of the Process and QF Resources



Whether you are a researcher based at QF or an independent entrepreneur licensing QF technology, the overall process for launching a startup is the same. Several QF resources are available via IDKT and QSTP; eligibility for these resources varies. The pages that follow provide information about each step in the process.



For more information about becoming an entrepreneur, visit <https://www.qf.org.qa/IDKT/for-entrepreneurs> and view our FAQ resource.

INNOVATION VIABILITY STUDY

The first step is to determine the viability of turning an innovative idea into a commercial product. To help non-QF entrepreneurs within Qatar with this process, IDKT offers our Al Khabeer Program. If you are a QF researcher, we also offer an Innovation Fellowship.

Al Khabeer Program for Technical Assistance Services

This referral-based consultancy service provides intellectual property (IP) expertise and technical assistance services to local entrepreneurs and inventors not covered under QF's IP policy. This subsidized service assists with initial IP protection, provides IP-related education workshops, and offers technical expertise services.

Al Khabeer is available to entrepreneurs by way of several innovation-supporting organizations and initiatives based in Qatar. Applications to the program are accepted based on these organizations' selections/recommendations.

Contact IDKT@qf.org.qa for more information about which organizations currently participate.

Innovation Fellowship for QF Researchers

Designed for pre-commercialization technology advancement, this innovation support mechanism for RDI activities enables QF researchers to take time off from their regular employment duties to assist in de-risking technologies prior to potential startup activities, subject to approval. These efforts might involve increasing the readiness level of the technology, addressing regulatory matters, or developing demonstration prototypes or presentations.

Contact IDKT@qf.org.qa for more information.

BUSINESS MODEL AND FINANCIAL PROJECTIONS

Ensuring the startup's product/service provides significant value to customers at the right price requires having the right business model. The business model identifies the target market and how the startup will deliver value to them. Financial projections estimate when the company will break even as well as the key milestones that need to be achieved in order to meet the financial projections. The frequently asked questions (FAQ) resource available at <https://www.qf.org.qa/IDKT/for-entrepreneurs> provides more information about the financial aspects of startups.

XLR8

This QSTP intensive, 10-week program offers training and mentorship to aspiring entrepreneurs for transforming tech-based ideas into commercially viable businesses with a solid business plan. XLR8 is open to teams of up to five members who are Qatar residents with a tech-based service/product idea and need training, mentorship, and a physical space to evaluate its commercial potential. It is not open to existing private companies.

Visit <https://qstp.org.qa/xlr8/> for more information.

ESTABLISH COMPANY

When you are ready to incorporate the company, consider establishing it through QSTP. As a “free zone,” QSTP offers several advantages to a startup:

- Quick and easy company formation
- 100% foreign ownership and capital repatriation
- Exemption from all taxes including income tax
- Exemption from customs duties and charges on imports
- Exemption from customs duties on exports
- No restrictions on repatriation of capital
- Profits and salaries in any currency

QSTP offers fully furnished, ready-to-occupy offices as well as meeting rooms, business services, expert advice, and legal/official documents.

Incorporating within QF also means the startup can take advantage of the proximity of QF’s research institutes in further developing the technology and providing access to other QF-patented inventions that may complement your offering.

Visit <https://qstp.org.qa/free-zone/> for more information.

LICENSING IP VIA IDKT

Intellectual property (IP) and technical expertise are a core component of a startup’s value. Therefore, IDKT offers exclusive and non-exclusive licenses to QF innovations based on your business needs. Tailored to your company’s specific product/service type, these agreements are negotiated according to market norms. Note that a business plan is required in order to license QF technology. For more information about business plans, visit <https://www.qf.org.qa/IDKT/for-entrepreneurs> and review the FAQ resource.

Contact IDKT@qf.org.qa to learn more about the options for licensing terms.

Entrepreneurial Leave

In some cases, a startup may need to utilize QF researchers for certain strategic activities. The Entrepreneurial Leave program enables QF research staff to step away from their normal duties to help with the smooth transfer of technology and knowledge to increase the commercialization success of the product/service.

Contact IDKT@qf.org.qa for more information about this program.



INCUBATION VIA QSTP

Serving as a home for tech-focused local entrepreneurs and their startups, the QSTP Incubation Center offers:

- Rapid incorporation in the QSTP Free Zone
- Collaborative co-working space
- Business facilitation and support services, including a network of mentors
- Access to funding programs
- Training
- Prototyping facilities

Visit <https://qstp.org.qa/incubation-center/> for more information on eligibility to apply.

MINIMUM VIABLE PRODUCT (MVP)

The MVP is a product that is developed just enough to enter the market. This early customer engagement is critical and will provide the insights needed for the startup to secure future customers.

Tapping into QF Expertise and IP via IDKT

As you work on developing your product enough to enter the market, IDKT can help you pursue opportunities to access QF research institutes for consulting services and facilities use as well as additional QF-developed IP.

Contact IDKT@qf.org.qa for more information.

SECURING FUNDING

As your company develops and grows, so too will the resources needed to support its success. Securing investment capital from angel and seed investors and venture capitalists is critical to the company's success throughout all stages of company growth. It requires the full-time commitment of an experienced member of the team to attract, negotiate, and secure investment.

QSTP's Product Development Fund

This cost-sharing fund provides grants of up to 50% of the total budget to encourage local startups to develop high-tech products and services relevant to local market needs, supporting the commercialization of market-ready technologies.

Visit <https://qstp.org.qa/product-development-fund/> for more information.

QSTP Tech Venture Fund

This strategic venture capital fund is designed to support local innovative startups and attract international startups looking to scale in the region. The fund provides opportunities for local, regional, and international tech founders and entrepreneurs to source seed-stage funding and follow-on capital:

- A seed round
- A Series A round
- A Series B round

Visit <https://qstp.org.qa/tech-venture-fund/> for more on eligibility and other information.

ACHIEVING the Exit Strategy



An exit strategy can be achieved either through an initial public offering (IPO) on a stock exchange or by being acquired by—or merging with—another (usually larger) company. Achieving the exit strategy allows the investors to recoup their investment. Most venture capitalists will want to be able to profitably sell their equity in the startup within 3 to 7 years.

LOOKING AHEAD TO THE NEXT SUCCESS

Contact IDKT@qf.org.qa to discuss your next entrepreneurial opportunity.

