

A COVID-19 interdisciplinary and partnership-based scientific committee at IRD

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IRD has created a COVID-19 interdisciplinary and partnership-based scientific committee. Composed of 8 members, who are researchers from the Institute and partners from the South, it is led by the Director of the "Societies and Globalization" Department and the Director of the "Health and Societies" Department. Its task is to advise IRD's governance and to coordinate the Institut's scientific actions in the best possible way in the face of the current health crisis.

IRD researchers and their scientific partners are mobilized in the fight against COVID-19 all over the world (see www.ird.fr/covid19). They work in line with the Institute's missions, providing support with disease diagnosis, epidemiological monitoring and health system responses, particularly to several affected countries in the South, and make a major contribution to collective scientific projects designed to provide elements of a response to the pandemic.

In this context, **Valérie Verdier**, IRD President and CEO, has entrusted **Philippe Charvis**, Deputy Director for Science, with the creation of a COVID-19 interdisciplinary and partnership-based scientific committee. This committee - led by **Flore Gubert**, Director of the "Societies and Globalization" Department, and **Yves Martin-Prével**, Director of the Institute's "Health and Societies" Department - is made up of four leading scientific figures from the Institute and four partners from the South, who are involved in the study of this pandemic and more generally in studying emerging infectious risks in Africa, as well as in Asia and Latin America. The purpose of this committee is to advise IRD's governance on the decisions that need to be made regarding the pandemic and to promote the coordination of the scientific actions to be pursued and implemented.

Composition of the Committee:

- **Laëtitia Atlani-Duault**, anthropologist, IRD research director (CEPED MRU), co-facilitator of the [PSIP "Global Changes and Emerging Infectious Risks"](#), member of the [Covid-19 Scientific Council and the Analysis, Research and Expertise Committee \(Care\)](#).
- **Eric Delaporte**, University Professor and Hospital Practitioner in Infectious Diseases at Montpellier University Hospital, Director of the IRD's TransVIHMI IMU.
- **Rodolphe Gozlan**, conservation ecologist, IRD research director (ISEM MRU), specialized in the study of the impact of biodiversity changes on the emergence of human pathogens.
- **Fatoumata Hane**, socio-anthropologist, lecturer and head of the department of sociology at the Assane Seck University of Ziguinchor (Senegal).
- **Ousmane Koita**, Professor of molecular biology/parasitology, Director of the Applied Molecular Biology Laboratory, University of Science, Techniques and Technologies of Bamako (Mali).

- **Francine Ntoumi**, molecular biologist, lecturer at the Marien Ngouabi University in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, Director-General of the Congolese Foundation for Medical Research (Republic of Congo).
- **Benjamin Roche**, eco-epidemiologist, IRD research director (UMMISCO IMU, also associated with MIVEGEC MRU), specialized in the mathematical and statistical modeling of the evolutionary ecology of infectious diseases, co-facilitator of the PSIP "Global changes and emerging infectious risks".
- **Abdoulaye Touré**, Professor of Public Health, Director of the Infectiology Research and Training Center of Guinea and Director of the National Institute of Public Health of Guinea.

As a catalyst for IRD action, this committee identifies, supports and connects research project leaders related to the COVID-19 crisis. It will pilot the launch of a research project financed by AFD in the framework of the REACTing consortium in Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Benin and Guinea. This project has three components: improving diagnostic capacities; studying the dynamics of the epidemic; and taking into account social determinants for a better response to the epidemic.

The IRD has also initiated a longer-term collective reflection, led by **Olivier Dangles**, Acting Director of the Ecology, Biodiversity and Functioning of Continental Ecosystems Department (ECOBIO), on the Institute's response to this health crisis. Because it mobilizes different approaches and transdisciplinary methods (both scientific and administrative), geared towards the search for solutions, the analysis of this crisis management should be rich in lessons and enable the Institute to better face future challenges and anticipate change.

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About IRD

Institut de recherche pour le développement (IRD) is a multidisciplinary French public research organization and a major player on the international development scene. Its model is original: equitable scientific partnership with developing countries.

IRD's research priorities are in line with the implementation of Sustainable Development Objectives (SDOs), with the ambition to support development policies and the design of solutions adapted to the environmental, economic, social and cultural challenges facing mankind and the planet.

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