



جهاز قطر للاستثمار  
QATAR INVESTMENT AUTHORITY



## Press release

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# Qatar and Germany expand deep-tech partnership with the launch of ESMT Berlin DEEP Institute and Creative Destruction Lab in Doha

- QIA and QRDI Council are supporting ESMT Berlin's opening of a DEEP Institute branch in Qatar (DEEP Qatar), building on Qatar's growing role as a hub for science-driven innovation, to support scientists, research institutions, startups, and innovators to transform new technologies into global businesses.
- Within the partnership, the DEEP Institute will open the Creative Destruction Lab's (CDL) first site in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and Asia and support a total of around 60 science-driven ventures annually.
- The Qatar Research Development and Innovation Council (QRDI) will oversee and enable the programs, ensuring alignment with national RDI priorities and integration into Qatar's broader innovation strategy.

**Announced at Web Summit Qatar 2026, in partnership with Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) and Qatar Research Development and Innovation Council (QRDI), the Institute for Deep Tech Innovation (DEEP) at ESMT Berlin has signed a landmark agreement to expand its footprint globally and strengthen the program offering in both Berlin and Doha in areas of technology transfer and innovation.**

DEEP Qatar will strategically connect the innovation ecosystems of Germany and Qatar and serve as a central hub for technology transfer, deep-tech innovation, and entrepreneurial growth. The expansion builds on ESMT's longstanding presence in Doha, including its EMBA/EMPA degree program offered in partnership with the Doha Institute for Graduate Studies since 2018.

The new institute in Qatar aims to harness Qatar's scientific and technological potential while enabling cross-border collaboration. It will be built on three core pillars that drive science-based entrepreneurship: the Creative Destruction Lab (CDL-Doha), DEEP Academy, and DEEP Pioneers.

**CDL-Doha** will be the Creative Destruction Lab's first site in the GCC and Asia. Operated by DEEP Qatar in partnership with CDL-Berlin and CDL-Paris, it will feature deep-tech streams in artificial intelligence, health, and agriculture & food. Each stream will support around 20 science-driven ventures annually, guided by internationally recognized mentors, including serial entrepreneurs, investors, corporate leaders, and researchers. Over a three-year period, CDL Doha aims to support more than 150 ventures in total. Participants will benefit from the corporate, mentoring, and investor networks available in both Doha and Berlin. Financing for CDL-Doha comes from QIA's Fund of Funds program, an initiative focused on developing the region's startup ecosystem by attracting leading VC firms to Qatar.

DEEP Academy is a highly selective entrepreneurial education program for researchers and scientists from Qatar and the wider GCC region. It will provide immersive, human-centric training to help

participants develop the skills, mindset, and confidence necessary to translate their scientific discoveries into viable startups.

DEEP Pioneers will serve as a venture-building engine. It aims to identify promising technologies, particularly from Qatari research and technology organizations, and pair them with experienced entrepreneurs to form high-performance startup teams capable of global impact. QRDI Council, as Qatar's national body for research, development, and innovation is the initiative's implementation partner. They will ensure that all activities support the country's innovation strategy, long-term goals of increasing private sector-led R&D, fostering technology transfer, and driving growth of the innovation ecosystem.

The commitment to collaborate was further strengthened during the visit of North Rhine-Westphalia's Minister President Hendrik Wüst to Qatar in 2025. Building on this momentum, the initiative brings together leading institutions such as HEC Paris in Qatar, RWTH Aachen, and Forschungszentrum Jülich, alongside QIA, QRDI Council, and ESMT Berlin.

"North Rhine-Westphalia stands for innovation, research, and entrepreneurship," said Minister President Hendrik Wüst. "Together with ESMT Berlin and partners in Qatar, we are creating a powerful platform for technology transfer that strengthens our innovation ecosystems, drives economic growth, and reinforces North Rhine-Westphalia's role as Germany's economic engine."

"This partnership is a strong signal of mutual trust, strategic collaboration, and a shared vision for the future between Germany and Qatar," said Sigmar Gabriel, former vice Chancellor and foreign minister of Germany and honorary senator of ESMT. "ESMT brings its core strengths in research, education, and entrepreneurship to this important initiative."

"By joining forces with QIA, ESMT Berlin, Creative Destruction Lab, we will significantly strengthen Qatar's role as a regional and global player in deep-tech innovation. Through these programs, we aim to attract leading global deep-tech companies, while accelerating the commercialization of the outstanding science emerging from our universities and knowledge institutes," said Eng. Omar Al-Ansari, secretary general, Qatar Research, Development, and Innovation (QRDI) Council.

#### **About ESMT Berlin**

ESMT Berlin is a leading global business school with its campus in the heart of Berlin. Founded by 25 global companies, ESMT offers master, MBA, and PhD programs, as well as executive education on its campus in Berlin, in locations around the world, online, and in online blended format. Focusing on leadership, innovation, and analytics, its diverse faculty publishes outstanding research in top academic journals. Additionally, the international business school provides an interdisciplinary platform for discourse between politics, business, and academia. ESMT is a non-profit private institution of higher education with the right to grant PhDs and is accredited by AACSB, AMBA, EQUIS, and ZEvA. It is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion across all its activities and communities. [esmt.berlin](https://www.esmt.berlin)

#### **Press contact**

Lennart Richter  
Press Spokesperson  
Phone: +49 160 552 139 3  
[lennart.richter@esmt.org](mailto:lennart.richter@esmt.org)

#### **About QIA**

Qatar Investment Authority (QIA) is the sovereign wealth fund of the State of Qatar. QIA was founded

in 2005 to invest and manage the state reserve funds. QIA is among the largest and most active sovereign wealth funds globally. QIA invests across a wide range of asset classes and regions as well as in partnership with leading institutions around the world to build a global and diversified investment portfolio with a long-term perspective that can deliver sustainable returns and contribute to the prosperity of the State of Qatar.

Media Contact: [media@qia.qa](mailto:media@qia.qa)

### **About QIA's Fund of Funds program**

The Fund of Funds program aims to develop a strong start-up and venture capital ecosystem in Qatar, attract leading venture capital funds and entrepreneurs to the region and help close the current funding gap for local and regional entrepreneurs.

The program, first announced in February 2024, will invest more than USD 1 billion in international and regional venture capital funds and will place a priority focus on the tech and healthcare sectors. The Fund of Funds program has a dual investment mandate to achieve good financial performance and deliver a positive development impact on the Qatari venture capital ecosystem.

### **About QRDI Council**

QRDI Council is a government entity with the mission to support research, development and innovation (RDI) activities as well as to develop RDI talent in Qatar. The Council strives to make Qatar a top destination for global talent and a pioneering research, innovation, and development hub with its motto "locally empowered, globally connected".

Playing a pivotal role within the Qatar National Development Strategy, the QRDI Council is actively shaping the Innovation component of the Economic Diversification goal. The Council's commitment underlines its unwavering dedication to the Qatar National Vision 2030. QRDI Council aims to make Qatar a global innovation hub and a top choice for R&D centers worldwide, seeing RDI as vital for Qatar's growth and prosperity.

To delve deeper into QRDI Council's endeavors and vision:

Visit: [www.qrdi.org.qa](http://www.qrdi.org.qa)