

Edouard ROUSSEAU was born in 1968 at La Rochelle (France). After graduating from the the École Supérieure d'Agriculture d'Angers in 1991 , he moved to Venezuela. For the following two years, he focused on growing mostly corn and rice for the local market in the Venezuelan Andes. Back in France in 1993, he was a business advisor to the Rural Economy Centre of the Poitou-Charentes Region and an advisor to Atout Consultant. Taking stock from this experience in dealing with the problems of agricultural and agri-food businesses, in 1998 he turned again to his family farm in Charente Maritime. Convinced that agriculture should be more respectful of the environment, he decided to go organic. 200 hectares of land were thus converted and different systems of crop rotation, production and even marketing were introduced. Actively engaged in the Regional Organic Farming Cooperative (*Coopérative agricole régionale d'agriculture biologique, CORAB*) since its establishment, Edouard ROUSSEAU is convinced that the cooperative model is the most appropriate tool available today to respond to the challenges of this sector and to provide farmers with a democratic tool to bring their plans to life. As CORAB vice president and executive director from 2000 to 2006 and president from 2007 to 2013, he has developed the cooperative model, involved local players so as to increase conversion to organic, and assured the future of cooperatives and producers by implementing secure partnerships with the downstream businesses. This project – called SICA SILO BIO WEST – marks a new stage in the cooperative sector, with the start of a project involving 16 operators in the production, processing and distribution sectors. In addition to playing a role in the cooperative, he strengthened regional dynamics through the establishment of Growth Bio association, in order to attract bio companies in the territory of the cooperative, with a view to boosting employment and promoting synergies among businesses.

A member of the national organization representing agricultural and agri-food cooperation since 2005, he stepped up his commitment in the group and took the chairmanship of the Commission on Organic Supply Chain of French Cooperatives (*Commission filières biologiques de coop de France*) in 2009. From 2009 to 2013, he upheld the values of organic farming cooperatives in France and in Europe and promoted exchanges and projects between French cooperatives, in order to develop organic farming.

As chairperson of the Seeds and Plants Commission of the National Committee for Organic Farming's (which is in turn part of INAO, the National Institute of Quality and Origin), he focused on the complex issue of organic seeds. Driven by a desire to develop organic agriculture by combining various players from different lines of business, Edouard ROUSSEAU was able to merge several interests, to become President of the Bio Copa Cogeca Working Group, of which he is still the President.