



## **NATIONAL PRIORITIES RESEARCH PROGRAM (NPRP)**

### **Request For Proposal (RFP)**

### **Third Cycle**

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# 1 OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL PRIORITIES RESEARCH PROGRAM

- 1.1 The mission of the Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF) is to advance knowledge and education by supporting original, competitively-selected research. It will provide opportunities for researchers at all levels, from students to professionals, in the private, public, and academic sectors. The National Priorities Research Program (NPRP), the flagship program and largest funding activity of QNRF, is the primary means by which QNRF will seek to address key national, regional, and global needs through research and to pursue research opportunities for which Qatar may have a comparative advantage. The NPRP is a one-cycle per year grant application of funding, ranging from US\$20K up to a maximum of US\$350K per proposal, per year, for research project periods of one, two or three years.

## 2 STRATEGIC GOALS AND RESEARCH PORTFOLIO OF QNRF

- 2.1 QNRF seeks to support a broad variety of projects, including basic and applied research projects in the Natural sciences, Engineering and Technology, Medical and Health sciences, Agricultural sciences, Social sciences and Humanities. QNRF invites researchers to submit proposals in all of these disciplines.
- 2.2 Proposals should address issues important to both Qatar's national interest and QNRF's mission by proposing research that will lead to:
- 2.2.1 Accumulation of valuable human capital or a sustainable research capability in Qatar;
  - 2.2.2 Answers to research questions of vital interest to Qatar, and
  - 2.2.3 Recognition of Qatar due to the regional or global significance of the proposed research.
- 2.3 Appendix 17.2 includes a sample list of research areas relevant to Qatar's national needs. QNRF compiled this initial list based on an internal study of Qatar's research needs commissioned by Qatar Foundation after consultation with a variety of relevant stakeholders in Qatar. This list is not an exhaustive list of the topics that QNRF may fund, and adherence to this list is not tied to the peer review (PR) process. The list is meant to help researchers visualize topics of interest to Qatar and is a work in progress to be supplemented and refined in subsequent funding cycles. Proposals in other research areas which are deemed as important to Qatar are welcomed and encouraged.

## 3 BENEFITS OF THE NPRP

### 3.1 Service to Qatar

The NPRP will serve the people of Qatar, as well as its business, academic, and government sectors. It will strive to build bridges between businesses, government, academia, and others in Qatar, and between Qatar and the international research community.

### 3.2 Collaboration and Sustainability

The NPRP will fund programs that encourage collaboration amongst researchers in Qatar, as well as between researchers in Qatar and their international colleagues, by putting special emphasis on multi-investigator, multi-year research projects.

### **3.3 Identifiable National Benefits**

As noted above, all work supported by the NPRP will have the potential to yield identifiable benefits to Qatar. Benefits to Qatar may include development of human capital in Qatar, answers to research questions of direct interest to Qatar, or international recognition of Qatar due to the regional or global significance of the proposed research.

### **3.4 Active Publication, Promotion, and Outreach**

QNRF will publish, summarize, and archive research results to promote Qatar's research activities locally, regionally, and internationally. QNRF will facilitate interactions within Qatar's research community and reach out to the wider community of Qatar.

### **3.5 Commercialization and Diversification of the Economy**

The NPRP will support basic and applied research, as both may lead to expertise in new sectors and a diverse, thriving economy.

## **4 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA**

### **4.1 Eligibility of Participants**

#### **4.1.1 Eligibility of Lead Principal Investigators (LPis)**

Eligible participants must hold a Ph.D. or terminal degree in their particular field of study with good research skills and experience in the field of the proposed project. He/she should be affiliated with a well-recognized academic institute, research institute, company, or research organization from the public or private sector.

#### **4.1.2 Eligibility of other key investigators (Co-LPIs, PI and Co-PI)**

Eligible participants must hold a Ph.D. or terminal degree in their particular field of study with good research skills and experience in the field of the proposed project. Co-LPIs reside inside Qatar and must be affiliated to a submitting institution in Qatar.

#### **4.1.3 Eligibility of other research team members**

This includes post-doctoral fellows, post-graduate students, research associates, research assistants, and lab technicians. This is a definitive list and for any other unlisted roles, the nearest applicable role can be chosen.

#### **4.1.4 Eligibility of consultants and experts**

Consultants and experts should have a proven track record in their field of specialization. QNRF requires the submission of a No Objection letter by the consultant.

### **4.2 Funding Eligibility**

**4.2.1** Grants will range from US\$20,000 up to a maximum of US\$.350,000 per proposal, per year;

**4.2.1.1** QNRF reserves the right to reduce the total budget requested by the LPI based on the recommendations of the peer reviewers. If funded, the timeline and the budget submitted will be made

available for the LPI to modify them accordingly. Therefore, QNRF strongly recommends that LPIs provide justification for each budget item. Funds will be made available to the successful LPI's submitting institution inside the State of Qatar that meets the following criteria:

**4.2.1.2** The total annual budget (direct and indirect) must be expended as at least sixty-five percent (65%) of the total award within Qatar and no more than thirty-five percent (35%) outside of Qatar.

**4.2.1.3** The submitted budget must comply with the budget guidelines as described in section 6 of this document, as well as the approved policies of the submitting institution.

#### **4.2.2 Eligibility of Graduate Students**

**4.2.2.1** Graduate students (GS) are eligible to participate in NPRP project provided that they are enrolled in an advanced degree program at the submitting or the collaborating institution and the NPRP research activities are related to the GS's degree program.

**4.2.2.2** Graduate students sponsored by the Qatari government to do their studies abroad will be allowed to participate in the NPRP regardless of the institution they are enrolled in.

**4.2.2.3** The budget request should include the anticipated number of GSs at the time of application. GSs may be named or nominated after the awarding of the NPRP project provided that the GS participates in only one awarded ongoing NPRP project.

**4.2.2.4** If funded, the LPI must submit a student's support letter from the original institution to which the student is affiliated, as per the template provided on ([www.qnrf.org](http://www.qnrf.org)) to QNRF via the submitting institution's RO, authorizing him/her to participate in the NPRP funded project

## **5 PROGRAM DESCRIPTION, POLICIES AND GUIDELINES**

### **5.1 Program Description**

**5.1.1** QNRF encourages collaborative projects involving teams from more than one institution, cross-campus collaboration, and collaboration between academic and non-academic organizations, both inside and outside Qatar.

**5.1.2** QNRF encourages multi-disciplinary projects.

**5.1.3** At least 50% of the research effort, measured in person-days and funded by QNRF, must be conducted by the research team in Qatar. However, it is fully expected that a coordinated research program funded by QNRF could take place, in part, at other venues. LPIs may collaborate with accredited research organizations in other parts of the world.

**5.1.4** Electronic online submissions must be completed in accordance with the timeline posted in the Proposal Submission Timeline.

**5.1.5** For proposals selected for award, the LPIs should submit hard copies of the following documents to QNRF within two calendar month of the date of the award announcement:

**5.1.5.1** The complete proposal, including a cover page signed by the LPI as well as the initialed research plan and the budget.

- 5.1.5.2 An endorsement letter, using institutional official letter head, signed by the Dean and CFO of the submitting institution or equivalent and stamped with the official seal.
- 5.1.5.3 A supporting letter, using institutional official letter head, signed by the Dean or equivalent from the collaborative institutions and stamped with the official seal.
- 5.1.5.4 All other supplementary/missing documents (IRB, IACUC, IBC approvals; Supporting letters, Endorsement letters, and GS registration form ...etc) as specified in the QNRF's award notification to LPI who must delivered to QNRF office via the Research Office of his/her submitting institution.
- 5.1.6 A supporting letter is not required from a consultant.

## **5.2 Program Policies and Guidelines**

- 5.2.1 Each Key Investigator is eligible to participate in up to nine proposals per cycle, acting as LPI, PI, or Co-PI in a maximum of three proposals for each role, provided that each proposal is scientifically distinct.
- 5.2.2 If the PI is residing or will reside in Qatar during the project period, he/she is eligible to play the role of Co-LPI in up to three proposals per cycle.
- 5.2.3 The LPI is not eligible to apply for NPRP if he/she has three proposals currently funded by QNRF in NPRP program.
- 5.2.4 The GS is not eligible to participate in more than one research project currently funded by QNRF in NPRP program.
- 5.2.5 Proposals which were not funded in a previous NPRP cycle may only be resubmitted up to two times for consideration in subsequent cycles.
- 5.2.6 Efforts (measured in person-days) committed by each key investigator should not be greater than that permitted by his/her respective institution.
- 5.2.7 Only ROs located inside Qatar are eligible to register with QNRF at [www.qnrfsubmission.info](http://www.qnrfsubmission.info), which can be done at any time.

## **6 BUDGET**

### **6.1 Budget Components**

#### **6.1.1 Compensation of the research team**

- 6.1.1.1 Compensation can be extended to all members of the research team (see section 5.1)
- 6.1.1.2 Compensation of the research team can be charged towards the project pro-rata to the time budgeted.
- 6.1.1.3 Research team members may use the grant funds to buy their time from other duties such as teaching or committee work, as per the policies of their institutions.
- 6.1.1.4 Administrator's compensation cannot be charged to the project.

## **6.1.2 Graduate Student's compensation**

- 6.1.2.1** LPIs need to apply for graduate student compensation in the proposal budget provided that it does not exceed \$30,000 per year for salaries and tuition from the budget allocated to his/her institution.
- 6.1.2.2** GSs who are conducting their research outside Qatar, their compensation regarding tuition and salaries will be allocated from the budget of the collaborating institutions outside Qatar.
- 6.1.2.3** GSs who will be traveling to Qatar to conduct their research are eligible for compensation regarding travels, accommodation and others from the budget of submitting institution only if they spend a minimum period of three months in Qatar.

## **6.1.3 Research equipment and material purchases**

- 6.1.3.1** Equipment: Defined as any item having a useful life of more than one year and a unit acquisition cost of greater than US\$1,000 and which is part of the approved budget. This includes associated materials for running the equipment as well as purchase of data sets which includes data compiled by third party or acquired through services or surveys.
- 6.1.3.2** QNRF strongly recommends that the LPI provides information about the specifications, estimated price and purpose of equipment to be purchased in the budget justification for the project.
  - Procurement of equipment must be in accordance with the institution's procurement procedures.
  - Equipment funded by QNRF should be labeled as such and properly inventoried.
  - Consumables and Supplies: Defined as items having a useful life of less than one year and a unit acquisition cost of less than US\$1,000 and which are parts of the approved budget.

## **6.1.4 Research-related travel cost**

- 6.1.4.1** All travel costs charged to the grant must comply with the Awardee institution's own travel policy
- 6.1.4.2** For research team members who specifically travel to and from Qatar to conduct NPRP-funded research, the cost of travel (visa, tickets, accommodation and per diem or relevant personnel compensation) will be charged to the submitting or collaborative institution inside Qatar, as applicable.
- 6.1.4.3** For research team members located outside of Qatar who specifically travel to destinations other than Qatar as part of the NPRP-funded research, the cost of travel (visa, tickets, accommodation and per diem) will be charged to the collaborating institution outside Qatar.
- 6.1.4.4** The LPI must itemize the budget cost in the travel budget justification section in terms of purpose, importance, and relevance to the awarded project.

## **6.1.5 Miscellaneous Costs**

- 6.1.5.1** Includes publications, communications, translation, repairs and maintenance of equipment, and other costs. Miscellaneous Costs are not to exceed 5% of a project's total annual budget.

## **6.1.6 Institutional Indirect Budget**

- 6.1.6.1** The overall annual institutional indirect budget, if applicable, must not exceed 20% of the total funds requested from QNRF.

## **6.2 Payment schedules**

### **6.2.1 Signing of the Fund Management Agreement**

- 6.2.1.1** Upon the execution of the Fund Management Agreement (FMA) by both the Awardee and QNRF, funds will be advanced to the awardees in installments in accordance with the following project-year(s) schedule:

### **6.2.2 One-year projects**

- 6.2.2.1** 100% of the approved annual budget for equipment and any associated material cost, plus up to 50% of the remaining total approved annual budget.
- 6.2.2.2** Up to 30% of the remaining approved annual budget will be advanced upon receipt and acceptance of the Interim Progress Report.
- 6.2.2.3** Up to 20% of the remaining of the approved annual budget will be reimbursed upon receipt and acceptance of the Final Report.

### **6.2.3 Two-year projects:**

- 6.2.3.1** 100% of the first year's approved annual budget for equipment and any associated materials, plus up to 50% of the first year's remaining approved annual budget.
- 6.2.3.2** Up to 50% of the first year's remaining approved annual budget will be advanced upon receipt and acceptance of the 1st Interim Progress Report.
- 6.2.3.3** 100% of the second year's approved annual budget for equipment and any associated materials plus up to 50% of the second year's remaining approved annual budget will be advanced upon receipt and acceptance of 1st Annual Progress Report.
- 6.2.3.4** Up to 30% of the second year's remaining approved annual budget will be advanced upon receipt and acceptance of the 2nd Interim Progress Report.
- 6.2.3.5** Up to 20% of the second year's remaining approved annual budget will be reimbursed upon receipt and acceptance of the Final Report.

### **6.2.4 Three-year projects**

- 6.2.4.1** 100% of the first year's approved annual budget for equipment and any associated materials, plus up to 50% of the first year's remaining approved annual budget.
- 6.2.4.2** Up to 50% of the first year's remaining approved annual budget will be advanced upon receipt and acceptance of the 1st Interim Progress Report. .
- 6.2.4.3** 100% of the second year's approved annual budget for equipment and any associated materials, plus up to 50% of the second year's approved annual budget will be advanced upon receipt and acceptance of 1st Annual Progress Report..
- 6.2.4.4** Up to 50% of the second year's approved annual budget will be advanced upon receipt and acceptance of the 2nd Interim Progress Report. 100% of the third year's approved annual budget for equipment and any associated materials, plus up to 50% of the third year's approved annual budget will be advanced upon receipt and acceptance of both the 2nd Annual Progress Report.

**6.2.4.5** Up to 30% of the third year's remaining approved annual budget will be advanced upon receipt and acceptance of the 3rd Interim Progress Report. .

**6.2.4.6** Up to 20% of the third year's remaining approved annual budget will be reimbursed upon receipt and acceptance of the Final Report.

## **6.2.5 Funds Transfer**

**6.2.5.1** QNRF shall transfer any of the above installments to the nominated bank account within 14 working days from QNRF's acceptance of the relevant required report, without any consequent delay in the schedule of the next reports.

# **7 SUBMITTING INSTITUTION'S AND RESEARCH OFFICE'S ROLES**

## **7.1 Submitting Institution's (SI) Role**

**7.1.1** Signing the Fund Management Agreement (FMA).

**7.1.2** Authorizing the representative of the RO.

**7.1.3** Managing the funds.

**7.1.4** Signing contracts with the sub-awardees.

**7.1.5** Issuing the institution's endorsement letter.

**7.1.6** Managing travel and procurement in accordance with its own policy.

**7.1.7** Compliance with the policies of the Qatar Supreme Council of Health (QSCH) for protection of human and animal research subjects through their Institutional Review Board (IRB).

## **7.2 Research Office's (RO) Role**

**7.2.1** The RO or equivalent of the submitting institution will have online access, via the QNRF online submission website, to the proposals submitted by the LPI and, prior to final proposal submission, the RO or equivalent of the submitting institution shall vet the proposals submitted by the LPI for compliance with institutional policies, as well as QNRF policies, as stated in the RO booklet and in this RFP.

**7.2.2** The electronic submission shall be considered the official version of the proposal. However, if the proposal is funded, refer to section 5.1.5 for details of the documents to be submitted.

**7.2.3** The RO or equivalent, must upload an endorsement letter signed by both the Dean or equivalent and Chief Financial Officer (CFO) or equivalent, certifying compliance of the submitted proposal with the following requirements:

**7.2.3.1** At least 50% of the proposed funded research days must be conducted in Qatar by the research team inside Qatar.

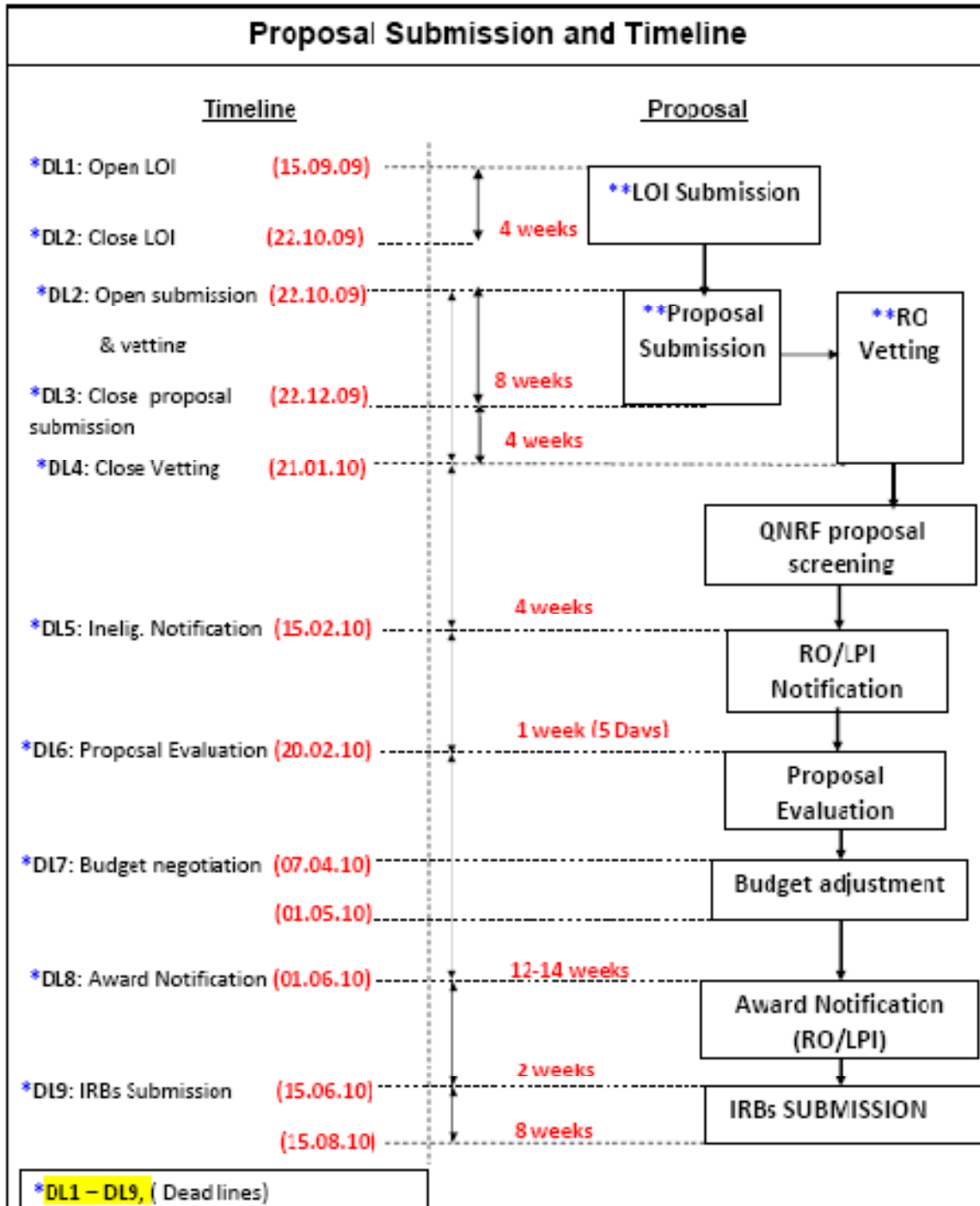
**7.2.3.2** At least 65% of the total budget must be expended within Qatar and no more than 35% outside Qatar.

- 7.2.3.3 Time and resources are available to the research team to carry out the project.
- 7.2.3.4 QNRF policies, as stated in this RFP.
- 7.2.3.5 The institution's internal policies.
- 7.2.3.6 All laws and regulations applicable to the jurisdiction in which the research is being conducted.
- 7.2.3.7 For funded proposals, confirmation that the IRB approved research procedures is in compliance with national ethics and guidelines.
- 7.2.3.8 The project budget (including compensation of the research team) is in accordance with all of the institutions' internal financial and research budget policies.
- 7.2.3.9 The amount charged to the project for the compensation of any research team member is no more than the percentage of his/her time (measured in person-days) spent on the project.
- 7.2.3.10 All travel expenses are permissible under the institution's policies.
- 7.2.3.11 At least one PI must reside in Qatar who must come from the submitting institution.
- 7.2.4 QNRF will grant the RO or equivalent an edit access to the budget section of the proposal, during the proposal preparation period to help LPIs preparing their budget.

## **8 PROPOSAL SUBMISSION FLOWCHART AND TIMELINE**

### **8.1 Flow Chart**

- 8.1.1 The following flowchart illustrates the steps necessary for proposal submission by the LPI and the RO starting with submission of the LOI, through to notification of the final award.



## 8.2 Timeline

8.2.1 The following table shows important dates for the NPRP 3<sup>rd</sup> cycle.

<b>Timeline for NPRP 3rd Cycle</b>	
<b>Description</b>	<b>Dates</b>
Open online registration for LPIs	<b>Ongoing</b>
Online registration of ROs and other key investigators	
Open Lol submission	<b>Noon, Tuesday 15th of September 2009</b>
Close Lol submission	<b>Noon, Thursday 8th of October 2009</b>
DL2: Open LPI proposal submission to the RO and vetting	
DL3: Close LPI proposal submission to the RO	<b>Noon Doha time, Tuesday 8th of December 2009</b>
DL4: Close RO final proposal submission and vetting	<b>Noon, Doha time, Thursday 14th of January 2009</b>
Ineligible proposals notification	<b>Mid February 2010</b>
Successful proposals notification, awards announced	<b>Mid June 2010</b>

## 9 ONLINE SUBMISSION

### 9.1 Applicant Online Registration

9.1.1 All NPRP grant participants (key investigators) residing in or outside Qatar must register with QNRF at <https://www.qnrfsubmission.info>.

### 9.2 Steps for new applicant's online registration

9.2.1 The LPI must first register at <https://www.qnrfsubmission.info> through the "Applicant" channel.

9.2.2 Applicants are required to use their official work email addresses (if available) when registering.

9.2.3 Use the link <https://www.qnrfsubmission.info> and click on the "**New Applicant? Sign up here**" link under Applicant section.

9.2.4 The registration process will require submission of personnel & contact information, specialization, research interest and the upload of the CV in PDF format only. Those who have previously registered do not need to re-register.

9.2.5 Applicants who register with two different email addresses will be disqualified.

## 9.3 Lol Submission

- 9.3.1 After registration, LPIs may enter the site <https://www.qnrfsubmission.info> and choose “Submit NPRP Proposal” and then choose “Submit Lol”. The LPI may submit a maximum of three (3) Lols online as per the NPRP Timeline.
- 9.3.2 Indicate whether the proposal is “**New**” or “**Resubmitted**”.
- 9.3.3 If “Resubmitted”, please enter the proposal’s previous ID number from the most recent cycle.
- 9.3.4 Select the research type from the from the drop-down menu provided.
- 9.3.5 Select the proposal’s research area, specialty, and sub-specialty from the drop-down menu provided.
- 9.3.6 In the five mandatory fields enter the most relevant keywords that best describe the research proposal.
- 9.3.7 Provide a proposal title with a maximum of 200 characters, including spaces.
- 9.3.8 Provide a proposal description with a maximum of 1,500 characters, including spaces.
- 9.3.9 For resubmitted proposals, the information mentioned above will automatically be displayed and will be open for editing.
- 9.3.10 The LPI can preview and edit the Lol before submission; however, once submitted, information may not be edited, but only deleted and replaced. The LPI may check the Status and Proposal ID number of his/her Lol by viewing the “Proposal Status” tab in the main menu.
- 9.3.11 QNRF will send the LPI a confirmation email and an SMS (hence the need for a mobile phone number) with a proposal ID number indicating that the Lol has been successfully received.

## 9.4 Proposal Preparation

- 9.4.1 The following components are required for the proposal’s submission:
- 9.4.2 Submitting Institution information. For details of the Co-LPI role please see section 10.7.2.
- 9.4.3 Collaborative institution(s) information and supporting letters.
- 9.4.4 Proposal description.
- 9.4.5 Performance site(s).
- 9.4.6 Names and Roles of Key investigators (LPI, Co- LPI, PI and Co-PI).
- 9.4.7 Description of the benefit of the research project to Qatar, the region, and/or the world community.
- 9.4.8 Resources available to perform the research proposal.
- 9.4.9 Timeline and specific aims.
- 9.4.10 Research plan (maximum 25 pages):
  - 9.4.10.1 Background and significance (maximum two pages).

- 9.4.10.2 Preliminary data or studies.
  - 9.4.10.3 Significance
  - 9.4.10.4 Research design and methods.
  - 9.4.10.5 Anticipated results and evaluation criteria.
  - 9.4.10.6 Strategy for project continuation
  - 9.4.10.7 Plans for disseminating research results
  - 9.4.10.8 Rebuttal to the peer reviewer's comments for resubmitted proposals.
- 9.4.11 References (literature cited)
  - 9.4.12 Previous publications by the LPI and other key investigators (not more than five publications pertinent to the proposed project)
  - 9.4.13 Research support: indicate any ongoing and previous research funds received over the past three years by each of the key investigators.
  - 9.4.14 Ethical compliance.
  - 9.4.15 Budget.
  - 9.4.16 Miscellaneous documents.

## **9.5 Instructions and guidelines for proposal preparation and online submission**

- 9.5.1 To avoid delays, misunderstandings and possible decline of the application, carefully read and follow the policies, instructions and guidelines within this RFP.
- 9.5.2 Use only the official QNRF proposal templates provided at [www.qnrf.org](http://www.qnrf.org); otherwise the proposal will be disqualified.
- 9.5.3 Text throughout the offline proposal preparation using QNRF templates should be Arial font, point size 12 and single spaced. The template margins (0.5" left, 0.5" right, 0.8" top and 0.8" bottom) must not be changed.
- 9.5.4 In the research plan, use figures, graphs, diagrams, charts, tables, figure legends, and footnotes. To distinguish the figure legends from the research plan text, use black italic type.
- 9.5.5 The research plan narrative must be numbered consecutively at the bottom center of each page (e.g. do not use page designations such as "9A" or "9B".)
- 9.5.6 The LPI carries full responsibility for submitting all components of the proposal, as described in section 10.4, above.
- 9.5.7 Documents uploaded mistakenly in the online submission process are the responsibility of the LPI and will lead to the disqualification of the proposal.
- 9.5.8 LPIs resubmitting proposals must highlight (e.g; bold type, line in the margin, underlining, etc.) all revisions and modifications made in response to the peer reviewers' comments.
- 9.5.9 QNRF strongly advises LPIs to submit their proposed applications well before the submission deadline (see Timeline).

**9.5.10** Research plans must be submitted in English, except in a limited number of research areas in which the primary international language of research is Arabic (for example, Islamic studies, Qatari law, etc.).

## **9.6 Proposal Online submission**

**9.6.1** The LPI should login into his/her account at <https://www.qnrfsubmission.info>, and choose the NPRP proposal submission icon on the left-hand side. He/she will then be taken to the NPRP homepage. Clicking on the "Prepare Proposal" tab from the main menu, will allow viewing of proposal ID numbers.

**9.6.2** Upon choosing a proposal, on the left-hand side of the proposal home page the LPI will be able to view a menu showing the components of a proposal. Although the LPI may choose to prepare any of the components in any order, these instructions will lead the LPI through the entire proposal preparation process starting from assigning the submitting institution.

## **9.7 Submitting institution information**

**9.7.1** Any primary academic institution, government or private research organization in the State of Qatar can register a research office responsible for vetting and making the final submission of proposals. Once awarded, such an entity will be termed as the Awardee. Any LPI located outside Qatar will be responsible for identifying the submitting institution and the Co-LPI inside Qatar.

**9.7.2** An LPI located outside Qatar will have to nominate a Co-LPI located inside Qatar together with his/her submitting institution. In order to do that, the LPI must ensure that the Co-LPI is already registered with QNRF online submission and his institution is registered.

**9.7.3** The LPI should enter the e-mail address of the Co-LPI in the relevant field, then press "add". Separately, the LPI should also notify the Co-LPI of the nomination.

**9.7.4** The nominated Co-LPI will then receive an automatic notification that he/she should login to his/her account to access the "Participation Requests" channel in order to accept or decline his/her nomination.

**9.7.5** Unless the Co-LPI accepts the nomination the LPI cannot proceed with the submission of the proposal.

## **9.8 Collaborating institutions' information**

**9.8.1** QNRF encourages collaborative projects involving teams from more than one institution, cross-campus collaboration, and collaboration between academic and non-academic organizations, both inside and outside Qatar.

**9.8.2** If collaborating institutions are involved in the proposal, the LPI should enter the required information for each institution, including uploading an official supporting letter.

**9.8.3** The LPI can add additional collaborating institutions by following the same procedure above.

**9.8.4** The LPI will not be able to add a key investigator unless his institution is identified as a collaborative institution.

## **9.9 Proposal Description**

**9.9.1** The proposal description is extracted from the original Lol submitted; however the LPI can slightly modify it during the submission phase.

**9.9.2 Project Title:** The LPI may modify the title of the project slightly from that stated in the initially submitted Lol however the title should retain the same theme of the research project that was originally intended.

**9.9.3 Description of the proposal:** The LPI should describe the hypothesis, the broad objectives and the specific aims of the research project as well as concisely describing the research design and methods for achieving the proposed goals. It is very important for the summary to be succinct, clearly written and informative to peer reviewers working in the same or related fields, as this document will provide them with the initial impression of whether the scientific idea, objectives, hypothesis, research plan and outcome data are innovative and/or a new contribution to knowledge in the subject. Describing past accomplishments should be provided and, if the proposal is submitted in Arabic, the LPI must provide an additional description of the proposal written in English.

## **9.10 Performance Site(s)**

**9.10.1** For each performance site(s) involved in the proposal, the LPI should enter the required information for each site in the official supporting letter.

**9.10.2** The LPI can add additional performance site(s) by following the same procedure.

## **9.11 Key Investigator(s)**

**9.11.1** The LPI may nominate key investigators from the submitting and collaborative institutions, the LPI will not be able to add any key investigator that his institution is not identified.

**9.11.2** The LPI should notify key investigators of their nomination and ensure that they have already registered with QNRF online submission by entering their e-mail addresses.

**9.11.3** If all key investigator have already registered with QNRF, the LPI should then be able to enter the email address

**9.11.4** Nominated key investigators will then receive an automatic notification that they should login to their account and access the "Participation Requests" channel to accept or decline the nomination.

**9.11.5** Unless the key investigators accept the nomination, the LPI will not be able to proceed with the submission of the proposal

**9.11.6** Key Investigators will be granted a view only access by QNRF to the submitted proposal.

## **9.12 Description of Benefit(s) to Qatar**

**9.12.1** Clearly state the benefits of the research project to Qatar's national interest and the potential impact on society, the region, or the world community. Explain how the outcome will improve understanding or provide solutions to the state of Qatar, the region or the world in specific areas.

**9.12.2** The proposals are expected to yield identifiable benefits to Qatar, which may include development of human capital in Qatar, answers to research questions of direct interest to Qatar, or international recognition of Qatar due to the regional or global significance of the proposed research.

## **9.13 Resources**

- 9.13.1 Indicate all resources currently available at the Performance sites, as well as resources that are planned to be obtained in order to carry out the proposed research project. The following five steps outline the procedure;
- 9.13.1.1 **Laboratory space:** Describe the working space available, e.g. the LPI's lab, space, available equipment and lab facilities.
- 9.13.1.2 **Personnel:** Briefly describe how the expertise, availability and years of experience of the key investigators, including consultants, if applicable, technologists and technicians who will carry out the technical work, is going to help in conducting the project.
- 9.13.1.3 **Facilities:** Describe the availability and technical specialty of the core facilities required to perform specific experiments of the project.
- 9.13.1.4 **Office and Computer facilities:** Describe the availability of office space and computer facilities, together with any software deemed crucial to the research project.
- 9.13.1.5 **Major equipment:** List the major equipment available in all performance sites that is considered as crucial to the success of research project.

## 9.14 Timeline and Specific Aims

- 9.14.1 LPI should submit a Timeline table online listing all specific aims, related activities and sub-activities of the project, along with their expected duration. LPI should also enter the names of the research team members assigned to each activity and the effort expected by each of them in days.
- 9.14.2 Please note that the efforts will be automatically reflected by the system in the relevant budget lines, therefore LPI needs to complete the timeline prior to budget preparation.

## 9.15 Research Plan

- 9.15.1 The LPI should prepare the research plan file, as described below, using the template available at [www.qnrf.org](http://www.qnrf.org) stating the proposal ID number at the top right-hand side of all pages and numbering the pages consecutively. Page numbers should appear at the bottom center of each page. **The research plan, as described in the following sections, may not exceed 25 pages:**

- 9.15.1.1 **Background:** Outline the background of the proposed research, knowledge, or information that has led to the current project proposal, assessing existing data or qualitative analysis, and discuss how the proposed research would address gaps in current knowledge in the relevant field (**maximum two pages**).
- 9.15.1.2 **Significance:** If the aims of this research project are achieved, briefly describe what the significance of the outcome provided through the proposed project will be in relation to the knowledge currently existing. Describe how this proposed activity will advance knowledge and understanding within its discipline or across disciplines. Describe how relevant the projected data are to the problem(s) in the specific research area, including the effect of these studies on the concepts, methods, technologies or services that drive this research area forward (**maximum one page**).
- 9.15.1.3 **Preliminary data or studies:** It is recommended to provide preliminary data or studies pertinent to the intended project application which will help to establish the experience and capability of the investigator to pursue the proposed project. Peer reviewers consider preliminary data as an essential part of the research plan and it often helps the reviewers in assessing the likelihood of the success of the proposed project.

- 9.15.1.4 Research design and methods.** Describe the research design, including an outline of the experimental plan, procedures and analyses to be used to accomplish the specific aims of the proposed research project. Describe clearly any new concepts, approaches, tools or technologies for the proposed project and any modifications in methodology and advantages over the existing methodologies. Describe the potential difficulties or limitations of the proposed procedures and provide alternative approaches to achieve the specific aims. Indicate any methodologies, procedures, situations, or materials that may be hazardous to personnel and describe the precautions to be exercised. In this section, although there are no page limits, please provide as succinct and informative a description of the research plan as possible.
- 9.15.1.5 Anticipated results and evaluation criteria:** Describe how data will be collected, analyzed and evaluated.
- 9.15.1.6 Strategy for project continuation:** Describe how the data obtained from the proposed project will be utilized in future studies to continue the momentum of scientific investigations through research.
- 9.15.1.7 Plans for disseminating research results:** Describe the mechanisms to be utilized for dissemination of the results such as participation in conferences, symposiums and workshops, publication of articles and reviews in journals.
- 9.15.1.8 Resubmitted proposals:** LPIs may use up to three pages to respond to the critiques and comments made by peer reviewers in a previous cycle. These three pages are not counted as part of the 25 pages of the research plan which will need to be updated if included as part of the re-submission.

## **9.16 References**

- 9.16.1** Use the QNRF Reference template available at the download center [www.qnrf.org](http://www.qnrf.org) to prepare a list of all references cited in the proposal. Each reference must include the title, names of all authors, books (ISBN) or journals, volume numbers, page numbers, and year of publication. Although there is not a page limit, it is important to be succinct and select only those references pertinent to the proposed research in current literature. The document should be saved as a PDF file and uploaded to the indicated section in the online proposal submission page.

## **9.17 Publication(s)**

- 9.17.1** If available, the LPI must upload, or provide access to, the paper via a link to the online site indicated in the publication page. A maximum of five previously published or “accepted for publication” papers relevant to the proposed project are allowed.

## **9.18 Research Support**

- 9.18.1** Indicate any ongoing and previous research funds (title of funded proposal, funding agency, project duration (start and end dates) and funded amount) received over the past three years by each of the key investigators.

## **9.19 Ethical Compliance**

- 9.19.1** QNRF requires the LPI to submit detailed protocol which should be approved by the relevant ethics committee of the submitting institution namely the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for human subjects' research, the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC) for research on animals or animal materials, the Institutional Biohazards Committee (IBC) for research involving bio-hazardous materials, or equivalent ethics board or committee.
- 9.19.2** In case the approved ethical compliance protocol(s) is unavailable at time of submission, please upload a letter from the RO confirming that the PI will provide the required protocol(s) prior to funding.

## **9.20 Budget**

- 9.20.1** Separate budgets will automatically be generated online for the submitting institution and any other collaborative institution(s) identified by the LPI.
- 9.20.2** Each of the following budget categories should be completed online by the LPI:
- 9.20.2.1** Personnel (as per the efforts assigned in the timeline).
  - 9.20.2.2** Graduate student's Compensation.
  - 9.20.2.3** Equipment and materials.
  - 9.20.2.4** Travel.
  - 9.20.2.5** Miscellaneous.
  - 9.20.2.6** Indirect cost.
- 9.20.3** Enter zero for any category that does not require a budget, e.g. "free consultation". The LPI must itemize and justify each budget category separately in the Budget Justification section.
- 9.20.4** The online budget system will prompt the LPI for any mismatch or violation of QNRF's budget policies. On completion, the system will compile the data and generate a "Submitted Budget" report which will be available to the LPI for editing and before final submission. This report will also be provided to the peer reviewers for their evaluation.

## **9.21 Miscellaneous Documents**

- 9.21.1** If applicable, use this location to upload recommendation letters from officials or individuals or beneficiaries who do not belong to a collaborative institution, questionnaires, etc

# **10 PROPOSAL EVALUATION, SCORING AND RANKING**

## **10.1 Peer Reviewers**

- 10.1.1** QNRF solicits peer reviewers (PRs) from eminently qualified international experts and will seek input from at least three such independent PRs for each proposal. The overall review process is comprised of the following steps:

## 10.2 QNRF Screening

**10.2.1** After the proposal has been submitted online, QNRF will screen it against the following criteria in a "yes/no" format. Any proposal failing to meet any of the following points will be disqualified and will not be forwarded to PRs.

**10.2.1.1** Research plan not to exceed 25 pages

**10.2.1.2** Wrongly uploaded documents

## 10.3 Technical Peer Review and Proposal Ranking

**10.3.1** Using the following questions as a guide, PRs will score proposals based on three sets of criteria: scientific merit, research team qualifications and budget.

### 10.3.2 Scientific Merit (60 points total)

**10.3.2.1** To what extent is the proposed research original or new in terms of (as applicable):

- Idea
- Approach
- Experimental design
- A contribution to knowledge or to the literature in the subject

**(Maximum 20 points).**

**10.3.2.2** How well conceived and organized is the overall proposed project in terms of (as applicable):

- Experimental design
- The statistical methods
- Data analysis
- Project feasibility given the resources
- Timeline and Specific aims
- The evaluation/validation plan is adequate and reasonable for measuring the project's progress, anticipated results and overall success

**(Maximum 20 points).**

**10.3.2.3** How significant is the research to advancing knowledge and understanding within its discipline or across disciplines, in terms of (as applicable):

- Relevance of the projected results to problems in specific research area
- Relevance of the literature cited being up to date
- A realistic mechanism for disseminating the project's results to the international scientific community

**(Maximum 10 points).**

**10.3.2.4** How significant is the envisaged outcome in promoting priority issues in areas that are critical to Qatar, in terms of (as applicable):

- Benefits of the proposed research activity to Qatar
- Plans for continuing or expanding the project after QNRF support ends

(Maximum 10 points).

### 10.3.3 Research Team Qualification (20 points total)

10.3.3.1 How well qualified are the Research Teams inside and outside Qatar and are their designated roles suitable to conduct the research (if appropriate, consider prior work)?

- **10 points for Research Team inside Qatar plus**
- **10 points for Research Team outside Qatar or**
- **20 points if the entire Research Team is located inside Qatar**

### 10.3.4 Budget Merit (20 points total)

10.3.4.1 How realistic is the proposed budget in terms of (as applicable):

- Personnel
- Graduate student's Compensation
- Equipment and materials
- Travel
- Miscellaneous
- Indirect cost

(Maximum 20 points).

## 10.4 PRs Comments

10.4.1 Each PR will provide narrative comments (not exceeding two pages), the scores described above, and recommendation to fund, not fund, or reduce funding requested. QNRF will make the reviews available to LPIs, without identification of the PRs' names, after the awards are officially announced.

## 10.5 Award selection process

10.5.1 QNRF will total the median score of each criterion as submitted by the PRs. The total score will then be used for ranking the proposals and, based on that, and funding assigned by QNRF for that cycle, the final funding decision will be made

# 11 RESEARCH ETHICS, REGULATIONS AND GUIDELINES

11.1 Upon announcement of the funding results, successful LPIs will be contacted to send to QNRF, within eight weeks, the IRB approved protocols for using human subjects and their institutional guidelines and regulations for using animals and biohazards materials, as applicable (link to National Research Ethics and guidelines).

- 11.2** With respect to research ethics and safety, the institutions involved in research should commit to follow best practice, as defined by its own established policies and procedures, consistent with Qatari and internationally recognized standards and applicable laws, in accordance with the following guidelines:
- 11.2.1 Research Misconduct:** The institution involved shall have in place established policies and procedures for the identification, reporting, and investigation of research misconduct. Any potential incidents of research misconduct that, if valid, would cast significant doubt on the validity of a project's research results shall be reported immediately, in writing, to QNRF.
  - 10.2.2 Human Subjects Research:** QNRF will release funds to submitting institutions for research projects involved in human subjects only upon receiving approval of the Institutional Review Board (IRB) or equivalent, following policies and guidelines described in the Qatar Supreme Council for Health (QSCH) document. If such a research project is to be conducted in multiple institutions inside and outside Qatar, the LPI must submit separate the IRB approval for each institution involved. QNRF reserves the right to review procedures, before and after the fund release to ensure the LPI's compliance with the QSCH policies and guidelines.
  - 10.2.3 Research Involving Laboratory Animals:** QNRF will release funds to submitting institutions for projects involving laboratory animals only upon receiving the Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee (IACUC), or equivalent, approval, consistent with internationally recognised standards, from all institutions inside and outside Qatar, where such activities will be conducted. QNRF reserves the right to review the submitting institution's policies and procedures prior to the approval of animal subjects research.
  - 10.2.4 Research Safety:** The submitting institution shall have in place adequate policies and procedures to ensure that research activities are conducted safely and in accordance with applicable laws, regulations and best practices. The submitting institution shall, upon request, provide QNRF with copies of such policies and procedures and such other information as QNRF may reasonably require with respect to the submitting institution's research safety policies and procedures.
- 11.3** In addition, please see Appendix 18.4 for QNRF's Code of Practice as applied to its research grants

## 12 PROPOSAL DISQUALIFICATION

- 12.1** QNRF may consider a proposal as disqualified, at either the pre- or post-award stage, if it falls into one of the following categories:
- 12.2 Pre-award**
    - 12.2.1** Proposals funded by sources other than QNRF
    - 12.2.2** Partial overlapping of proposal with other funded proposal(s)
    - 12.2.3** Proposal fails the QNRF screening requirements (see Initial Screening section).
    - 12.2.4** Research plan exceeds 25 pages.
    - 12.2.5** Applicant has submitted incorrect or prohibited documents.
  - 12.3 Post-award**

- 12.3.1** Hard copies of the research plan, the budget, the endorsement letters, supporting letters or/and the cover page bearing original signatures and stamps of the relevant offices are not received within one calendar month of the award notification.
- 12.3.2** The LPI fails to submit the required IRB approval no later than eight weeks after award notification.
- 12.3.3** The LPI fails to inform QNRF of any delay in starting the project within three months of receiving the funds. If QNRF discovers through the progress report that the project is delayed, the LPI will have up to one month to justify the delay and request a no-cost extension; otherwise QNRF reserves the right to terminate the project.
- 12.3.4** QNRF reserves the right to test all submitted proposals and reports for plagiarism and misrepresentation. If any proposal or report was found to be plagiarized or misrepresented, it will be disqualified.

## **13 FUND MANAGEMENT**

- 13.1** For funded proposals, grants will be managed as per the terms and conditions set forth in the Fund Management Agreement (FMA) as well as the Post Award Policies and Guidelines (PAPG) documents.
- 13.2** For projects involving multiple institutions located within Qatar (in addition to any institutions located outside Qatar), the institution located within Qatar that submitted the approved proposal will be designated as the Awardee institution with responsibility for managing the funds, including disbursing the relevant share of the funds to the collaborative institutions and managing the technical implementation of the project(s).
- 13.3** The Awardee institution is authorized to grant sub-awards based solely on the separate budget submitted by the collaborating institution(s).
- 13.4** Sub-awardees may not issue sub-awards.
- 13.5** The Awardee institution is responsible for ensuring that all sub-award agreements contain terms and conditions consistent with those specified in the FMA signed with the Awardee.
- 13.6** Not more than 35 % of the total grant funding can be expended by sub-awardee(s) outside Qatar.
- 13.7** All research equipment and materials purchased will remain the property of the Awardee unless otherwise directed by QNRF.
- 13.8** The RO is responsible for advising QNRF of any change in the status of the PIs and their contact information during the pre- and post-award period.
- 13.9** At the end of each funding year, carryover of any remaining fund will require QNRF's approval. For each budget item, the LPI needs to complete the online budget carryover section of the Annual Progress Report together with the rationale (reasons for not spending as planned and why it should be carried over) and submit it online to the RO for vetting prior to submitting it to QNRF.
- 13.10** A substitute for any key investigator (LPI, Co-LPI, PI and Co-PI) or any member of the research team during the project period is eligible only if his/her qualifications and experience are equivalent to, or higher than, the original member of the team. The LPI should get QNRF approval through the RO of the submitting institution one month before substitution takes place.

## **14 INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY POLICY**

- 14.1** QNRF will follow the international model for recognizing intellectual property rights and revenue sharing for research outcomes and technology transfer. Please see the QNRF website for the Intellectual Property Policy ([www.qnrf.org](http://www.qnrf.org)).

## **15 CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

- 15.1** Defined as situations in which the LPI or any key investigator in the research team is in a position to gain financial advantage or personal benefit (broadly construed) arising from their university positions or professional standing, either through outside professional activities or through their research, administrative, or educational actions or decisions at research institution.
- 15.2** The submitting institution shall have adequate policies and procedures in place for the identification and management of potential financial conflicts of interest. The submitting institution shall, upon request, provide a copy of its conflict of interest policies and procedures to QNRF.
- 15.3** The submitting institution shall disclose to QNRF any potential conflict of interest that may have a significant effect on the project, promptly, in writing, together with details of all actions taken to eliminate or mitigate the effect of any such potential conflict.

## **16 INQUIRIES**

- 16.1** For any inquiry about this RFP and the electronic proposal submission process that is not already answered on the Q&A section of QNRF website, please contact QNRF, by email only, at [nprp@qf.org.qa](mailto:nprp@qf.org.qa) . QNRF's response will then be made publicly available on Q&A section.

## 17 APPENDICES

### 17.1 Definitions and Acronyms

**Awardee:** Academic, government, or private organization operating in or through a branch entity located inside the State of Qatar, that has appropriate research resources to enable research in specialized area(s), and which will be entrusted with managing the research fund.

**Carryover fund:** Amount of unused but advanced or obligated research grant funds remaining at the end of the award year that may be carried forward to the next year. The unused funds are regulated by Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF) policies

**Chief Financial Officer (CFO):** CFO is senior corporate officer with full financial authority. In general terms, the main responsibility of a CFO is to oversee financial appropriations and expenditures of an organization. Hence, the CFO is in charge of disseminating financial data, directing budget and spending, as well as monitoring a number of other financial activities.

**Co-Lead Principal Investigator (Co-LPI):** is a PI affiliated to the submitting institution and acting as the LPI-representative in Qatar in addition to his/her scientific role of post award communication between the research team and QNRF. In the event that the LPI is in Qatar he/she will take the role of the Co-LPI by default.

**Collaborative Institution:** Any academic, government, or private organization in or outside the State of Qatar collaborating with the submitting Institution in conducting the research proposal. Once awarded, it will be termed as sub-awardee.

**Co-Principal Investigator (Co-PI):** An individual involved with the other key investigators in the scientific development or execution of a project. A Co-PI typically devotes a specified percentage of time to the project and is considered as a "Key Investigator." The designation of a Co-PI does not affect the PI's roles and responsibilities as specified in this policy statement.

**Conflict of Interest:** Situations in which the Principal Investigator or any Investigator in the research team is in a position to gain financial advantage or personal benefit (broadly construed) arising from their university positions or professional standing, either through outside professional activities or through their research, administrative, or educational actions or by the Awardee.

**Consultant:** An experienced individual that is trained to analyze and advise the research team in order to help making the best possible choices during execution of the research project. A consultant in a research team may evaluate the research plan and help develop a plan to meet the proposed research goals.

**Consumables and Supplies:** Items having a useful life of less than one year or unit acquisition cost of less than US\$1,000.00 and which are part of the approved budget.

**Equipment:** Items having a useful life of more than one year or a unit acquisition cost of greater than US\$1,000.00 and which are part of the approved Budget.

**Graduate Student:** A graduate student (GS) is a student enrolled for a graduate degree in a university and engaged in research that is in direct fulfillment of a requirement for that degree.

**Grant:** The funding instrument used by QNRF for the execution of material support for the NPRP.

**Indirect Budget:** Covers expenses that are not readily identified with a particular grant, contract, project function or activity, but are necessary for the general operation of the Institution and the conduct of activities it performs.

**Intellectual Property (IP):** Reference to creations of the mind including, but not limited to: inventions, literary and artistic works, symbols, names, images, and designs used in commerce. Intellectual Property is divided into two categories: Industrial property which includes inventions (patents), trademarks, industrial designs, and geographic indications of source; and Copyright which includes literary and artistic works such as novels, poems, plays, films, musical works, drawings, paintings, photographs and sculptures, and architectural designs.

**Institutional Review Board (IRB):** An Institutionally mandated committee charged with responsibility to review proposed research in order to ensure that the rights of human subjects are protected and that risk of harm to subjects is minimized as described in the ethics and guidelines of the National Health Authority (NHA) in Qatar (<http://www.nha.org.qa>)

**Key Investigator:** Member of the research team involved in the scientific development and in the execution of a project. Each key investigator (LPI, PI and Co-PI) typically devotes a specified percentage of time to the project and is considered "key personnel".

**Lead Principal Investigator (LPI):** The PI who is recognized by the key investigators as the leader and manager of the research team. He is in charge of preparation and submission of the proposal to the submitting RO in Qatar, assigning roles and responsibilities to the research team, identifying submitting and/or collaborative Institutions, etc. For proposals with a single PI, he is, by default, considered as the lead PI. In the event that the LPI is in Qatar he will also take the role of the Co-LPI by default.

**Letter of Intent (LoI):** Is a temporary, brief description of the proposal, submitted prior to the final proposal submission. It will be used for the purpose of identifying potential peer reviewers. Information included in the LoI will not be used for review or evaluation of the proposal.

**Performance Site:** A place where research is conducted.

**Principal Investigator (PI):** The individual designated in the research proposal as having ultimate responsibility for all administrative and programmatic aspects of the proposed project. For awards involving more than one PI, only one PI will be nominated as the Co-LPI.

**Project(s):** General term used to describe individual grant awards made to the principal investigators by QNRF.

**Project Year:** 12-month period starting from the date of transfer of funds to the Awardee.

**Research Misconduct:** The fabrication, falsification, or plagiarism in proposing, performing, or reviewing research, or in reporting research results. Research misconduct does not include honest error or honest differences of opinion.

**Research Office (RO):** The department within any academic, government or private research organization in or outside the State of Qatar responsible for administering research.

**Reside in Qatar:** Refers to the status of an individual who has a contract with an institution (as defined above under "Awardee") and, in addition for expatriates, a work visa in the State of Qatar valid for the entire period of the proposal.

**Sub-award:** The agreement between the Awardee in the State of Qatar and any other institution inside or outside the State of Qatar that will participate in a project under the grant award made by QNRF for the NPRP.

**Sub-awardee:** Any academic, government or private research organization in or outside the State of Qatar collaborating with the Awardee in conducting the research project.

**Submitting Institution:** Any **primary or collaborating** academic, government or private research organization in the State of Qatar, which is responsible for vetting and making the final submission of the proposal. Once awarded, it will be termed as Awardee.

**Terminal degree** is generally accepted as the highest degree in a field of study. In some countries an earned academic (or research) doctorate such as a Doctor of Philosophy is considered the terminal degree in most academic fields of study. Many professional degrees are also considered terminal degrees because they are the highest professional degree in the field. Some terminal degrees are not even doctorates --the terminal degree in applied arts, such as creative writing, graphic design and video art is usually the M.F.A. (Master of Fine Arts), not a Ph.D.; the terminal degree for an academic librarian is a M.L.S./M.L.I.S. (Master's degree in Library Science or Library and Information Sciences), and for many applied fields of study the terminal degree is an MPS (Masters of Professional Studies). In some countries an additional tier of degrees known as Higher Doctorates exist. Whilst the Ph.D. is usually undertaken at the outset of an academic career, a Higher Doctorate is usually awarded to senior academics for their overall contribution to their field and assessed on the basis of their existing published works, not on specific study for the Higher Doctorate.

## **17.2 Examples of Focused Research Areas of Priority to Qatar**

As part of the National Priorities Research Program, QNRF seeks to support a broad variety of projects. These may include basic and applied research and projects in the arts, sciences, healthcare, engineering, and humanities. Proposals are invited in all of these disciplines.

Below is a list of examples of broad research areas relevant to Qatar's national needs for this cycle of the NPRP. This list is largely based on a study completed by the Angle Technology Group into research areas relevant to Qatar and is included for the purpose of sharing research ideas with potential researchers. QNRF also encourages proposals for other research topics that the applicant believes are of importance to Qatar and can lead to:

- 1) accumulation of valuable human capital or a sustainable research capability;
- 2) answers to research questions of vital interest to Qatar, or
- 3) recognition of Qatar due to the regional or global significance of the proposed research.

After consultation with relevant stakeholders in Qatar, QNRF has developed more detailed lists that include examples of research themes and topics within certain research areas, namely: Natural sciences, Engineering and Technology, Medical and Health sciences, Agricultural sciences, Social sciences and Humanities, as outlined below.

## INDUSTRY & ENGINEERING

### – Energy/Oil & Gas/Petrochemicals

- LNG transportation and economics
- Robotics in hostile environments
- Enhanced oil recovery
- Utilization of sulfur
- Reservoir modeling
- Gas-to-Liquids process and economics
- Process heat utilization
- Gas flaring
- Alternative energy
- Fuel cells
- Energy efficiency
- Electricity demand management
- Resource sustainability
- Fluid separation
- Carbon dioxide capture from flue gas
- Production of gas hydrate as a means of gas utilization
- Sea transportation of compressed natural gas
- Improve oil & gas extraction efficiency
- Remediation (pollutants and byproducts)
- Robotics in hostile environments

### – Materials

- Corrosion
- Non-destructive testing
- Catalysis
- Advanced polymers
- Recycling
- Alloys for high salinity environment
- New materials and nanotechnology

### – Aviation Operations

- Airport Efficiency
- Logistics Management
- Training
- Failure analysis

## ENVIRONMENT

### Water/Air/Soil

#### – Water

- Supply
- Distribution
- Quality
- Security
- Desalination
- Reuse and Irrigation
- Importation
- Cooling water
- Water produced from oil and gas operation
- Waste water management, treatment, reuse

#### – Air

- Quality
- Reduce stack emission
- Ozone formation and level

#### – Soil & Ecosystem

- Coastal and terrestrial ecosystems
- High salinity marine ecology
- Geospatial systems
- Health effects of environmental pollutants
- Biodiversity
- Desertification
- Impact of land reclamation

## COMPUTER SCIENCE & INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

- Computing on a national level
- Oil and gas data mining
- Integrated GIS graphic information systems
- Cyber security
- Robotics
- Networks
- Language translation
- Wireless networking
- Media
- National Digital Roadmap

## HEALTH & LIFE SCIENCES

- Diabetes
- Obesity
- Cardiovascular diseases
- Women's and children's health
- Genomic factors on health of individuals and population
- Cancer (breast, hematological, colon, and malignancies)
- Health and Environmental Pollution

## PUBLIC POLICY & MANAGEMENT

- Economic diversification
- Econometrics
- Intellectual property protection
- Risk Management and industrial safety
- Growth management
- Urban and regional planning, sustainable cities, population dynamics
- Media
- Aviation operations
- Technology innovation and commercialization
- Advancement of Women
- Operations Research
- Enterprise risk management
- Leadership, organizational behavior, communication
- Innovation and entrepreneurship
- Management in Qatar

## EDUCATION

- E-learning
- Open systems
- Distance learning
- Virtual classrooms
- Software
- Methods and Systems

## ARTS & HUMANITIES

- Design
- Shariah
- Ethics of new technologies

## SOCIAL SCIENCES

- Regional history, culture and law
- Regional political science
- East/West understanding
- Behavior modification
- Diet and exercise
- Motivation
- Conflict resolution

## 17.3 Fields of Science And Technology Classification

### 1. Natural sciences

#### 1.1 Mathematics

- Pure mathematics, Applied mathematics; Statistics and probability;

#### 1.2 Computer and information sciences

- Computer sciences, information science and bioinformatics (*for hardware development use 2.2, - for social aspects use 5.8*);

#### 1.3 Physical science,

- Atomic, molecular and chemical physics (physics of atoms and molecules including collision, interaction with radiation; magnetic resonances; Moessbauer effect); Condensed matter physics (including formerly solid state physics superconductivity); Particles and fields physics; Nuclear physics; Fluids and plasma physics (including surface physics); Optics (including laser optics and quantum optics); Acoustics; Astronomy (including astrophysics, space science);

#### 1.4 Chemical sciences

- Organic chemistry; Inorganic and nuclear chemistry; Physical chemistry, Polymer science, Electrochemistry (dry cells, batteries, the cells, corrosion metals, electrolysis); Colloid chemistry; Analytical Chemistry;

#### 1.5 Earth and related Environmental sciences

- Geosciences, multidisciplinary; Mineralogy; Paleontology; Geochemistry and geophysics; Physical geography; Geology; Volcanology; Environmental sciences (for social aspects use 5.7);
- Meteorology and atmospheric sciences; climatic research;
- Oceanography. Hydrology, Water resources;

#### 1.6 Biological science, (*for medical use 3, and for agricultural use 4*)

- Cell biology, Microbiology; Virology; Biochemistry and molecular biology; Biochemical research methods; Mycology; Biophysics;
- Genetics and heredity (for medical genetics use 3); reproductive biology (medical aspects to be 3); developmental biology;
- Plant sciences, botany;
- Zoology. Ornithology. Entomology, Behavioural sciences biology;
- Marine biology, freshwater biology, immunology; Ecology; Biodiversity conservation
- Biology (theoretical, mathematical, thermal, cryobiology, biological rhythm), Evolutionary biology; other biological topics:

#### 1.7 Other natural sciences

### 2. Engineering and technology

#### 2.1 Civil engineering

- Civil engineering; Architecture engineering; Construction engineering, Municipal and structural engineering; Transport engineering;

#### 2.2 Electrical engineering, Electronic engineering, Information engineering

- Electrical and electronic engineering; Robotics and automatic control; Automation and control systems; Communication engineering and systems; telecommunications; Computer hardware and architecture;

### *2.3 Mechanical engineering*

- Mechanical engineering; Applied mechanics; Thermodynamics;
- Aerospace engineering;
- Nuclear related engineering; (for nuclear physics use 1.3);
- Audio engineering, reliability analysis;

### *2.4 Chemical engineering*

- Chemical engineering (plants, products); Chemical process engineering;

### *2.5 Materials engineering*

- Materials engineering; Ceramics; Coating and films; Composites (including laminates, reinforced plastics, cements, combined natural and synthetic fibre fabrics; filled composites); Paper and wood; textiles; including synthetic dyes, colours, fibres; (*for nanoscale materials, use 2,10; for biomaterials, use 2.9*);

### *2.6 Medical engineering*

- Medical engineering; Medical laboratory technology (including laboratory samples analysis; diagnostic technologies); (*for biomaterials, use 2.9 [physical characteristics of living material as related to medical implants, devices, sensors]*);

### *2.7 Environmental engineering*

- Environmental and geological engineering, geotechnics; Petroleum engineering, (fuel, oils), Energy and fuels; Remote sensing; Mining and mineral processing; Marine engineering, sea vessels; Ocean engineering;

### *2.8 Environmental biotechnology*

- Environmental biotechnology. bioremediation, diagnostic biotechnologies (DNA chips and biosensing devices) in environmental management; environmental biotechnology related ethics;

### *2.9 Industrial biotechnology*

- Industrial biotechnology, bioprocessing technologies (industrial processes relying on biological agents to drive the process) biocatalysis, fermentation; byproducts (products that are manufactured using biological material as feedstock) biomaterials, bioplastics, bio fuels, bio-derived bulk and fine chemicals. bio-derived novel materials:

### *2.10 Nano-technology*

- `Nano-materials [production and properties];
- `Nano-processes [applications on nano-scale]; (*for biomaterials, use 2.9*)

### *2.11 Other engineering and technologies*

- Food and beverages;
- Other engineering and technologies

## **3. Medical and Health sciences**

### *3.1 Basic medicine*

- Anatomy and morphology (for plant science, use 1.6); Human genetics; Immunology; Neurosciences (including psychophysiology); Pharmacology and pharmacy; Medicinal Chemistry; Toxicology; Physiology (including cytology), Pathology;

### 3.2 Clinical medicine

- Andrology, Obstetrics and gynaecology; Paediatrics; Cardiac and Cardiovascular systems; Peripheral vascular disease; Hematology; Respiratory systems; Critical care medicine and emergency medicine; Anaesthesiology; Orthopaedics; Surgery; Radiology, nuclear medicine and medical imaging; Transplantation; Dentistry, oral surgery and medicine; Dermatology and venereal diseases; Allergy; Rheumatology; Endocrinology and metabolism (including diabetes, hormones); Gastroenterology and Hepatology; Urology and nephrology; Oncology; Ophthalmology; Otorhinolaryngology; Psychiatry; Clinical neurology; Geriatrics and gerontology; General and internal medicine; other clinical medicine subjects; Integrative and complementary medicine (alternative practice systems);

### 3.3 Health Sciences

- Health care sciences and services (including hospital administration, health care financing); Health policy and services;
- Nursing; Nutrition, Dietetics;
- Public and environmental health; Tropical medicine; Parasitology; Infectious diseases; epidemiology;
- Occupational health, Sport and Fitness sciences;
- Social biomedical sciences (includes family planning, sexual health, psycho-oncology, political and social effects of biomedical research); Medical ethics; Substance abuse

### 3.4 Medical biotechnology

- Health-related biotechnology; Technologies involving the manipulation of cells, tissues, organs or the whole organism (assisted reproduction); Technologies involving identifying the functioning of DNA, proteins and enzymes and how they influence the onset of disease and maintenance of wellbeing (gene-based diagnostics and therapeutic interventions (pharmacogenomics, gene-based therapeutics); biomaterials (as related to medical implants, devices, sensors); medical biotechnology related ethics;

### 3.5 Other medical sciences

- Forensic science
- Other medical sciences

## 4. Agricultural sciences

### 4.1 Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries

- Agriculture; Forestry; Fishery ; Soil science; Horticulture, viticulture; Agronomy, plant breeding and plant protection; (*for agricultural biotechnology use 4.4*)

### 4.2 Animal and Dairy science

- Animal and dairy science (*for animal biotechnology use 4.4*)
- Husbandry; Pets;

### 4.3 Veterinary science

### 4.4 Agricultural biotechnology

- Agricultural biotechnology and food biotechnology; GM technology (crops and livestock), livestock cloning, marker assisted selection, diagnostics (DNA chips and biosensing devices for the

early/accurate detection of diseases) biomass feedstock production technologies, biopharming; agricultural biotechnology related ethics;

#### 4.5 Other agricultural sciences

### 5. Social sciences

#### 5.1 Psychology

- Psychology (including human - machine relations)
- Psychology. special (including therapy for learning, speech, hearing, visual and other physical and mental disabilities);

#### 5.2 Economics and Business

- Economics, Econometrics; Industrial relation
- Business and Management;

#### 5.3 Educational sciences

- Education, general; including training, pedagogy, didactics;
- Education, special (to gifted persons, those with learning disabilities);

#### 5.4 Sociology

- Sociology; Demography; Anthropology, ethnology,
- Social topics (Women's and gender studies; Social issues; Family studies, Social work)

#### 5.5 Law

- Law, criminology, penology;

#### 5.6 Political science

- Political science; public administration; organization theory;

#### 5.7 Social and economic geography

- Environmental sciences (social aspects); Cultural and Economic geography; Urban studies (Planning and development); Transport planning and social aspects of transport (*for transport engineering use 2.1*);

#### 5.8 Media and communications

- Journalism; Information science (social/ aspects); library science; media and socio-cultural communication;

#### 5.9 Other social sciences

- Social sciences interdisciplinary;
- Other social sciences

### 6. Humanities

#### *6.1 History and Archaeology*

- History (*for history of science and technology use 6.3, history of specific sciences to be under respective headings*); Archaeology;

#### *6.2 Languages and Literature*

- General language studies; Specific languages; General literature studies; Literary theory; Specific literatures; Linguistics

#### *6.3 Philosophy, Ethics and Religion*

- Philosophy, History and philosophy or science and technology;
- Ethics (except ethics related to specific subfields); Theology; Religious studies,

#### *6.4 Arts (arts, history of arts, performing arts, music)*

- Arts, Art history; Architectural design; Performing arts studies (Musicology, Theater science, Dramaturgy); Folklore studies;
- Studies on Film, Radio and Television;

#### *6.5 Other Areas of Humanities*

*This Frascati Classification is adapted for QNRF's use from UNESCO*

## 17.4 Code of Practice

### 1. Code of Practice for Consideration of Research Proposals

.3 This Code of Practice describes the standards of transparency by which the Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF) abides in administering applications for research awards and other proposals for support, and embodies the principles of equity, integrity and confidentiality for all who are involved in the assessment of proposals. The Code is also intended to act as guidance to Peer Reviewers in discharging the responsibilities placed on them in assessing proposals, and sets out the proper conduct expected of them.

### 2. Information for PIs

1.1 **Application procedures** For each of its competitions, QNRF issues guidelines on the information to be supplied by PIs in support of bids for funds, details of the criteria, against which the application will be assessed, and the process and timeline for assessment of the application. Any other details of the program may be clarified in publicly posted Questions and Answers on the QNRF website.

1.2 **Data Protection** PIs are required to sign the application to indicate that the information provided therein is, to the best of their knowledge, complete and accurate. PIs should be aware that information they provide will be stored and circulated as necessary for the assessment procedures to be followed. Successful PIs should be aware that the information they provide on the application form may be copied to the relevant authorized officer in their employing Institution as necessary for the award procedures to be followed, and information on the status of their award may be made available to the relevant authorized officer in their employing Institution by QNRF as necessary for the conditions of award to be fulfilled. Application forms will be retained for ten years in the case of successful applications, and five years in the case of unsuccessful applications, and may be consulted by QNRF in the event of future applications being submitted. Details of award holders (including name, Institution, project details and amount of award) will be used to compile published lists of award-holders that will be made available on the internet, and to produce statistical and historical information on QNRF awards. Signing the application form constitutes the PI's agreement to all terms, conditions, and notices contained in the Notes for PIs. Once QNRF has received the final applications, it will respect the integrity of the applications and not alter them in any way.

1.3 **Data monitoring** Personal information provided by PIs will be used for monitoring and statistical purposes only, and at no stage will it form any part of the assessment process.

1.4 **Equal opportunity** QNRF is committed to a policy of equal opportunity in that PIs will receive equal treatment, regardless of race, color, religion, gender, age, nationality (except where the conditions of the competition

specify otherwise) or disability.

**1.5 Ethics policy** QNRF requires the research it funds to be conducted in an ethical manner. The following considerations apply to all Proposals:

- 1.5.1 accurate reporting of findings and a commitment to enabling others to replicate results where possible;
- 1.5.2 fair dealing in respect of other researchers and their intellectual property;
- 1.5.3 proper employment conditions for research staff;
- 1.5.4 honesty to research staff and students about the purpose, methods and intended and possible use of the research and any risks involved;
- 1.5.5 confidentiality of information supplied by research subjects and anonymity of respondents (unless otherwise agreed with research subjects and respondents);
- 1.5.6 independence and impartiality of researchers to the subject of the research.

Additionally, proposals may raise one or more of the following considerations: the involvement of human participants; the involvement of human remains (e.g. traceable to living descendants); the use of non-human animals; destructive analysis of historic artifacts; research that may result in damage to the natural or historic environment; and the use of sensitive social, economic or political data. Wherever necessary, appropriate consent should be obtained from or on behalf of participants or others affected by the research. PIs should indicate whether their proposed research raises any special ethical issues, and whether the relevant authority has approved their application. Independent researchers without access to formal ethical scrutiny and approval should briefly describe any special ethical issues, and explain how they will be addressed.

**1.6 Assessment process** Appropriate experts judge all applications on their academic merit through a stringent process of peer review. Recommendations are passed to the relevant awarding committee for final decision on awards. QNRF will respect the integrity of the reviews and not alter them in any way.

**1.7 Outcome of applications** PIs are informed by email of the outcome of their application. Feedback, in the form of anonymous comments from external Peer Reviewers, will be provided for PIs. QNRF is, regrettably, unable to enter into correspondence concerning the decision of the awarding committee.

**1.8 Conditions of awards** Recipients of awards are made aware of the regulations governing the scheme in which they have been successful and are required to adhere to those regulations.

**1.9 Appeals** The competition for research awards is intense and many high quality applications may not receive support. All applications receive careful scrutiny by the Peer Reviewers, in the context of competing claims on available funding. Appeals may therefore not be made against the academic judgment of the QNRF's peer reviewers, panels, or Committees. The sole ground on which an appeal may be made is one of improper

decline of the Proposal based on the initial screening process. Anyone wishing to make an appeal against such a decision should write to the Director of QNRF no later than one week after notification of such a decision, citing the specific decision and setting out clearly the substantive basis of the appeal. Only CO-LPIs may appeal; they may include supporting documents as relevant.

## 2 Information for Peer Reviewers

2.1 **Confidentiality** Those who undertake the assessment of applications are required to give assurance that all information which they acquire in the discharge of their duties be kept confidential and not be transmitted to any persons other than in accordance with the prescribed procedures for the selection process. All reasonable steps must be taken to ensure that such information is kept in a secure place and, in due course, is disposed of in a secure fashion (or returned to QNRF). Information provided to Peer Reviewers in an application for funding may only be used for the purposes of evaluating the Proposal in accordance with QNRF's guidelines.

2.2 **Conflict of interest** Those who undertake the responsibility of assessing applications for funds, either in writing or through membership of awards committees, are required to declare actual or potential conflicts of interest and observe the following guidelines:

2.2.1 *References* Peer Reviewers, including members of awards committees, shall not act as referees for individual candidates in any of QNRF's grant-making programs in which they are involved in any capacity.

2.2.2 *Institutional affiliation* Peer Reviewers shall not participate in the evaluation of any proposal emanating from their own Institution.

2.2.3 *Other connections* Where an application involves a former pupil, close colleague or co-researcher, a family member, or a person with whom there is or has been a current or prior relationship, Peer Reviewers are required to declare any conflict of interest to the relevant QNRF officer so that the proposal can be redirected (in the case of research and conference grants), and Peer Reviewers, including those involved in the assessment of research posts, shall abstain from participating in the evaluation of that particular Proposal.

2.2.4 *Peer Reviewers as PIs*: Individuals who wish to apply for QNRF support during the period in which they are serving in any capacity as an Peer Reviewer must abstain from any involvement in the competition to which they are applying, that is, they may not assess or comment or vote on any application in that round of the competition.

2.2.5 If Peer Reviewers are unsure whether their ability to assess a proposal is compromised in any way, they should inform QNRF of the relevant circumstances so that guidance can be sought on individual cases.

A log of such incidents shall be retained for the regular scrutiny of QNRF's Steering Committee and / or Governing Board.

**2.3 Fair evaluation** Peer Reviewers are normally drawn from subject-specific experts within the international academic community, and it is expected that they will be able to evaluate the proposals sent to them. In cases where individual Peer Reviewers feel unable to offer an informed view on a Proposal, they may request approval from QNRF to share Proposals confidentially with other experts approved by QNRF so that they may consult about the merits of the Proposal. In all cases, Peer Reviewers must submit the request for additional assessment to the QNRF Director to ensure that the chosen advisers receive the necessary instructions about assessment criteria particular to the relevant competition and a copy of this Code of Practice. Any supplementary advisers are required to abide by its provisions.

*This Code of Practice is adapted for QNRF's use from The British Academy's Code of Practice. QNRF expresses gratitude to The British Academy for its permission to do so.*

## 17.5 Project Management and Research Products

QNRF will allow the following action to be taken during the post-award phase:

- **Modifications to Terms of a Grant:**

The submitting Institution may transfer an amount not exceeding 5% of the original budget for any one category to any other category, providing that the category receiving the re-allocation does not itself exceed 5% of its original budget and provided that the total grant amount remains unchanged.

- Prior written authorization from QNRF is required for the following substantial changes:
  - Transfer of the project effort to another Institution inside Qatar;
  - Transfer of funds between Institutions involved in the project;
  - Transfer of funds from the compensation of research staff category to other categories;
  - Extension of the grant agreement term with no additional funding;
  - Substantial change in objectives or scope
  - Change in PI, co-PI, or other project leadership

### **Research Documents and Products**

The following research products are required:

***Interim Progress Report:*** This report should provide a list of the achievements, results obtained, problems or difficulties encountered, and deviations from the original objectives or research plan in the reported period. It should be submitted by the LPI every six months from the grant year start date using QNRF's online submission system and should be vetted by the RO. Failure to submit an acceptable report may invoke Section 15.1 of the FMA.

***Annual Progress Report:*** This report should include list of the achievements, results obtained, problems or difficulties encountered, and deviations from the original objectives or research plan as stated in the submitted timeline in the reported period (one year) as well as the annual expenditure against each budget category, with supporting details and explanatory notes. It should be submitted by the LPI by the end of every grant year for RO vetting using QNRF's online submission system and should reach QNRF within one month of the end of the current grant year. Failure to submit an acceptable report may invoke Section 15.1 of the FMA.

***Final Report:*** This report should provide technical and financial aspects of the project and its final outcome. It should be submitted by the LPI both electronically and in hardcopy through his/her RO using QNRF's online submission system no later than 90 days after the end of the project's duration. Failure to submit an acceptable report may invoke Section 15.1 of the FMA.

***Research Products:*** An electronic copy and two hard copies of each publication, report, or other documented product resulting from the grant should be sent to the QNRF Program Officer for archival purposes. Research products must be in accordance with QNRF's Intellectual Property Policy, which will be available online.

***Acknowledgement of Support:*** Any publication, report, or other documented product resulting from a QNRF grant will include the following statement:

"This [publication, report, etc.] was made possible by the support of an NPRP grant from the Qatar National Research Fund. The statements made herein are solely the responsibility of the author[s]."

**Abstracts:** For each publication the Awardee will provide abstracts suitable for publication in QNRF's Bi-Annual Survey of Research (BNRS) in Qatar.

**QNRF Conferences:** The Awardee agrees to participate in QNRF workshops and conferences. During the term of the project, PIs must be reasonably available to participate in semi-annual or annual conferences or workshops organized by QNRF in order to share findings, lessons learned, and technical or policy barriers. QNRF may request presentations of progress made, if needed. Costs for participation shall be reimbursed by QNRF separately from the funding provided under this Agreement.

**Post-Completion Reports:** Grantees should also provide post-completion reports, if applicable, after the term of the grant, outlining any subsequent grant-derived accomplishments. Given ordinary lags in developing work products, e.g., publishing research findings or acquiring patents, and in establishing outcomes, it may be difficult to assess the full impact of funding without post-completion reporting.

**Communication of Research Results:** QNRF will create and maintain a publicly accessible project database with links, as appropriate, to work products. For example, a web-based database could include the following: the program or project title, the name of the Principle Investigator, the start and end dates, a summary of findings, as approved by the Principle Investigator or project leader, a list of work products, and links to final reports, publications, and other documented work products. PIs must cooperate in providing this information.

**Intellectual Property Policy:** QNRF will follow the international model for recognizing intellectual property rights and revenue sharing for research outcomes and technology transfer. Please see the QNRF website [www.qnrf.org](http://www.qnrf.org) for the Intellectual Property Policy.