

New tree-planting project aims to make Qatar greener



Officials with a sapling planted in a Groasis waterboxx yesterday. The Groasis waterboxx is a device designed to help grow trees in dry areas

A pilot project to grow trees using 90% less water has been launched in West Bay and Lusail yesterday under the joint auspices of the Netherlands embassy, Doha Municipality, Dutch company AquaPro Holland and Lusail City.

A total of 160 saplings have been planted using the “Groasis waterboxx” technology. Initial results are expected in October this year when the saplings would have survived with watering only once or twice in between.

The Groasis technology, introduced by AquaPro Holland, a private company founded by inventor Pieter Hoff, is at the core of the pilot project.

“The Groasis Technology is a planting technology, and not a way of irrigation. While planting during the first year water savings go over 90% compared to any other planting method,” an official said yesterday.

“The Groasis Technology is a copy of how Mother Nature solves the problem of planting in deserts, eroded areas and on rocks,” the official explained.

“Thus we can replant man-made desert or eroded areas, restore the vegetation cover and make them productive with fruit trees and vegetables.”

The pilot project could be replicated on a wider scale in all of Qatar’s public spaces, roads, houses and parks and the country turned into a green peninsula, it was pointed out.

The Netherlands embassy in Doha, together with the Doha Municipality and Lusail City, has agreed to make Qatar greener while efficiently preserving water.

To achieve this common objective, the Netherlands government, which has earmarked water industry as a top sector, has introduced different techniques for water management and water saving to the Qatar government.

The Netherlands embassy officials have met over the past few days with officials from the Doha Municipality, the management of the city of Lusail, Qatar National Food Security Programme and the Ministry of Environment to promote the Dutch innovative water management technologies provided by Dacom and Groasis Aquapro.

“The Qatar government has welcomed the initiative and stressed on the importance of water management and saving for Qatar,” the official said.

Qatar’s insistence on finding sustainable solutions to challenges such as food risks or water shortages has resulted in opening up a highly important area of co-operation between the Netherlands and Qatar.

The official explained that there is hardly a single part of the Netherlands left where human intervention cannot be seen.

“The battle against the sea has played a major role in the design of the landscape. Without these man-made adjustments, half of the Netherlands would not only be uninhabitable, but would also be underwater.

“Despite that both countries are facing opposite challenges, Netherlands facing abundance of water and Qatar facing scarcity of water, the answer to both challenges is one: water management.

“The Dutch are pioneers in sustainable water management and are renowned for their engineering capacities in waterworks.

“As well as protecting the Dutch coast and rivers, the Dutch expertise focuses on economic water systems and water re-use technologies.”

As consumer supplies of water are under growing pressure, Qatar and the Netherlands aim to take an active approach.

“Education and raising awareness is one approach that must be used, but also introducing technologies that can save and manage the water is an essential approach,” the official added.