



# Biography of Participants



## Abdelbasset Hamrouni

Originally from the Chenini Gabès oasis in southern Tunisia, I am an engineer by training and was the founding president of ASOC in 1995 and later ACDD in 2012.

I have contributed to the preservation and improvement of living conditions for communities in vulnerable territories of southern Tunisia (oases, arid zones, etc.) facing ecological challenges such as climate change and desertification.

This was achieved through sustainable development initiatives and the rehabilitation of degraded ecosystems via agroecological practices.

In collaboration with CARI, CCFD France, and Maghreb oases associations, I was a founding member of the Oasis Sustainable Development Network (RADD0) in 2001. Within this framework, I worked towards the preservation of oases and advocated for their recognition as resilient ecosystems and heritage of humanity.

## Assane Soumaré



Assane Soumaré is a former Minister of Fisheries in Mauritania and a retired professor of Mathematics and Applications. He holds a PhD in Mathematics from the University of Paris IX Dauphine and a management degree from the University of Paris I Panthéon-Sorbonne.

Currently, he serves as the Director General of Bureau Sahel Études.

He previously oversaw the PhD program in Mathematics and Computer Science at the University of Nouakchott and held several positions as Financial Director.

He has extensive experience in consulting missions in Mauritania and countries like Mali, Comoros, and Kenya, focusing on sectoral and national strategy development and the evaluation of development projects.

In the field of environment and climate change, he contributed to the development of Mauritania's first national communication on climate change and led studies such as:

- The establishment of the National Observatory of the Coastal Zone in Mauritania.
- The assessment of the social and environmental characteristics of water bodies in the Trarza and Gorgol regions for the OMVS.
- The development of business plans for Mali's protected areas as a UNDP consultant.



## Aymen Frija

A senior researcher and country manager at ICARDA, with considerable experience in program and project management, in the fields of farm transformation, policy, and institutional economics. He has developed this expertise through his doctoral studies (2009-2011) and postdoctoral research position at Ghent University (PhD in 2009), as well as his tenure as assistant professor at Carthage University (2011-2014), Tunisia.

Since joining ICARDA in 2014 and assuming the role of Tunisia and Algeria representative in 2018, he has overseen the implementation of research projects, engaged with donors and policymakers, and spearheaded interdisciplinary research initiatives in the domains of conservation agriculture, farmers cooperatives, agroecology, foresight for food security, and sustainable intensification.



## Bruno Romagny

Bruno Romagny is an economist specialising in renewable resources, a research director (HDR) at the French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development (IRD), and a member of the Population-Environment-Development Laboratory (LPED, UMR 151 IRD – AMU) in Marseille. He is currently the deputy director of the scientific department "Societies and Globalisation" (SOC) at IRD.

His research initially focused on maritime fisheries in Côte d'Ivoire (1997-2000), followed by water and desertification issues in Tunisia (2002-2006). Since 2003, he has worked on various topics in Morocco as part of multidisciplinary research programs and partnerships.

Between 2016 and 2021, Bruno Romagny co-directed the International Joint Laboratory (LMI) "Mediterranean Terroirs," MediTer, based in Morocco and Tunisia.



## Frederic de Dinechin

UFM Senior Policy Advisor . Frederic de Dinechin joined the Union for the Mediterranean in 2023 as Policy Advisor in Water, Environment and Blue Economy to assess the latest policy developments in these areas and develop appropriate regional cooperation strategies and dialogue processes. He coordinates multi-partners efforts to prepare and implement a regional strategy of the

"Water-Energy-Food-Ecosystem (WEFE) Nexus in a Mediterranean Source to Sea Continuum". Prior to this assignment, Frederic worked in multilateral development banks including the World Bank and the Council of Europe Development Bank and had experiences in the private and public sectors in France on sustainable development. He has a broad international experience including long term assignments in North and Latin America.

He graduated from the Ecole Polytechnique in France and holds master's degrees in Geographic Information Systems, and Urban Planning and is a certified coach.



## Fatah Ameer

Dr. Fatah AMEUR is a researcher with a Ph.D. in Water Sciences, specializing in sustainable agricultural systems within Mediterranean climates. As a Research Team Leader at the Research Center in Applied Economics for Development (CREAD) in Algeria, Dr. AMEUR is dedicated to advancing the understanding of agroecology, water management, and agricultural production systems. His research employs multidisciplinary approaches to address complex environmental challenges through the Water-Food-Energy-Ecosystems Nexus.



## George Vlontzos

George Vlontzos is an Agricultural Economics Professor, Director of the Laboratory of Agricultural Economics and Consumer Behaviour, University of Thessaly GREECE. His research interests focus on, among others, economic and environmental efficiency assessment, and on consumer behavior characteristics for agricultural inputs and foodstuff. He has published several papers in journals under double blind peer review evaluation and participated in international congresses and seminars. Finally, he has participated, in competitive projects co-financed by the EU, national funding as well as private funding projects. He is the coordinator of the ALIANCE HORIZON EUROPE project, consortium member of the following HORIZON EUROPE projects NATAE and RESTPOLL, and consortium member of the following PRIMA projects GreenDriedFruits and DIONYSUS.

He was a visiting professor at the Center of Applied Optimization, University of Florida, USA. He is affiliated with IAMM CIHEAM institute of Montpellier, France, teaching consumer behaviour for agricultural products and food at the MSc program MIDAS.



## Hala Yousry

Hala Yousry is Professor of Rural Sociology, former Head of Social Studies Department, Desert Research Center, Egypt. She is Deputy Head of Rural Women committee, National Council for Women. She is the chair of National Steering Committee for Small Funds Program (GEF/UNDP). In 2012, she was nominated by UN Women to represent Egyptian and Arab women at RIO+20 and was then selected by (WMG)/UNEP to hold a speech in the plenary session. Prof. Yousry wears the academia, civil society as well as governmental hats.

She has many scientific researches and working papers on the social dimensions of desert and rural communities, Bedouin and rural women, climate change and desertification, water and food, and sustainable development issues in Egypt and the Arab States.





## Joël Teyssier

Joël Teyssier, an agro-economist engineer, has been the head of a department at the French Development Agency (AFD) office in Tunis since 2022. He oversees the design and monitoring of projects in the sectors of agriculture, water and sanitation, biodiversity, governance, and support for civil society organisations, working closely with AFD's local partners. Previously, he served for five years as a project team leader in the Agriculture, Rural Development, and Biodiversity division at AFD headquarters.

## Laura Tabet

Laura Tabet leads Nawaya - a community-based initiative serving small-scale farming families in Badrashin- a peri-urban area close to Cairo, Egypt. Nawaya promotes agroecology as a pathway for sustainable development, with a focus on women-led cooperatives in the heritage food and gastrotourism sectors. Laura is also a video producer and North Africa focal point for Access Agriculture, a leading international NGO for digital extension using farmer-to-farmer learning videos and mobile solar-powered smart projectors.



With a keen interest in food system change from the bottom-up, Laura is an active member of international civil society networks promoting ecological farming and its links to healthy and sustainable diets. Currently, Laura is working on launching Egypt's first national NGO network for agroecology knowledge sharing and policy advocacy.



## Mehdi Ben Mimoun

Mehdi Ben Mimoun is a Professor in the Department of Agronomy and Plant Biotechnology at INAT.

A Doctor in Agronomy and Ecophysiology with over 25 years of experience, these years have equipped him with the expertise to understand the agricultural sector, with a particular focus on Mediterranean fruit species. His work aims to provide producers with techniques to optimise crop yield and quality while ensuring economic competitiveness and maintaining the sustainability of production systems.

He has supervised 11 doctoral theses, 42 master's dissertations, and 93 final-year projects (PFE). Additionally, he has published over 165 scientific articles, as well as technical and outreach reference materials.

Mehdi Ben Mimoun has led and participated in 38 national and international projects and is currently the coordinator of the NATAE project for INAT.



## Mahmoud Elyes Hamza

Mahmoud Elyes Hamza is a doctor in agricultural sciences and a professor of higher agricultural education in Tunisia.

Born in Mahdia in 1958, he earned his doctorate from the National Institute of Agronomy in Paris Grignon in 1987. He began his career as an assistant at the National Institute of Agronomy in Tunisia in 1988 and became a professor in 2012, specialising in rural engineering, water, and forestry.

He has led several institutions, including the Higher Institute of Preparatory Studies in Biology and Geology, the National Institute of Agronomy in Tunisia, and the Institution of Agricultural Research and Higher Education.

From 2021 to 2023, he served as the Minister of Agriculture, Water Resources, and Fisheries. Since January 2024, he has been the director of the Regional Activity Centre for Specially Protected Areas (UNEP).

## Nihal Bounaim



Project Manager at the Crédit Agricole du Maroc Foundation for Sustainable Development.

With confirmed expertise in coordinating and managing the Foundation's initiatives and partnerships, Nihal Bounaim is a Project Manager within the Crédit Agricole du Maroc Foundation for Sustainable Development.

As a reminder, the Foundation is dedicated to promoting sustainable development in the agricultural and rural world, in partnership with associations, project leaders, researchers, and national and international experts, to carry out pilot experiments aimed at testing innovative and resource-friendly practices among farmers who are clients of the Crédit Agricole du Maroc bank.



## Rachel Bezner Kerr

Dr. Rachel Bezner Kerr is a Professor in the Department of Global Development at Cornell University, also serving at the Director of the Institute for African Development. Her area of expertise is in food security, nutrition, agroecology, climate change adaptation and social inequalities in rural communities in Africa.

She served as the Coordinating Lead Author for the 'food systems chapter' of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Assessment Report 6.



## Zohra Lili Chabaane



Zohra Lili Chabaane is a Professor of Rural Engineering, Water, and Forestry at the National Agronomic Institute of Tunisia (INAT). She holds dual engineering and master's degrees from INAT and ENSA-Rennes (1989) and a PhD in Physics and Remote Sensing (1993) from ENSA-Rennes. Since 1997, she has taught Remote Sensing, GIS, Spatial Analysis, and Water Resources Management at INAT.

An expert in remote sensing and GIS for agricultural and water resources management, she has contributed to over 33 international projects, coordinated several, and published 88 scientific articles. She has also supervised 13 PhD theses and 38 master's dissertations.

Notable roles:

- Vice President of the University of Carthage (2014–2017)
- Head of the GREEN-TEAM laboratory (2017–2024)
- Head of the Rural Engineering, Water, and Forestry Department (2020–2024)
- Coordinator of the GEOMAG master's program (since 2018)

She is a scientific advisor for Tunisia's Horizon Europe program and has been recognized as one of six Tunisian women leaders in technology (2023). In 2024, she received the honorary prize for scientific excellence from the Ministry of Agriculture. She is a member of the French Academy of Agriculture (2025) and currently serves as President of the Institution of Agricultural Research and Higher Education (since August 2024).