



Under the Patronage and in the Presence of
H.E. Dr. Nizar Hani Minister of Agriculture of Lebanon

FIRST CIHEAM LEBANESE ALUMNI INTERNATIONAL SEMINAR IN LEBANON

24 SEPTEMBER 2025 | RADISSON BLU HOTEL - VERDUN, BEIRUT, LEBANON

**Investing in Youth for Sustainable Agrifood Systems :
Linking Education to Job Opportunities & Sector Priorities**



**CIHEAM
BARI**



**CIHEAM
CHANIA**



**CIHEAM
MONTPELLIER**



**CIHEAM
ZARAGOZA**



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SPEAKERS PRESENTATION



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H.E Nizar HANI

Minister of
Agriculture

Republic of
Lebanon

Dr. Nizar Hani has been serving as Minister of Agriculture in the Republic of Lebanon since February 8, 2025. He brings extensive experience in the fields of environmental protection, protected areas management, and sustainable natural resource governance.

From 2010 to 2025, Dr. Hani served as Director of the Shouf Biosphere Reserve, Lebanon's largest nature reserve. He also acted as an advisor to the Protected Areas Department at the Ministry of Environment, Water and Agriculture in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, where he contributed to the development of the "30x30 Vision Roadmap for Pre taught as a lecturer at the faculties of agriculture at both Saint Joseph University and the Lebanese University, where he played a vital role in training new generations of professionals in the agricultural and environmental sectors.

In 2021, Dr. Hani was elected Vice Chair of the World Commission on Protected Areas (WCPA) of the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) for the North Africa, West Asia, and Middle East region. Since 2023, he has also served as Advisor on Natural World Heritage to the Permanent Delegation of Lebanon to UNESCO.

Dr. Hani has received several prestigious awards and honors in recognition of his work, including the Michel Batisse Award from UNESCO's Man and the Biosphere (MAB) Programme (2011), the Kenton Miller Award from the IUCN World Commission on Protected Areas (2020) and the Order of the Star of Italy – Knight Rank, awarded by the President of the Italian Republic in 2021 for his contributions to environmental protection and international cooperation.

He holds a Ph.D. in Agricultural and Food Sciences from the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK), awarded with highest distinction and the committee's commendation, as well as a Master's degree in Agricultural Economics from the Lebanese Universityotected Areas".

Between 2014 and 2020, he held the position of Senior Environmental Specialist at the Lebanese Ministry of Environment, overseeing the management of the Shouf Biosphere Reserve. He taught as a lecturer at the faculties of agriculture at both Saint Joseph University and the Lebanese University, where he played a vital role in training new generations of professionals in the agricultural and environmental sectors.



**H.E Kamal
SHEHADI**

Minister of
Information
Technology &
Artificial Intelligence

Republic of
Lebanon

Dr. Kamal Sameer Shehadi has been serving as Lebanon's Minister of State for Technology and Artificial Intelligence since February 2025. He is a successful leader in the telecommunications and digital industries in the Middle East and North Africa and has worked extensively in Europe, Africa, India and Pakistan. He is a graduate of Harvard College in Economics (BA, cum laude) and Columbia University (PhD), and has taught in both institutions as well as the American University of Beirut. Since 2024, he has been a Partner in THX Ventures, a venture-building partnership, and an advisor to a number of technology companies. He is also a Member of the Board of Trustees of the Lebanese American University (LAU). From 2010 to 2023, he served as Chief Legal and Regulatory Officer and then Chief Strategy Officer (International) for e & Group (formerly Etisalat), a UAE-based telecommunications and technology company, one of the biggest telecommunications companies in the world.

In 2014-2016, he was Chairman of the Chief Policy and Regulatory Officers' Group at GSMA, an association of the world's telecommunications operators. In 2007- 2010, he was Chairman of the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of the Republic of Lebanon, the first independent regulatory authority established in Lebanon which set a new standard in transparency and efficiency in managing public affairs, generally, and telecommunications, specifically, and which issued all the telecommunications regulations and licenses and designed a competitive and transparent auction for the privatization and licensing of the mobile operators in 2008. In 2009, he was Chairman of the Global Symposium for Regulators at the International Telecommunications Union.

Earlier in his career, he was Advisor to the World Bank on privatization and private participation in infrastructure in the Middle East and North Africa. He was also Advisor to the World Bank on privatization and private participation in infrastructure in the Middle East and North Africa, and executed projects in ten countries. He was a founding member of the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE) and a board member of the Lebanese Transparency Association (LTA). He served as Director of Research at the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies, in 1995 -1997. He is the author of books and articles on public finances and financial reforms in Lebanon and on the Euro-Mediterranean Partnership. He has advised governments and investors in private infrastructure projects, including the operations and maintenance of the container terminal of the Port of Beirut, and the policy and regulations for the liberalization and regulation of civil aviation in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. He is a recipient of many academic awards from Harvard University, Columbia University, and the International Institute for Strategic Studies, London.



**Wafaa EL
DIKAH HAMZE**

**CIHEAM Vice
President and
Delegate of
Lebanon**

Mrs. Wafaa El Dikah Hamzé is an agriculture and rural development specialist with over 20 years of professional experience. She is Senior Adviser for Policy & Cooperation at the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture, Delegate of Lebanon to CIHEAM, and Vice President of its Governing Board since August 2023. Recently, she was elected Member of the FAO Committee on Constitutional and Legal Matters, representing the Near East Region.

She has promoted regional networking and led policy dialogues in agriculture, food security, social protection, farmer's rights, and women's empowerment across Lebanon, the Arab, and Mediterranean Regions. She has authored and co-authored over 30 publications, strategies, and action plans on agrifood systems, sustainable development, knowledge transfer, and gender equality. She also played a key role in establishing the Arab Forum for Rural Advisory Services (AFRAS) and serves on its Technical Advisory Committee. From 2013 to 2016, she worked with UN-ESCWA, UN Women, and the League of Arab States, focusing on sustainable development and gender equality. In 2004, she became Lebanon's first female minister, serving as Minister of Parliamentary Affairs.

She previously held senior roles with Italian Cooperation, the EU, FAO, IFAD, and the World Bank. Holds BSc and MSc degrees in Agriculture and Rural Development from the American University of Beirut, she pursued her postgraduate training in the Netherlands and Germany



Frida KRIFCA

President

CIHEAM
Governing
Board

Frida Krifca is the President of the CIHEAM (International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies) Governing Board, leading efforts to strengthen sustainable agriculture, food security, and rural development across the Mediterranean. She previously served as Albania's Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development (2021–2023), where she oversaw a sector employing one-third of the population, achieving record export growth and doubling government support for farmers.

With over 24 years of experience spanning international development, financial services, and policy reform, she has held leadership roles with USAID/FSVC and Albania's Agriculture and Rural Development Agency.

A Fulbright Scholar with an MBA from the University of Akron and executive training at Harvard, she is recognized for her strategic vision, diplomatic acumen, and ability to build partnerships that drive long-term impact.



**Teodoro
MIANO**

Secretary
General

CIHEAM

Teodoro Miano has served as Secretary General of CIHEAM in Paris since March 2023.

He is Full Professor of Agricultural Chemistry at the University of Bari Aldo Moro, where he was also Vice Rector for International Relations. With more than 35 years of academic and professional experience, he has contributed to Mediterranean and global discussions on agriculture, food systems, and sustainability.

He has held leading roles in professional associations, including President of the Italian Society of Agricultural Chemistry and the International Humic Substances Society.

His collaboration with CIHEAM began in 1996 through teaching, research, and cooperation initiatives. He later became Member and Vice President of the CIHEAM Governing Board before his current appointment as Secretary General.



Abir Abou EL KHOUDOUD

Rural Advisory
Services and M&E
expert

Ministry of
Agriculture

Abir Abou El Khoudoud holds a Master's degree in Agricultural Extension and Development and a Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Engineering from the American University of Beirut, complemented by certifications in Monitoring and Evaluation and Project Management. She is currently pursuing an Associate Diploma in Strategic Research Design, reflecting her commitment to continuous learning and evidence-based approaches.

With more than 15 years of experience, she has worked in rural advisory services, agribusiness and value chain development, agricultural policy, food security and food system development, and technical and vocational education and training. For the past ten years, she has served as Project Manager with UN agencies, implementing donor-funded initiatives and leading multidisciplinary teams.

She has collaborated with a wide range of stakeholders, including public institutions, local actors, and international and UN organizations across Lebanon and the wider MENA region. Her work bridges policy and grassroots levels: she engages directly with farmers and SMEs to support cooperative initiatives, improve production practices, and strengthen market linkages, while also contributing to strategy development and institutional capacity building.



Nadine NASSIF

Dean

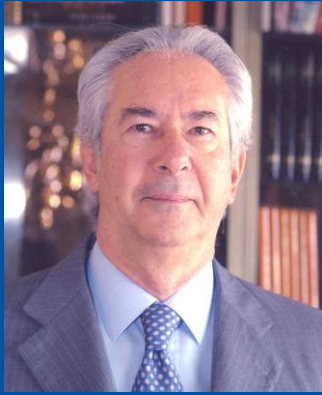
**Faculty of
Agronomy**

**Lebanese
University**

Dr. Nadine NASSIF. After receiving the diploma of agricultural engineer from the Lebanese University, specialty in Agri-Food Sciences and Technology, then obtaining a diploma of law from Sagesse University and the Diploma of Advanced Studies in Sustainable Agriculture in the Mediterranean, DEA jointly organized, under the aegis of AUPELF-UREF, by the Lebanese University, the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik, the Saint-Joseph University and the National Agronomic Institute Paris-Grignon, Nadine Nassif decides to prepare a thesis where she could express at the same time her passion for science and law and which would allow her to realize her dream of marrying them together and showing their complementarity. She then undertook arduous interdisciplinary work, covering multiple skills, which resulted in the defense of a thesis entitled: Chemical pollution of the Lebanese coast: modeling test and regulatory approach, thesis for which she was awarded the title in 2004. Doctor of the National Agronomic Institute Paris-Grignon, in the discipline Analytical Chemistry, with very honorable mention and congratulations.

This thesis proposes an analytical methodology that goes from the sampling plan to the development of real chemical data. It demonstrates the importance of including this methodology in any regulation that aims to ensure the protection of the environment and human health. It goes far beyond a simple case study. To highlight its very general scope and thus draw attention to the results of a long process of methodological reflection, it was decided to publish this thesis under a more general title: Chemical pollution in the marine environment: modeling test and approach regulatory. Dr. Nassif held the position of head of the department of environment and natural resources at the Lebanese University, Faculty of Agronomy, as well as she was a representative of Professors within the same Faculty.

She inaugurated a course on environmental law in the majority of Lebanese universities (UL, USEK, USJ, LIU.) as well as in the Judicial Institute. Her ambition for research and publications allowed her to obtain the Fulbright award where she highlighted the importance of introducing the GIS techniques into the environmental crimes, research carried out at Northeastern University, Boston. Responsible for several European and national projects, his center of interest always remains the same: protecting the environment by creating an interface between science and law; in other words, a scientific methodology upstream and legal rules downstream.



Raphael DEBBANE

President of the
Agricultural
Committee of the
Federation of the
Chambers of
Commerce, Industry
and Agriculture in
Lebanon

Raphaël Debbané is the Chairman of Debbané Saikali Family Holding in Lebanon with activities in pesticides, fertilizers & seeds, horticulture & landscaping, wireless broadband operators, industrial heat and sound insulations, wine production and trading.

Member of the Board of Directors of Beirut Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture; President of the Agricultural Committee of the Federation of Chambers of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture in Lebanon; Member of the Board of International Chamber of Commerce Lebanon; Former President and actual Member of the Lebanese-Italian Business Council; Vice-President of the Lebanese Canadian Business Association; Vice-President of Lebanese Algerian Business Council; Vice-President of the National Council for Lebanese Economists; Member of the Pesticides Committee of the Lebanese Ministry of Agriculture; Honorary Member of the FAFS Advisory Board (Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences) of the American University of Beirut; Member and Founder of the Lebanese Businessmen Association (RCDL).

Socially, Mr. Debbane is Member of Rotary International (since 1965); Honorary Consul of Italy in Saida, Lebanon (1994 – 2009); President of Debbané Foundation and Curator of Debbané Palace Museum, Saida – Lebanon.



Elie MASSOUD

Head of Agriculture and
Agro-Industries
Department at the
Chamber of Commerce,
Industry, and Agriculture
of Beirut and Mount
Lebanon

Elie Massoud is Head of the Agriculture and Agro-Industries Department at the Chamber of Commerce, Industry, and Agriculture of Beirut and Mount Lebanon, and Coordinator of the Agriculture Committee at the Federation of Lebanese Chambers. He has extensive expertise in business development, agricultural value chain strengthening, and cooperative support, with a strong focus on improving access to finance and expanding access to markets for Lebanese producers.

Over the past years, Elie has played a leading role in developing strategies and initiatives that empower agricultural cooperatives, SMEs, and exporters to improve competitiveness and meet international market requirements. He has supervised the preparation of business plans, feasibility studies, and trade promotion activities, while also facilitating linkages between producers and buyers at both local and international levels.

His work has been instrumental in positioning Lebanese agricultural products in global markets, including Europe and North Africa, by emphasizing quality, sustainability, and the unique characteristics of Lebanese produce. Elie continues to collaborate with national institutions, international organizations, and the private sector to create opportunities for farmers and agribusinesses, contributing to the modernization and transformation of Lebanon's agri-food sector.



**Maya AL-HAJJ
LATOUF**

Partner/ME
Business
Development &
Sustainability
Director at IDOM

Maya Al-Hajj Lattouf. PhD Agricultural Engineer from the Polytechnic University of Madrid, with MSc in Marketing of Agrofood Products from CIHEAM- IAMZ, and Agricultural Engineer from the Lebanese University. Working in the engineering consultancies field since 1995 on research and development first, then leading projects related to Organic farming for the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food in Spain, and the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries in Portugal.

In 2007 she started working at IDOM in the Infrastructure Division on Modernization of Irrigation in the Cheliff Valey in Algeria, and on different projects related to water, agriculture and sanitation in Spain, Paraguay, Tunisia, Algeria, Egypt, Jordan and Saudi Arabia. She led the business development of the Infrastructure Division projects in the MENA region till 2023. Currently, she is the Corporate ME Business Development & Sustainability Director, and partner at IDOM since 2017.



**Lara HANNA-
WAKIM**

**Full Professor,
USEK - Fellow of
the International
Academy of Food
Science and
Technology,
Canada**

Prof. Lara Hanna-Wakim is an accomplished academic leader and distinguished figure in food science, most recently serving as Director of the Continuing Learning Center at the Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK). Previously, she was Dean of the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences and Vice-Director of Research at USEK.

She was the first scientist from the MENA region elected as a Fellow of the International Academy of Food Science and Technology (IAFoST) – Canada and represents the region on the Governing Council of the International Union of Food Science and Technology (IUFoST), and the Codex Committee. She is a Senior International Officer at Duke University's Academy of Leaders (AIEA) – USA and holds key roles with the UN Environment Program as National Coordinator for the “Faith for Earth Coalition”.

Her leadership in global food security is evidenced by her vice-presidency of GCHERA - USA and co-chair role of the IUFoST Food Security Taskforce - Canada. Beyond these positions, she is an active advocate for food justice and education reform, a theme she amplifies as a published scholar and keynote speaker. In recognition of her impactful work, she has been named a Women Leader by the Lebanese Parliament and honored by the Minister of Agriculture.



Louis LAHOUD

Director General
of Agriculture

Ministry of
Agriculture

Louis Lahoud has served as Lebanon's Director General of Agriculture since 2003.

Engineer, he holds a Master's degree in Diplomacy, Strategic Negotiations, and International Relations from La Sagesse and Paris XI Universities. He also earned a Diploma in Agricultural Engineering from Saint Joseph University in 2000.

His work has focused on strategies in agricultural economics and rural development. He lectures at the Lebanese University and Antonine University on agricultural and epidemiological topics.

Eng. Lahoud represents Lebanon in numerous international agricultural organizations and forums. He continues to advance agricultural policy and development through leadership and international cooperation.



**Theresa EL
CHAHROUK EL
MAALOUF**

Program Officer
Berytech,
Lebanon

Theresa El Chahrouk El Maalouf is a Program Officer at Berytech, where she has been supporting over 65 startups and entrepreneurs working in the agri-food sector since January 2024. She holds a degree in Agricultural Engineering from the Lebanese University, with a specialization in Agribusiness and Rural Development, and a Master's in Agricultural and Territorial Management from CIHEAM – IAMM. Her academic and professional journey has centered on sustainable agriculture, climate change adaptation, and rural development.

During her master's studies, she conducted and carried out a field internship in Mauritania, where she explored the potential of agroecology and sustainable agriculture through assessing farmers' needs and identifying pathways to strengthen their long-term resilience. Through her role at Berytech, Theresa works closely with startups and entrepreneurs in Lebanese rural areas, empowering them to innovate and scale sustainable agribusiness solutions.

Her journey has deepened her passion for helping people embrace sustainable practices and foster healthier environments.



Samar AZZI

**Head of
Department of
Agriculture and
Food
Engineering**

Holy Spirit
University of
Kaslik - USEK

Samar Azzi is an Associate Professor in the Department of Agriculture and food engineering at the School of Engineering. She joined USEK in 2008 as an Assistant Professor. She currently serves as the Head of Department of Agriculture and food engineering and the chair of the Green Committee.

Samar is a coordinator and consultant for different agricultural projects at the School of Engineering. She teaches graduate and undergraduate courses. She received her Bachelor of Engineering in Agriculture from USEK, and her PhD. in analytical Chemistry from AgroParisTech France, after completing a thesis on wine and must chemical composition. She was also awarded a Postgraduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education from Chester University, in United Kingdom.

Her academic interests and publications are in the areas of Food and wine composition and analysis.

Azzi has made keynote presentations on these topics at international conferences. She also works on sustainability projects, and she was appointed Chair of the Green committee in January 2016.



Nasser YASSIN

Policy Scientist

Former Minister
of Environment

Dr. Nasser Yassin is a policy scientist, educator, and former government minister with extensive experience in policy, planning, and leadership. He held a tenured professorship at the American University of Beirut, serving as chair of the Department of Health Management and Policy, director of research, and director of the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs. He founded the AUB Crisis Observatory and the AUB4Refugees Initiative.

Dr. Yassin served as Lebanon's Minister of Environment (September 2021 to February 2025), driving reforms in environmental governance, and community engagement. In October 2023, during the Gaza War and South Lebanon conflict, he was appointed to oversee the National Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan, coordinating UN agencies and humanitarian organizations assisting one million displaced persons.

He has led executive education programs across the Gulf in collaboration with Duke University CE, Qatar University, the Qatar Leadership Centre, and Oman's Competence Academy, training senior civil servants in strategy, policy and crisis management. He has advised UN agencies and Middle Eastern governments on governance and crisis response.

His work includes books, peer-reviewed articles, and policy papers cited in international media including Al Jazeera, BBC, Bloomberg, The Economist, The New York Times, Deutsche Welle, and Reuters....



**Ramy
BOUJAWDEH**

Managing Partner

Fermendom,
France, Lebanon

Mr. Boujawdeh is the Managing Partner at fermendom, an environmental engineering, entrepreneurship ecosystem support and Policy development consultancy firm, driving transformational practices, in environmental engineering, circularity and agrifood sectors.

He is best known for his role previous role as the Chief Operating Officer of Berytech, where he played a pivotal role in fostering innovation and entrepreneurship scaling support in supporting Lebanese and regional startups across various sectors to start and scale their businesses, and is a regional key player in the space of Agri-food Innovation.

With over 25 years of experience, he has led numerous initiatives to empower young professionals and drive economic growth.

Before that, Ramy worked with a number of multinationals, in the GCC, and Canada where he has been involved in Change Management, Certification and Operations, with Sodexo and Compass Group, both leaders in Facilities and Support Life Services.

Mr. Boujawdeh is committed to support social causes, such as education, climate change, sustainability, environment, gender equity and economic development, and has been active on Boards of many local and international NGOs.

He is a graduate of AUB with a BS in Agriculture and had his MS from the CIHEAM Chania, Greece, in Economics and Management.

He is a father of 4 daughters and enjoys running his Circular and sustainable Farm.



**Chariton
KALAITZIDIS**

Research & Studies
coordinator

CIHEAM Chania

Dr. Chariton Kalaitzidis is an Agricultural Engineer, with an MSc and PhD on the use of remote sensing for environmental applications and particularly the monitoring of vegetation. He has been employed at the Mediterranean Agronomic Institute of Chania since 2007, where he has been the research and studies coordinator of the Department of Geoinformation in Environmental Management since 2012.

His educational experience includes delivering courses on Remote Sensing, GIS and Precision Agriculture for the MSc Geoinformation in Environmental Management, as well as participation in short courses and summer schools of relevant topics and the participation in ERASMUS+ projects, generating similar educational content.

His research interests involve the use of remote sensing for monitoring of vegetation in terms of plant health, biomass production, crop yield and status, as well as monitoring of land cover/land use change.

He has participated in numerous EU-funded (FP7, H2020, INTERREG, ERASMUS+) and nationally funded projects around these topics, and most recently on the use of drones for monitoring livestock and the AI algorithms that provide data analysis and information extraction from drone and satellite data.



Raul COMPES

Director

CIHEAM Zaragoza

Raúl Compés López is the Director of the CIHEAM Zaragoza.

He is an Agricultural Engineer with a Ph.D. from the Polytechnic University of Valencia (UPV). His work spans teaching, research, knowledge transfer, and technical assistance in agri-food economics and policy.

His recent research covers wine, citrus, production costs, trade agreements, climate change, sustainability, and ethical issues.

He served as President of the Spanish Association of Agricultural Economics (AEEA) from 2013 to 2019 and as a consultant for CAF-Latin American Development Bank. He is currently Vice President of the European Association of Wine Economists and Academic Coordinator of the economic pillar of the Wine Technology Platform (PTV). He serves on the Spanish Commission of the International Organisation of Vine and Wine (OIV).

He has coordinated two award-winning books on wine economics and climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies in the Mediterranean.



**Chadi
ABDALLAH**

**Secretary
General**

CNRS, Lebanon

Dr. Chadi Abdallah is the Director of Research and Secretary General of the National Council for Scientific Research in Lebanon (CNRS-L). A geologist by training, he earned his Ph.D. in Natural Resources from Paris VI University (France) and completed a postdoctoral fellowship in Radar Interferometry at the University of Missouri (USA).

He previously served as Director of the National Center for Natural Hazards and Early Warning in Lebanon. Over the course of his career, Dr. Abdallah has led numerous nationally and internationally funded research projects in the fields of natural hazards and early warning systems, water information management, environmental modeling, decision-support tools, and the sustainable management of natural resources.

He currently chairs the Arab Science and Technology Advisory Group for Disaster Risk Reduction (Arab-STAG) under the UNDRR. Dr. Abdallah has authored and co-authored more than 80 scientific publications in peer-reviewed international journals and has presented his work at leading scientific conferences worldwide.



Nahla HWALLA

Professor of Human Nutrition (Department on Nutrition and Food Sciences, Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences)
PhD, RD, FAND

Dr. Nahla Hwalla is a professor of Human Nutrition at the American University of Beirut. She has served as Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences for 11 years. She promoted the first Food Security program in the region, thus highlighting the importance of sustainable food consumption patterns and sustainable diets in tackling the Sustainable Development Goals and food and nutrition insecurity in the Middle East.

Dr. Hwalla founded and presided the Lebanese Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics and has published over 150 seminal articles on nutrition and diet related diseases. She was appointed a fellow of the International Union of Nutritional Sciences (IUNS) and a previous Chair of the International Center for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM) Advisory Board and is a current member of CIHEAM's Ethics Committee.

She has been awarded the Medallion Award from the US Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics in 2019 and the Susan Bulkeley Award for Excellence in Education from Purdue University. She has also received the 2017 regional TAKREEM Award, as well as the Research Award from the Lebanese National Council for Scientific Research and the Lebanese parliament. Most recently, Dr. Nahla was elected as the president of the first Order of Dieticians in Lebanon.



**Nadine
KHOURY**

**Chief Operating
officer**

**The Quinta
Group**

Nadine Khoury is the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of The Quinta Group (formerly Robinson Agri) contributing significantly to the expansion of the organization's Greenhouses & Seeds businesses. Nadine's strategic initiatives include the establishment of Agriland, serving as a hybridseeds supplier and a center of excellence for farmer and agriculture engineers' training, then Agri grow, a professional plant nursery, specializing in grafting vegetables and herb plants.

Her visionary leadership continued with the establishment of a management center focused on horticulture strategy and feasibility studies. Later, Nadine was an active contributor to the formation of Elysee WISE in joint venture with Elysee-Cyprus, a factory specializing in irrigation, potable water, energy, and sewage PE pipes. Currently, she actively heads its Business Development Unit.

Nadine Khoury's commitment to innovation has positioned The Quinta Group at the forefront of advancing agriculture in Lebanon. The company stands as the First Socially Responsible Agricultural Company, aligning seamlessly with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Nadine Khoury graduated from the American University of Beirut in 1995, earning her bachelor's degree in Agriculture Engineering.

Nadine followed in 2017 the "Cercle Des Dirigeants" training program at Ecole Supérieure des Affaires (ESA).

Actively engaged in various professional associations, Nadine serves in leadership roles:

- External Board Member in FAFS AUB (Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences, American University of Beirut). Board member in the fertilizer committee at the agriculture ministry LPSN (Lebanese private network sector) Aiming to defend and revitalize the private sector
- LBDA (Lebanese Dutch Business Association): Leveraging international partnerships to drive economic growth and cooperation
- RDCL (Lebanese Business Leader Association): Aiming to elevate business Leadership in Lebanon.
- FBN Levant (Family Business Network): Nurturing the growth and sustainability of family-owned businesses.
- Ex President and founding member of QOOT Cluster: Pioneering the first Agri- food innovation cluster in Lebanon.



George MITRI

**Professor of
Environmental
Sciences
Director of Land and
Natural Resources
Program
Institute of the
Environment,
University of
Balamand, Lebanon**

George Mitri is Full Professor of Environmental Sciences at the Department of Environmental Sciences and Director of the Land and Natural Resources Program at the Institute of the Environment, University of Balamand, Lebanon. He has more than 23 years of professional and research experience in the field of environmental sciences. His research interests lie in the area of Earth Observation and Geo-Information Analysis and their applications in climate-related risk assessment, land cover/land use mapping and monitoring, forest management, wildfire risk assessment and management, drought and land degradation assessment, and the impact of climate change on terrestrial ecosystems.

Professor Mitri has been leading various research and development projects funded by national and international organizations and has published more than 100 articles in peer-reviewed journals, conference proceedings, and book chapters. Beyond academia, he serves as a senior advisor and consultant to several international organizations, contributing his expertise to shaping policies, strategies, and innovative practices in the fields of environmental sustainability, natural resource management, and climate change adaptation.

In parallel, Professor Mitri plays an active role in bridging education with job opportunities and sectoral priorities, particularly in environmental sector. He has supported curriculum development and capacity-building programs to ensure that higher education outputs are closely aligned with national development needs.



Daniel EL CHAMI

**Sustainable
Strategy Director**

**TIMAC AGRO
Int., France**

Daniel El Chami. As a Sustainability Strategy, Development, and Innovation Director, my mission is clear: to transform organisations into true pioneers of responsible innovation. I am driven by a contagious passion for a model where positive impact, performance, and long-term viability are mutually aligned.

My professional journey, forged within prestigious organisations, has enabled me to develop a unique, transdisciplinary approach and a global perspective. I am committed to thinking outside the box, integrating research, innovation, and seamless collaboration – both vertical and horizontal. My ambition is to develop models that shift from reactive risk management to proactive anticipation of challenges, thereby increasing efficiency and long-term value.

Because yes, the future is built today, and I love being at the forefront of shaping it!



**Thierry
DUPEUBLE**

Director

CIHEAM
Montpellier

Thierry Dupeuble is a doctor in economics. He is a specialist in public policies in favor of sustainable agriculture and rural development. He has supported development projects in the fields of organic farming and sustainable agriculture, on-farm transformation and selling, rural tourism,...

Most of his experiences have been run in various positions within the ministry for agriculture in France.

As such, he has worked in particular on initial and continuing professional training for farmers involved in the agroecological transition. Since 2021, he is the director of CIHEAM Montpellier.



Michel AFRAM

PDG of the
Lebanese
Agricultural
Research
Institute (LARI)

Michel Antoine Afram has served as Director General of LARI since 2002, leading agricultural research and innovation in Lebanon.

He is Chairman of the Board of Trustees of ICARDA and Vice President of Confremo and the Union of Francophonie Universities of Agriculture and Nutrition.

Former Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture at Saint Joseph University (1993–2002), he has also taught at USEK and Lebanese University.

His expertise spans agronomy, agricultural policies, rural economy, plant production, and environmental management.

Michel Afram has received multiple international awards, including honorary professorships, the Palmes Académiques, and recognition from BID, Oxford, and BIZZ.

He actively participates in national and international scientific and agricultural committees, advancing research, education, and Mediterranean cooperation.



**Wadih Antoine
SKAFF**

**Associate professor and
researcher** at the Faculty
of Architecture and
Engineering of Saint
Joseph University of
Beirut.

Director of ESIA (School
of Food Industry
Engineering) and ESIAM
(School of Agricultural
Engineering for
Mediterranean
Countries) - USJ.

Dr. Skaff is an Agricultural Engineer and holds a PhD in analytical chemistry (Process Engineering and Bioproducts) from AgroParisTech in Paris, France.

Since 2014, he has served as an experienced university lecturer, associate professor, and researcher at the Faculty of Architecture and Engineering at Saint Joseph University of Beirut (USJ). Dr. Skaff currently directs two of the university's schools: ESIA, the School of Food Industry Engineering, and ESIAM, the School of Agricultural Engineering for Mediterranean Countries.

An expert in statistical analysis and chemometrics, Dr. Skaff's research focuses on using infrared spectroscopy with chemometrics for the quality control of various products, including olive oil, honey, wine, dairy products, and chocolate. He is also interested in analyzing trace elements in food matrices like bread and fish, and in developing solutions to address water scarcity and pollution.



Paul SKAYEM

**Portfolio
Coordinator**

**KfW Development
Bank
Crisis Prevention
and Response,
Middle East**

Eng. Paul Skayem serves as a Portfolio Coordinator at KfW, the German Development Bank, where he oversees infrastructure and development initiatives across Lebanon and Syria. These projects, funded by the German government through KfW, are implemented in collaboration with UNICEF, UNDP, UN-Habitat, and through bilateral cooperation with the Lebanese government. His current role in KfW is closely aligned with the strategic priorities of BMZ (Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development), with a strong focus on sustainable development and regional resilience.

A graduate of CIHEAM Bari (2001), Paul began his career with international NGOs, contributing to development and emergency response programs in water, agriculture, and livelihoods. Over two decades, he has led projects funded by major international donors including the EU, BMZ, USAID and other donors, working across the Middle East and Africa.

As an active CIHEAM alumnus, Paul champions initiatives that highlight alumni achievements and foster academic collaboration, particularly within Lebanese institutions. He credits CIHEAM with shaping his professional journey and continues to advocate for inclusive growth and humanitarian impact.

Paul is married to a fellow CIHEAM graduate, and together they are raising three sons—reflecting a shared commitment to education, collaboration, and sustainable development.



**Yara EL
ZOGHBI**

**Agricultural
engineer and
plant breeder**

Yara El Zoghby is an agricultural engineer and plant scientist specializing in plant genetics, genomics, and breeding. She recently obtained her Master's degree in Plant Genetics, Genomics, and Breeding from the University of Lleida and CIHEAM Zaragoza, Spain, graduating with high distinction. As part of her Master's research at the Institute of Plant Molecular and Cellular Biology (IBMCP) in Valencia, she worked on the regeneration and genetic transformation of Chiltepin pepper (*Capsicum annuum* L. var. *glabriusculum*) using *Agrobacterium*-mediated techniques.

Yara also holds a Bachelor's degree in Agricultural Engineering and a Master's in Plant Production and Biotechnology from the Lebanese University. She previously conducted research at ICARDA, contributing to the molecular characterization of Lebanese wheat accessions to support the expansion of genetic diversity in ex-situ collections. Her professional background includes roles in agribusiness, seed technology and vineyard management, which enriched her understanding of sustainable agrifood systems.

Fluent in Arabic, English, French and Spanish, Yara is passionate about plant breeding, biotechnology and bioinformatics. She aspires to contribute to innovative solutions for climate-resilient and sustainable agriculture through research and international collaboration.



Kanj HAMADE

**International
Development
Consultant**

Kanj HAMADE is an economic development consultant and academic, based in Beirut and Athens, with over 20 years of experience in agriculture, food security, sustainable livelihoods, labor market systems, and rural development.

He has worked extensively across NENA countries, supporting UN agencies, donors, NGOs, and research institutions; leading on evaluations, evidence-based programming, and policy-relevant research, with a strong focus on placing local communities at the center of change.

Kanj holds a PhD in the Agriculture Economics from University of Bologna and is a CIHEAM Bari Alumni. He previously served as an Assistant Professor of Agricultural Economics at the Lebanese University



Dani FADEL

President

Lebanese
Cannabis
Regulatory Board

Dani Fadel is President of Lebanon's Regulatory Authority for Medical and Industrial Cannabis, overseeing national cannabis regulation.

He leads initiatives on cultivation, processing, and export under Law 178/2020.

He holds a Ph.D. and three postdoctoral degrees, with additional certification in nanotechnology.

His expertise spans medicinal plants, biotechnology, pharmacognosy, and cannabis-related industries. He has played a key role in shaping Lebanon's national cannabis strategy.

His work promotes innovation, international collaboration, and sustainable agricultural development.

He advances Lebanon's position as a regional leader in the emerging medical and industrial cannabis sector.



**Virginia
LACHANA**

**Coordinator of the
education pillar of
CIHEAM**

Virginia Lachana – Economist, Specialist in Education and Corporate Social Responsibility

Virginia Lachana is an economist with expertise in education coordination, corporate social responsibility (CSR), and institutional management.

At the International Centre for Advanced Mediterranean Agronomic Studies (CIHEAM), she coordinates academic programs and educational activities, and leads the Educational Working Group of the CIHEAM. She plays a key role in the Strategic development of CIHEAM's educational framework, focusing on curriculum development, technological platforms, campus life, academic regulations and framework, and alumni engagement.

Ms. Lachana holds a degree in Business Administration and Management from the Athens University of Economics and Business (AUEB), a Master's in Business Economics and Management from CIHEAM Chania, and a Master's in CSR from Paris Dauphine University. She is fluent in Greek, French, and English, with additional knowledge of Italian, Spanish and Russian.



**Biagio Di
TERLIZZI**

**Director
CIHEAM Bari**

Biagio Di Terlizzi is the Director of CIHEAM Bari. An agronomist by training, he has dedicated his career to advancing sustainable development and international cooperation in agriculture.

With over three decades of experience at CIHEAM Bari, where he served in various roles since 1987, including Deputy Director and Head of Planning and Cooperation, he has been instrumental in numerous training, research, and technical assistance initiatives.

His expertise spans a wide range of fields, from project management for key international donors to leading diverse teams on country-specific and regional projects across the Mediterranean, the Middle East, North Africa, and beyond.



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