

## **FASTER FINAL CONFERENCE**

FROM TWINNING TO  
EXCELLENCE HUB  
FOR TUNISIAN FARM  
ADVISORY SYSTEM

# **AGENDA**

Wednesday, October 20

## FASTER IN A NUTSHELL

Farmers' Adaptation and Sustainability in Tunisia through Excellence in Research (FASTER) is a Twinning Project funded by European Commission (Directorate-General for Research and Innovation) through Horizon 2020 funding programme. FASTER aims to reinforce the research and knowledge transfer capacity of INRGREF related to innovative land and water management for climate change adaptation and its implementation through the use of Farm Advisory Systems (FAS).

FASTER has developed a sustainable framework for research capacity building, international networking, and FAS practice to achieve its mission.

The consortium gathers seven European and Tunisian partners: two EU partners of established scientific excellence in the topic, CREAM and the Lund University, have been ensuring the strengthening of researchers and technicians of INRGREF and the associated IRESA (the Institution for Agricultural Research and Higher Education) centres. Europe for Business evaluated the experience from the economic perspective. At the same time, Vision Communication ensured public awareness, dissemination of results, and training support. Finally, AVFA (the Agriculture Extension and Training Agency) serves as a liaison with policymakers and related stakeholders, making sure to integrate the FASTER results into national policies.

## CONCEPT

“From Twinning to Excellence Hub for Tunisian Farm Advisory System” represents an opportunity for **FASTER Consortium** to share the Project findings and main outputs after three years of intense work; enhancing research, developing digital capacity building and networking instruments as the e-learning platform and the FASTER Excellence Hub.

The event will have a hybrid format consisting of the following sessions:

- 🌿 A **morning session**, organised online (English language), where synergies and clustering activities with ongoing initiatives will be showcased to foster innovation ecosystems in Tunisia and beyond, creating better linkages between academia, business, and government.
- 🌿 An **afternoon session**, organised in presence in Tunisia (French language), where local stakeholders will have the possibility to visit the FASTER Exhibition presenting the main outputs and findings of the project. There will be moments of discussion and stakeholder engagement. Participants could provide their feedback and testimonial on fostering rural development and the empowerment of Tunisian research about natural resources management and climate change.

## SPEAKERS MORNING SESSION



**Leonardo Piccinetti** holds a BSc in Economics at the University of Rome (ITA) with a special focus on water management in Mediterranean countries. He finished his Master in European Studies at Sussex European Institute at University of Sussex (UK).

Leonardo is currently studying research degree in Creative Business Management and at the University of Chester United Kingdom at Chester Business School in Warrington. He is an independent evaluator for the H2020 programme.



**Marios Markakis** is an experienced scientist with a PhD in biology. As Research Policy Officer of the European Commission Directorate General of Research and Innovation, he serves the European Union by advancing research and innovation in Europe and beyond while contributing to evidence based policy making. This aims at creating a positive impact on our society, economy and environment.



**Sihem Jebari** holds a Ph.D in Water Resources from Lund University (SWE). Her original background is Agricultural Engineering. She has been working as a researcher at the Tunisian National Research Institute for Rural Engineering, Water and Forestry (INRGREF) since 1999. Her research work is focused on semiarid and arid areas. It involves water erosion modelling, human activities & climate change impacts on water availability, agricultural environment degradation, reservoir siltation and transboundary water management.

Besides, while participating in international projects Sihem's research commitment dealt with "Hydropolitics, Security and International Law", "River Basin Adaptation Plans" and "Participatory approaches". Currently, she is investigating new methodologies and applying relevant techniques to enable the drawing of adapted scenarios for better Integrated Water Resources Management in the Mediterranean river basins.



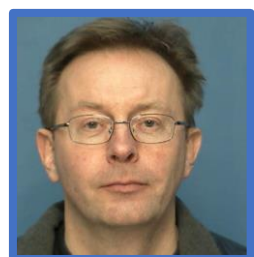
**Wouter Vanneuville** holds a MSc in Geography at Gent University (BEL), expert on climate change adaptation, he was a Researcher and Policy Theme Manager in Integrated Water Policies for the Flanders Government (BEL).

For the last 4 years he has been working as Expert and Project Manager in Climate Change Adaptation at the European Environmental Agency (EEA) in Copenhagen (DEN).

As an expert on flood risk management, and thanks to his experience with policies, as he says, he is "trained in looking at the overall picture", taking care and focusing both on social and environmental impacts of economic activities.

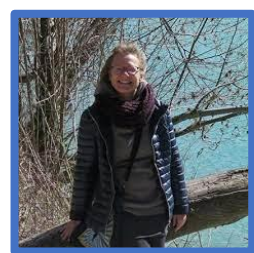


**Charles Bestwick** holds an Honorary (Visiting) Professorship at Robert Gordon University (UK). He is a Principal Investigator at the Rowett Institute, University of Aberdeen (UK). He is SEFARI Gateway's director; the Gateway is the knowledge exchange and impact hub for SEFARI. I have also been a SEFARI Advisor working across research themes and knowledge exchange systems to support our impact agenda.



**Ronny Berndtsson** holds a MSc in Civil Engineering at Lund University (SWE), a PhD in Spatial hydrological processes in a water resources planning perspective at Lund University.

He is a full professor and deputy director of Centre for Advanced Middle Eastern Studies, Lund University. He has more than 35 years of experience in university teaching and research in water resources management, water supply and sanitation, socioeconomic hydrology, and climate change effects on sustainable development. He has acted as UNDP consultant during several occasions regarding socioeconomic development and water issues. At present, he is a coordinator of strategic research areas the multidisciplinary Centre for Advanced Middle Eastern Studies at Lund University.



**Annelies Broekaman** holds a degree in Agricultural Engineer at University of Bologna (ITA), a PhD in Agricultural Economics at University of Bologna, and a MSc in Integrated Water Management at University of Zaragoza (ESP). She is a consultant on water management policy analysis and has senior field expertise promoting innovative governance practices at local, national and international level, with a particular interest in the Mediterranean region. In 2013 she joined the Water and Global Change Research team at CREAM, with whom she collaborated in 8 projects (FP7, H2020 and national funds), focusing on the creation of multi-actor platforms for the co-design of adaptation solutions. Responsible for the implementation of innovative tools and methods in different case study areas, she uses lessons learned from developing competitive international projects.



**Zied Boulashi** holds a degree in Marine Environmental Engineering at the National Agronomic Institute of Tunis (TUN).

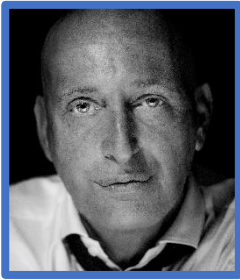
With over 17 years of experience in Technical and Vocational Education and Training, at national and international level, he has been in charge of international cooperation coordination at the Extension and Agricultural Training Agency of Tunisia (AVFA) for the past 7 years.



**Thouraya Souissi**, holds a MSc in Plant Pathology and PhD in Weed Science at the University of Missouri, (USA), is a Professor at the National Institute of Agronomy of Tunisia. She is the Director of Pedagogical affairs at the Institution of Agricultural Research and Higher Education (IRESA) where she leads and coordinates projects on and quality assurance and reforms of academic programs in agricultural higher education.

Souissi's main area of research is integrated weed management in field crops with emphasis on developing weed biocontrol methods to reduce herbicide use in crops and evolution of herbicide resistance in weed species.





**Richard Elelman** holds a PhD in Government and Political science at Northumbria University (UK).

Former teacher, journalist, actor and director of theatre, he is currently the Head of Politics of the Catalan Technology Centre (EURECAT) (ESP), the Principal Investigator of the Social Engagement Platform of the United Nations World Water Quality Alliance and co-creator of the European Commission's RENAISSANCE approach to Science-Culture-Environmental diplomacy.

Dr Elelman has a wide international experience across Europe, Asia and the Middle East.

His research focuses on International Relations, Urban Politics and Science, Citizen Engagement, Technology and Environmental Politics and Science Diplomacy.



**Caterina Marinetti** holds a MSc Degree in Civil Engineer, Water Resources Management, from Delft University of Technology (The NLD) - complemented by master studies in Cultural Anthropology and Development Sociology at Leiden University; and a BSc in Environmental Engineering from University of Rome La Sapienza (ITA) with one year abroad at Granada University (ESP).

Currently working as Scientific Project Manager at the Institute for Environmental Studies (IVM), Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam, for the EU-funded Marie Curie Innovative Training Network 'NEWAVE' (Next Water Governance). At IVM, Caterina recently started her PhD, investigating the status quo of tertiary educational programmes that focus on water governance, with particular interest for aspects such as inter- and trans-disciplinarity, co-production, transformative and transgressive learning, and frameworks such as the UN Education for Sustainable Development.



**Naomi Timmer** holds a BA in Religious Studies and MA in Political Science at Leiden University (NLD). She has been active for almost 10 years in the water management sector as a programme manager for several personal development programmes in the Dutch water sector.

Timmer applied her unique multidisciplinary vision to develop the European Junior Water Programme and started many collaborations to create and share our knowledge within a European context, during the last 2 years and a half. She is focused on make connections and bring the water sector a step forward in supporting the human factor in working in water.



**Miklas Scholz** holds a MSc in Water Resources Engineering, PhD in Civil Engineering, PgC in Higher Education Practice, and DSc in Civil Engineering.

He is a Professor in Water Resources Engineering at Lund University (SWE) and holds the Chair in Civil Engineering at University of Salford (UK) where he serves as a Professor and the Head of the Civil Engineering Research Group. He is also a Distinguished Professor at Johannesburg University (ZAF) and the Central University of Technology (ZAF).

Scholz's main research areas are treatment wetlands, integrated constructed wetlands (ICW), sustainable flood retention basins (SFRB), permeable pavement systems, decision support systems, ponds and capillary suction time.



**Attilio Toscano** holds a PhD in Environmental Engineering at University of Palermo (ITA), a MSc in Water Resources Management at Scuola Superiore di Catania (ITA)

He is full professor of agricultural hydraulics and watershed protection at the University of Bologna (ITA). His research activity is mainly focused on sustainable agricultural water management, precision irrigation, NBSs (Constructed wetlands) for wastewater treatment and wastewater reuse in agriculture. He was/is involved in several national and European projects as WP leader or coordinator (WATERAGRI, SWAMP, MEDIWAT, CHEM-FREE, WATER4CROPS, FIT4REUSE, GREEN4WATER, INCIPIT, VALUE CE-IN, TARANTO). He is advisor of national agencies and ministries.



**Philippe Ker Rault** holds a PhD. in Water Management at Cranfield University (UK), a MSc. in Civil & Environmental Engineering at Imperial College London (UK), and a DMS at The Nottingham Trent University (UK). Both Engineer and Social Scientist, his professional experiences are on the international market as senior researcher (Europe, MENA, Africa), as export manager for wastewater treatment works and subsidiary Director for a SME. He also worked in war zone and post conflict area as drinking water programme manager for Humanitarian NGOs.

His Thesis explore which type of stakeholders' participation is perceived appropriate for which type of water related challenges: societal complexity within the context of the EU Water Framework Directive, governance & conflict resolution.



**Gustavo Perez** holds a PhD in Chemistry (Analytical chemistry applied to the research on environmental availability of heavy metal in polluted sites and influence of anthropogenic contribution) at University of Barcelona (ESP).

He works as Project Manager at GTS (Group of Separation Techniques in Chemistry, PRUAB), responsible for analytical testing services the Group offers to SMEs and public administration, also dealing with the coordination and management of R+D projects at several levels:

- International (FP5, FP6 and FP7 (ENV, NMP, INCO); AECID, ALPHA, INTEREG, TEMPUS)
- National (AACC, AAIL, I+D+i, INFRASTRUCTURE, CDTI, PROFIT, PTA, CONSOLIDER, ISCIII)
- Local autonomous communities (VALTEC, CREIXEMENT, PEIR, LIDEREU, CONES, CONPT, SGR).
- Collaborative agreements with private companies



**Cristina Cruz** holds a Ph.D. in Ecology and Plant Systematics from the University of Lisbon (PRT), and she is currently leading the Plant - Soil Ecology (PSE) research group of cE3c. She is a Lecturer of Plant Biology at the University of Lisbon.

Her current research is driven by three overarching objectives: i) maintain long-term ecological experiments in order to collect data on the response of Mediterranean ecosystems to changes in resource availability in time and space; ii) to understand the role of soil ecology on plant productivity and eco- and agro-systems sustainability; iii) to engineer the rhizosphere of crop plants in order to obtain higher stress tolerant plants, with increased nutrient use efficiency, and nutritional value. She is the Project Manager of the H2020-funded twinning project SOILdarity.



**Sondos Njoumi** holds an BS in Agro-Food Engineering, and a PhD in Nutrition and Public Health from the French Institute of Research for Development of Montpellier(FRA) in cooperation with INAT. She also has background in agronomic sciences. She has served for one year as Assistant Researcher providing lectures for engineering students at INAT.

Among her professional engagements, she has worked over three years in the sustainable development project 'Medina', supported by the French National Research Agency (ANR), assessing dietary and nutritional shifts and related environmental changes in the Mediterranean, addressing aspects like land use and degradation, water scarcity, environment pollution, biodiversity loss, and climate change.

Sondos also liaised with community leaders and contributed to mobilizing public- and private-sector resources.

## SPEAKERS AFTERNOON SESSION



**Zouhair Nasr** holds a PhD from Paris Sud University (FRA) in plant ecology. Between 1991 and 2007 he has been assistant then responsible for agricultural research at INRAT (TUN) in the field of efficient water management in agriculture and bioclimatology.

Since 2007 he is the director of agricultural research at INRGREF and participates in several national and international projects.

Zouhair is one of the main tunisian experts in the development of climate change adaptation strategies for agriculture and ecosystems at national level. He is also supporting and engaging with a network of farmers in Cap Bon (TUN) on water management improvement.



**Hichem Ben Salem** earned a PhD in Animal Nutrition from the University of Dijon (FRA). He is currently the Director General of the Institution of Agricultural Research and High Education (IRESA) of Tunisia. With a 30-year career as scientist at INRA-Tunisia, Prof. Ben Salem is in charge of research programs focusing on the potential use of alternative resources in livestock feeding and their effects on meat and milk production and quality. He also investigated livestock response to different nutritional and environmental stressors and the potential improvement of the efficiency and sustainability of production systems in the areas. The H-index of Pr. Ben Salem is currently 26 (Scopus database). He is member of the national committee on adaptation to and mitigation of climate change.



**Chedly Abdelly** is Doctor of Science, Professor, and Research Director in Plant Ecophysiology. He is CEO of the Tunisian National Agency for the advancement of scientific research (ANPR). His work focuses on the characterization and ecological and economic valuation of extremophile plants (halophytes, xerophytes) for: the rehabilitation of marginal areas, the identification of tolerant species and / or of interest for fodder, rangelands, edible and industrial oils, biomass, and biomolecules. Presidential Prize for best researcher, best laboratory; African Union Prize for Scientific Excellence. Member of the African Academy of Sciences and of the Tunisian Academy of Sciences, Letters and Arts.





**Semia Cherif** holds a PhD at the University of Strasbourg (FRAe) and has started her research activities in 1990 as a Full Professor in the Department of Environment at ISSBAT, University of Tunis El Manar (TUN).

She presently does research in Atmospheric Science, Climate Change and Water Science using Analytical Chemistry, Biological Chemistry, Statistics, Modelling and Artificial Intelligence.

Her innovative research publications allowed her to receive the Scientific Research Prize for The Environmental Technologies of the President of the Republic in 2009 (Tunisia) and the prestigious McKee Medal for GroundWater Protection, Restoration or Sustainable use of the Water Environment Federation in 2013 (USA) as well as the North-South 2020 Prize of the Council of Europe (within the network of Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change MedECC).



**Mohamed Zmerli** is Deputy Director at the Ministry of Local Affairs and Environment, Tunisia.

He currently works as National Focal Point of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change.



**Mohamed Naoufel Ben Haha** holds an engineering degree specializing in agro-economics from the Agronomic and Veterinary Institute Hassan II in Rabat (Morocco). He is currently Director of Rural Development at the Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Fisheries (MARHP). He is responsible for coordinating the adaptation program to climate change in vulnerable territories of Tunisia, funded by AFD in 5 governorates in the north and center. He has 26 years of professional experience in the field of territorial and rural development based on participatory and partnership approaches within the MARHP. Previously, he held the position of coordinator of the "Framework Funding for Watershed Management" project, the main objective of which is the sustainable management of natural resources and the improvement of living conditions in 10 governorates.



**Hichem Khemiri** currently works as General Director of the Development Office Sylvo pastoral de Nord-Ouest (ODESYANO). Having practical experience on participatory and integrated projects applied in the socio-economic context of North-West Tunisia, at the level of local planning, execution and monitoring-evaluation. Socio-professional partner for the training of professional masters' students, in sustainable territorial development.

Medallist (presidential prize) in gender approach for the benefit of rural farms, short-term independent expert in good agricultural practice (agro-forestry) on behalf of the DS / SCM / FAO project.

He is member of the INGREF "Quality" committee.

# AGENDA

## MORNING SESSION

20 October 2021 - 09:30-13:00 (GMT+2) ONLINE

**SESSION CHAIR: Leonardo Piccinetti, Europe For Business (EFB)**

09:30 09:40	<p>Welcoming words by <a href="#">Marios Markakis</a> European Research Executive Agency - Future Society - Widening Participation EA.C.3.002</p> <p><i>Mr Markakis, representing the European Research Executive Agency, will introduce the Funding Programme, welcoming all the Participants</i></p>
09:40 9:55	<p>Presentation of the FASTER project by <a href="#">Sihem Jebari</a>, National Research Institute for Rural Engineering, Water and Forestry   INRGREF</p> <p><i>PhD Jebari, FASTER Project Coordinator from INGRES, will start the first part of the Morning session, introducing the project and its main topics.</i></p>
09:55 10:20	<p>Key-note speeches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🍃 <i>“Climate Change Adaptation”</i> by <a href="#">Wouter Vanneuville</a>, European Environment Agency   EEA</li> <li>🍃 <i>“The role of Scotland’s SEFARI Institutes, Centres of Expertise and strategic research on the road to COP26 and beyond”</i> by <a href="#">Charles Bestwick</a>, Scottish Environment, Food and Agriculture Research Institutes   SEFARI</li> </ul>
10:20 10:40	<b>BREAK</b>
10:40 11:20	<p>FASTER key results and lessons learnt</p> <p><i>The second part of the Morning session will resume from PhD Jebari FASTER introduction to better explain and display the main project outcomes, deliverables and results, presented directly by the Work Package Leaders.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>🍃 <b>WP3 Capacity Building</b>, presented by Professor <a href="#">Ronny Berndtsson</a>, Lund University</li> <li>🍃 <b>WP4 Living FAS Lab</b>, presented by PhD <a href="#">Annelies Broekman</a>, CREAM</li> <li>🍃 <b>WP5 Sustainability of excellence</b> presented by <a href="#">Zied Bouslahi</a>, Agriculture Extension and Training Agency   AVFA and <a href="#">Thouraya Souissi</a>, Tunisian Institution of Agricultural Research and High Education   IRESA</li> </ul>
11:20 12:45	<p>Key results from other European and international initiatives</p> <p>Moderated by <a href="#">Richard Elelman</a>, Technology Center of Catalonia   EURECAT</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>NEWAVE presented by scientific project manager <a href="#">Caterina Marinetti</a></li><li>European Water Junior Programme presented by Director <a href="#">Naomi Timmer</a></li><li>WaterAgri presented by <a href="#">Miklas Scholz</a>, Lund University</li><li>FIT4REUSE presented by <a href="#">Attilio Toscano</a>, University of Bologna   Unibo</li><li>MEDFORWATER presented by <a href="#">Philippe Ker Rault</a>, KER</li><li>PHEMAC presented by project manager <a href="#">Gustavo Perez</a>, Autonomous University of Barcelona   UAB</li><li>SOILdarity presented by project manager <a href="#">Cristina Cruz</a>, University of Lisbon</li><li>Global Water Partnership Med Programme presented by programme officer <a href="#">Sondos Njoumi</a></li></ul>
12:45 13:00	Closing remarks by <a href="#">Richard Elelman</a>

# AFTERNOON SESSION

20 October 2021 - 14:00-18:30 (GMT+1) TUNISIA

**SESSION CHAIR:** Zouhair Nasr, National Research Institute for Rural Engineering, Water and Forestry | INRGREF

14:00 14:10	Welcoming words	
14:10 15:30	<p>Visit of the FASTER Exhibition</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>📁 <b>ATLAS for Adaptation to Climate change &amp; FAS Living Lab Factsheets:</b> presenting climate change adaptation measures and solutions co-created by the stakeholders engaged in the project's Living Lab;</li> <li>📁 <b>Excellence Hub:</b> presenting the platform, supporting and providing guidance to participants with their enrolment;</li> <li>📁 <b>Video Gallery:</b> watching the videos produced within the project</li> </ul>	
15:30 16:30	<p><b>Parallel Sessions</b></p> <p><i>Roundtables with 10 minutes of presentations from each speaker, followed by discussion and Q&amp;A with the participants</i></p>	
	<p><b>Roundtable 1: European funding for better rural development</b></p> <p>Smallholder farmers often face challenges, such as limited access to financial services and lack of training and support, which would enable them to advance further their own development. Opportunities, frameworks, processes and management strategies to reach EU funding will be described by the leading institutions with broad experience. The panellists will focus, among others, on the socio-economic impacts related to the funding schemes presented. Finally, the panellists will discuss crucial findings on climate change while considering new adaptation solutions.</p>	<p><b>Roundtable 2: Innovative natural resources management in future climate conditions</b></p> <p><i>Future climate conditions push managers in many sectors, especially agricultural ones, to consider concrete adaption measures. The latter need to be mainly technical, practical and societal when dealing with natural resources. To do so, Innovation is crucial, and all the panellists will share their views and experiences covering a wide range of implementations.</i></p> <p><i>Consequences, vulnerabilities and ways to face climate change will be presented along with success stories</i></p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>«European fund for research on the mainstreaming of climate change into rural development in Tunisia» by <b>Hichem Ben Salem</b>, Director-General of the Tunisian Institution of Agricultural Research and High Education   IRESA</li> <li>«Research at the service of the socio-economic world: knowledge transfer tools» by <b>Chedly Addelly</b>, Director-General of the National Agency for the Scientific Research Promotion   ANPR</li> <li>«Key findings on Climate change: an output of the first Mediterranean Assessment Report» by <b>Semia Cherif</b>, member of the Editorial Committee of the Mediterranean Experts on Climate and Environmental Change network   MedECC</li> </ul>	<p><i>about using a participatory approach and developing living labs.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>«National challenges and priorities in the field of climate change» by <b>Mohamed Zmerli</b>, Head of section, Tunisian Ministry of Environment and Sustainable Development</li> <li>«Co-construction at the service of territorial development» by <b>Naoufel Ben hah</b>, Deputy Director of Planning for the Tunisian Ministry of Agriculture, Water Resources and Fisheries</li> <li>«Natural resources management in the socio-economic context of the mountainous areas of North-Western Tunisia» by <b>Hichem Khemiri</b>, General Director of the Office of Sylvo-Pastoral development of the Northwest   ODESYPANO</li> </ul>
16:30 17:00	COFFEE BREAK	
17:00 18:00	<p><b>Testimonials</b></p> <p><i>Invited stakeholders will have the opportunity to share their perspectives and commitment towards the work carried out within the project.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extensionists and farmers</li> <li>Decisions makers and project partners</li> <li>Lab leaders and scientists</li> </ul>	
18:00 18:30	Closing remarks	

