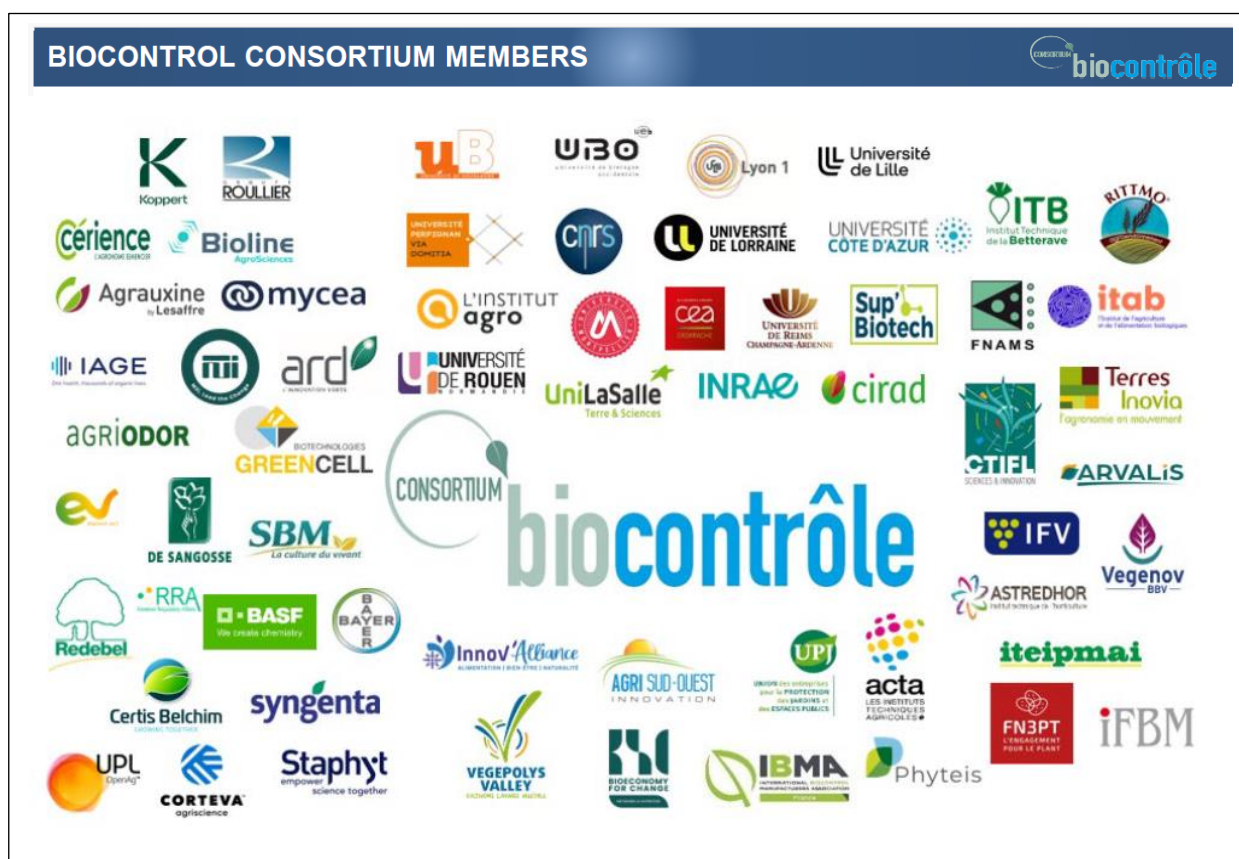


Portfolio Team 4.2 – STRUCTURING NETWORKS

Faced with the urgent need to reduce the use of synthetic pesticides, national policies have decided to structure research and industry to promote the development of biocontrol solutions. Team 4 is particularly committed in these structuring networks in France and in Belgium.

The **French Biocontrol Consortium** was launched in 2016 when public and private players in research, R&D and innovation joined forces to create the Public-Private Consortium “Research - Development - Innovation” on biocontrol. The ambition was to increase the use of biocontrol and develop industrial activities on biocontrol on the French territory. It gathered 48 partners when started in 2016 and more than 60 for its closure in Décembre 2023 including universities, research organisms, technical centers, associations, and private companies marketing biocontrol products.

<https://consortium-biocontrole.hub.inrae.fr/>



Among the means to achieve the ambitions were :

- Forming workgroups on regulation, biological resources or microbiome. Their roles were to take stock of what already exists, and identify the obstacles and levers to be used to overcome them, as well as the challenges and avenues to be pursued.
- Organisation of thematic days as the one on formulation

- Organisation of annual events for exchanges between industrial, technical, research and associative members
- Providing financial support for collaborative pre-competitive projects
- Organisation of co-building days to prepare the structuration of the next network to meet the ambitions of the « Grand défi » on *Biocontrol and biostimulation toward agro-ecological transition*.
- Organisation of webinars for private and public innovation players and Ministry departments on research projects, initiatives and incentive policies for the operational deployment of biocontrol solutions in response to the needs of players in the field.

BioEcoAgro Team 4 represented the University of Lille as member of the Consortium Biocontrol since 2016, was leading the « microbiome » working group during four years, and took an active part in the activity of the association *Biocontrol and biostimulation toward agro-ecological transition* created in Septembre 2023 to start defining the roadmap to go on with collaborative work between all the biocontrol players.

European Commission calls on all European regions to adopt a strategic framework for their innovation policies. Consequently, Wallonia decided to facilitate the setting up of networks combining research, innovation and industrial policies. This led to the creation of Strategic Innovation Initiatives. Among them is the « **Digibiocontrol** : Digital 4 Pest, Disease and Weed Biocontrol ». Team 4 is the driving force behind this new structure, the ambition of which is strengthening the Walloon biocontrol ecosystem by interconnecting the digital world (applications, sensors, robots, etc.) and the world of biological control of plant predators through three pillars: innovation/R&D, training and entrepreneurship. Once again, this network gathers universities, research centers, companies and associations (currently 31 players) and aims to respond to a societal challenge namely the reduction of inputs for a more sustainable agriculture.

By its commitment in the French **Biocontrol consortium** and by initiating the Walloon **Digibiocontrol** strategy, the Team 4 clearly marks its key role in a thematic closely interconnected with societal and economic issues. Team 4 may rely on these structuring networks to accelerate the output of the research topics and to identify potential partners to set up large-scale projects in the near future.