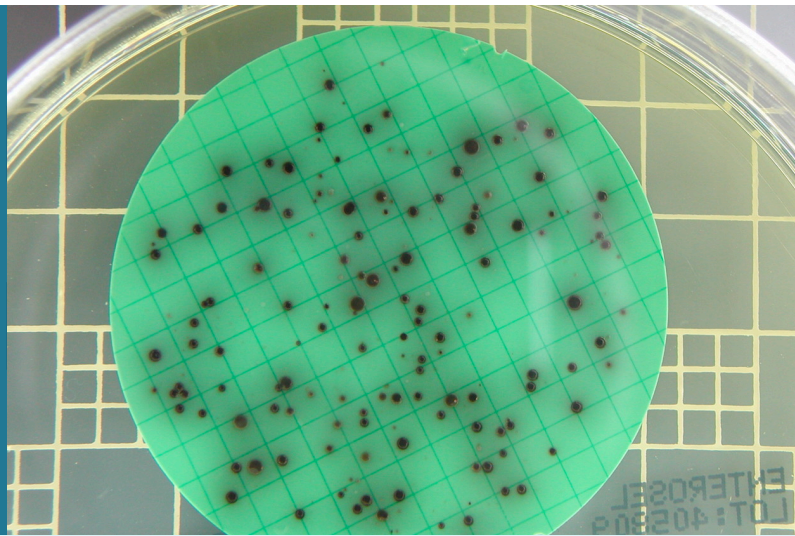


Environmental microbiology and biotechnology



As part of their activities in the Environmental Microbiology and Biotechnology group, researchers develop knowledge, know-how and innovative solutions in relation to the contamination of water, food and the environment by pathogenic microorganisms.

Main Expertise fields

- Environmental microbiology, with a focus on water resources
- Antimicrobial compounds and materials
- Environmental applications of probiotics
- Sewer-based epidemiology

Research Challenges

Microbial Risk Assessment in a One-Health perspective

Food and water are regularly contaminated by microorganisms along the production chains. Recent outbreaks of food-borne and waterborne microbial infections highlight the increasing risk of microbial propagation in a globalised world. These problems are worsened by an increasing antibiotic resistance in bacteria. The research group is engaged in understanding the way these microorganisms interact with the matrices they encountered (water, air, food, soil, sediment,...) in order to precisely characterise the risk associated with food or water production and consumption, water-based recreational activities, water reuse in agriculture or cities. The research group offer to private and public partners, among others:

- Development of monitoring tools for tracking contamination in environment or industry (water, food). These tools are based on a combination of culture methods, molecular biology tools and analytical chemistry analyses for assessing viruses, parasites, bacteria or algae and their relevant properties such as toxin production or antibiotic resistance
- Development of rapid diagnostic tools such as aptamer-based biosensors for viruses or MALDI-ToF identification databases of antibiotic resistance in bacteria
- Integrative studies of environmental context and public health epidemiology, e.g. for pathogens such as *Campylobacter*, *Noroviruses*, *Adenoviruses* or *Cryptosporidium*
- Assessment of the fate and transport of pathogens in surface water or groundwater in a drinking water protection perspective;
- Background or emergency studies of contamination for bottled water industry
- Drone-assisted monitoring of surface water resources contaminated with cyanobacteria in complement to assessment of the dynamics of algae and toxins

SEWER-Based Epidemiology

For 15 years, LIST has been investigating circulation of microbial pathogens in human populations through the monitoring of wastewater. This competence has been particularly useful when data from the group has fed the decision-making process of the Luxembourg's government during the SARS-CoV-2 sanitary crisis. The research group offer to:

- Determine the diversity of bacterial strains and virus variants circulating in wastewater and relate this to dynamics in human population
- Advise governments on the evolution of epidemics or pandemics such as SARS-CoV-2
- Communicate with media and citizens about sanitary status during crises

Clean-Tech related to microorganisms

Fighting microorganisms has become of paramount importance in order to propose responses to the increasing microbial risk generated by the globalisation. Researchers develop innovative decontamination processes for food- or water-based businesses. The research group offers to private or public partners:

- Development of technologies based on cold atmospheric plasmas for the decontamination of inert surfaces or food items
- Validation and marketing of new decontamination processes such as chemical additives, material structures, photochemical reactions or plasma treatments for example

Development of Clean-Tech based on Microbial Products

Researchers develop greener alternatives to classical treatments for water infrastructures, bottled water industry, food industry, hospitals,... using beneficial microorganisms (such as probiotics or microbial enzymes) to eliminate pathogenic microorganisms or chemical pollutants such as pharmaceuticals (antibiotics in particular), in wastewater or on building materials (polymers stainless steel, etc.). We therefore offer to private companies the following support:

- Selection, characterisation and cultivation of interesting bacterial strains or phages for industrial purposes
- Reference and manage microbial strains in the [Luxembourg Microbial Culture Collection](#) managed by LIST
- Produce free or fixed bacterial enzymes or other compounds for decontamination systems

Application areas

- Microbial risk assessment and management
- Viral diagnostics
- Probiotic production
- Cleaning technologies

Main assets

- Innovative biosensors for waterborne viruses
- Risk assessment tools for bathing areas affected by cyanobacteria
- Isolation, characterisation and culture platform for probiotics
- Culture collection of pathogenic bacteria such as *Campylobacter*

Equipment

- Fully equipped biosafety level 2 lab
- Illumina MiSeq sequencer
- qPCR
- Surface Plasmon Resonance
- Cell culture lab
- Water-solid separation lab with ultrafiltration and ultracentrifugation
- Anaerobic culture chamber
- Cold atmospheric plasma generator

Selected Publications

- [Setting a baseline for global urban virome surveillance in sewage](#), Nieuwenhuijse DF, Munir BBO, Phan MTV, Munk P, Venkatkrishnan S, et al. 2020. Scientific Reports
- [Controlled co-immobilisation of fibronectin on a water-borne plasma polymer film for multi-functional biomedical surfaces](#), Collin U, Moreno-Courajou M, Collard D, De Paese-Gillet MC, Quintana R, et al. 2020. Plasma Processes and Polymers
- [MALDI-TOF mass spectrometry and specific biosensors: potential new tools for the identification of antimicrobial resistance in foodborne pathogens](#), Feucherolles M, Cauchie HM, Penny C. 2019. Microorganisms
- [Influence of physico-chemical characteristics of sediment on the in situ spatial distribution of Especific RNA phages in the riverbed](#), Fauvel B, Cauchie HM, Gantzer C, Ogórzal L. 2019. FEMS Microbiology Ecology
- [Global monitoring of antimicrobial resistance based on metagenomic analysis of urban sewage](#), Herdendorf RS, Munk P, Njoge P, van Buren B, McAlilly L, et al. 2019. Nature Communications, vol. 10, no. 1, p. 1124
- [Isolating and characterizing bacteriophages with a microfluidic platform developed from an on-sceneable atmospheric pressure jetless assisted CO₂ process](#), Moreno-Courajou M, Mauchauffe R, Bonot S, Detrembleur C, Choquet P. 2018. Journal of Materials Chemistry B, no. 4, pp. 614-623
- [Interactions of infectious Especific RNA bacteriophages with suspended matter and sediment: Towards an understanding of FRNPH1 distribution in a river water system](#), Fauvel B, Ogórzal L, Cauchie HM, Gantzer C. 2017. Science of the Total Environment, vol. 574, pp. 960-968
- [Significance of a Mobile RNA Virus in the UV and Light Limit: Phylogenetic Analysis of Phages T10, T11, T12, T13, T14, T15, T16, T17, T18, T19, T20, T21, T22, T23, T24, T25, T26, T27, T28, T29, T30, T31, T32, T33, T34, T35, T36, T37, T38, T39, T40, T41, T42, T43, T44, T45, T46, T47, T48, T49, T50, T51, T52, T53, T54, T55, T56, T57, T58, T59, T60, T61, T62, T63, T64, T65, T66, T67, T68, T69, T70, T71, T72, T73, T74, T75, T76, T77, T78, T79, T80, T81, T82, T83, T84, T85, T86, T87, T88, T89, T90, T91, T92, T93, T94, T95, T96, T97, T98, T99, T100, T101, T102, T103, T104, T105, T106, T107, T108, T109, T110, T111, T112, T113, T114, T115, T116, T117, T118, T119, T120, T121, T122, T123, T124, T125, T126, T127, T128, T129, T130, T131, T132, T133, T134, T135, T136, T137, T138, T139, T140, T141, T142, T143, T144, T145, T146, T147, T148, T149, T150, T151, T152, T153, T154, T155, T156, T157, T158, T159, T160, T161, T162, T163, T164, T165, T166, T167, T168, T169, T170, T171, T172, T173, T174, 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