Press release
Toulouse, 4 May 2017

MicroPep Technologies joins Toulouse White Biotechnology to accelerate the development of biostimulants and natural herbicides

The ambition of MicroPep, founded in 2016 and laureate of the World Innovation Competition, is to develop biostimulants and natural herbicides by means of molecules that can regulate plant metabolism. In order to benefit from a favourable research environment, MicroPep has just joined Toulouse White Biotechnology (TWB). It is the 4th start-up welcomed by TWB, whose objective is to speed up the development of industrial biotechnology, by providing in particular support to the "nuggets" of tomorrow.

MicroPep, a start-up committed to a sustainable agriculture

Using plant-produced molecules called 'micro-peptides', MicroPep develops biostimulants and natural herbicides to propose a real alternative to chemical pesticides and fertilizers most widely used in agriculture. These natural micro-peptides can temporarily and moderately regulate gene expression in plants, producing a bio-stimulation, without DNA modification (non-GMO). For example, the research conducted by MicroPep will make it possible to identify maize-specific micro-peptides which will stimulate germination without accelerating the other genes.

"Like an orchestra conductor who would ask his musicians to play louder or on the contrary more quietly, without changing instruments, the molecules developed by MicroPep are designed to stimulate certain genes, rapidly or slowly, without however modifying them, contrary to GMOs. It is therefore the original action which is modified and not the gene itself, which is a genuine revolution in the world of agriculture", explained **Thomas Laurent, Director General and co-founder of MicroPep.**

A project with high potential supported by TWB

MicroPep intends to offer more scientifically credible natural solutions on the biostimulant and biocontrol markets, which are estimated at 1.6 and 3 billion euros, respectively, and growing by more than 10% per year. By joining TWB, the start-up will first be able to benefit from TWB's technological platform and high-tech equipment. Objective: to develop a biological process for the industrial production of micro-peptides that is both ecological and competitive, a critical stage for the project's long-term economic viability.

With the support and assistance of TWB, MicroPep intends to raise funds of 3 million euros by 2018 to accelerate its research, by financing in particular the recruitment of 6 new collaborators, bringing its number of employees to 10 by 2018.

"Thanks to TWB, we benefit from a structure with equipment at the cutting-edge of innovation and top-level experts who help us in developing our project in a very practical manner. Working jointly with them also makes it easier for us to make known our research and our products to the consortium of industrial partners", said **Thomas Laurent**.

"The TWB mechanism provides assistance and a significant acceleration to the development of start-ups, particularly in the initial phase, to help them consolidate their technology and provide them with concrete opportunities with manufacturers. This year, we are therefore proud to welcome MicroPep whose technology is revolutionary for the world of agriculture, a real innovative alternative to herbicides", concluded **Michel Manach, Director of industrial partnerships at TWB**.

About TWB:

Toulouse White Biotechnology (TWB) is a preindustrial demonstrator whose goal is to speed up the development of industrial biotechnologies by facilitating exchanges between public research and industry. Its vocation is to contribute to the expansion of a bioeconomy based on the use of renewable carbon in various fields (chemistry-biochemistry, materials, energy, etc.). Various kinds of collaborative research and development projects are proposed, as well as personalized services for businesses. Since 2012, TWB has supported a total of 79 projects including 33 finalized at the end of 2016. In March 2011, TWB was awarded the call for project for the Investments for the Future Program (PIA – Programme Investissements d'Avenir). It receives State aid through the ANR (Agence Nationale de la Recherche - National Research Agency). TWB is a UMS (Unité Mixte de Service – Mixed Service Unit) managed by INRA under triple INRA/INSA/CNRS tutelage. With €18.6 M of signed contracts since its creation, TWB confirms the relevance of its role at the interface of the public/private transfer.

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