

INTRODUCTORY WORKSHOP OF THE FASTER PROJECT

As part of the FASTER “Farmers’ Adaptation and Sustainability in Tunisia through Excellence in Research” project, the INRGREF organized on January 9, 2019 an introductory information and consultation workshop on the approach to be taken in order to achieve the objectives of the project.

This was an excellent opportunity to bring together a total of 62 participants from a broad panoply of the agricultural sector, mainly from research, development and higher education. This workshop provided an opportunity to immerse in the context of the project and to discuss possible collaborations and implications in “FASTER” activities by exchanging their needs and expectations.

The plenary session formed a broad presentation of FASTER through four presentations successively provided by members of the INRGREF team of the project. A general overview of the project was presented by the coordinator (S. Jebari). Three presentations have followed (1) Capacity Building (H. Askri), (2) Innovation in Natural Resource Management (S. Hannafi) and (3) Excellence in Research (I. Taghouti). This FASTER framework was followed by a Q & A session on clarifications on the project, the contribution of the partners and on the Farm Advisory System (FAS).



The participants were divided into four groups according to themes: water, soil, forest, natural resources and climate change to debate and gather their thoughts on: (i) the difficulties that may hinder the promotion of research and researchers at the level of Tunisian institutions (ii) the points to be addressed for the implementation of the Farm Advisory System (FAS). During this group work, a questionnaire was distributed to participants to identify the expectations of INRGREF researchers, engineers, doctoral students and students as well as key partners of the FASTER project. The four groups structured their responses to the research challenges into four areas:

(1) Legislative / Policy; (2) Means and Skills; (3) Socio-Economics; and (4) Governance.

The objectives of the FAS formulated can be summarized as follows:

(1) Effective management of the project, **(2)** human resource development, **(3)** establishment of a living lab and **(4)** networking. The final session of the workshop preceding the speaking session and the closing was reserved for the restitution of the group work and the gathering of the opinions of the participants about this workshop in a general way. The work accomplished greatly stimulated the interest and involvement of the participants. Indeed, they expressed a strong predisposition to collaborate for the advancement and success of the FASTER project given its positive impact on innovation and excellence in the field of research in Tunisia.

Project Coordinator
Sihem Jebari, PhD

National Research Institute
for Rural Engineering, Water
and Forestry
Box 10, 2080 Ariana, Tunisia
sihem.jebari@gmail.com

Communication & Media
Vision Communication

Carrer de Rafael Campalans, 166,
08903 L'Hospitalet de Llobregat,
Barcelona, Spain
info@vision-communication.org

Press release by H. Askri and I.
Nsiri (FASTER project members)
faster.project.inrgref@gmail.com



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