

## Note from Representative of LEBANON in PRIMA Board of Trustees

The COVID-19 pandemic, during less than 3 months, has fundamentally changed research priorities, funding, practices, and main actors. Ongoing research, pre-COVID-19, has slowed down due to both lockdown restrictions as well as a quick change in priorities during the emerging crisis. Researchers, invited also by their institutions and/or funding agencies, have been requested and urged to adapt their research, as much as possible, in response to the increasing need, in all countries, to quickly find answers to issues in direct relation to the pandemic. Calls with a direct input into the COVID 19 crisis, are covering a long list of scientific discipline: from health, engineering, medical engineering and practices, food security, nutrition, immunity, risk management, socio-economic dimension and psychological impact.

In parallel, with limited financial resources, projects that can provide a direct link with COVID-like scenarios are likely to be maintained for funding. Health will increasingly become a cross-cutting thematic, as is national self-sufficiency to respond to the new post-Covid-19 realities.

We take this chance to highlights the following initiatives launched by the CNRS-L in response to the Covid-19 pandemic, in line with similar initiatives undertaken by national and international organizations to guarantee an efficient role of the scientific community in each country.

- CNRS-launched, in mid-March, a “**Flash Call**” on “**COVID-19 Management in Lebanon.**”
- In parallel, and *under force majeure*, an automatic, no-additional cost, 1-year extension on all running contracts was granted. CNRS-L also encouraged all main investigators to explore possibilities for a **re-orientation of running projects** that can answer to some clear aspect of COVID-19 Management in Lebanon.

CNRS-L was delighted with the quick reaction of the Lebanese research community to the Flash Call: with the number of proposals submitted, in less than 4 weeks, almost exceeding the applications received within regular yearly CNRS-L calls, clearly indicating both the new tendency and the flexibility of scientists to adapt to an emerging issue and crisis. ***Unfortunately, in the two thematic covered by PRIMA (Agri-food and Water), the number of proposals were very limited: not exceeding 5 and mainly on economic impact of food supply, and water and air quality.***

This gives rise, and for the CNRS-L to propose, an open discussion among partners about how to respond better to the post-COVID research landscape, taking a strategic look at the priorities of PRIMA. This survey, while regarded as a first step in that direction, will require further discussion for creating a ***new wave***, to encompass the inclusion of health as a cross-cutting thematic/axis: (agro-food/food security-health) and (water quality/management–health). This, we feel, will create a great opportunity to guarantee the

continued attractiveness of the programme and within the scientific community in all Euro-Med research systems.