



Guidelines for Applicants

Voucher Call 3

Insects for feed applications

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND DEFINITIONS

Abbreviations	
NWE	North-West Europe
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
TRL	Technology Readiness Level

Definitions	
ValuSect consortium	The collective applicants and implementers of ValuSect, often referred as project partners or ValuSect.

Introduction

The ValuSect voucher scheme aims to accelerate the development of insect-based businesses for food and feed applications in North-West Europe and transfer knowledge on the subject.

This manual is drawn up for voucher call 3 of the ValuSect project, which targets applications from **SMEs within the insect feed industry**. This document provides a complete set of information regarding the ValuSect Open Call for Investment Vouchers for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The ValuSect consortium will select 20 cases to support the development of insect applications in the animal feed industry.

SMEs with an innovative idea for supporting the development of the insect's industry in North-West Europe can apply for a voucher worth up to €40.000 **provided in services** by the ValuSect consortium, consisting of experts in insect breeding, transformation and marketing of insects for food and feed applications.

The ValuSect project

At a time of rising population and prosperity and decreasing resources, especially in a very densely populated area like North-West Europe (NWE), sustainable alternatives for food and feed are needed. Insects have potential as such alternative source of nutrients. Therefore, there is a growing interest for using insects in food and feed applications. Few insect products are already commercially available on Western markets. However, since this is a relatively new concept in the EU, the market still faces many challenges. ValuSect aims to support the development of this innovative sector.

As part of Interreg NWE, The ValuSect project enhances the innovation performance of enterprises throughout NWE regions by strengthening the transnational cooperation and exploitation of research on insects as resource for the development of new (semi) finished food and feed products. The ValuSect consortium consists of 11 full members and 8 associated partners from 7 countries in the NWE area, with Thomas More University of Applied Sciences as lead partner. The consortium consists of partners with different fields of expertise such as insect breeding, processing, food technology and commercialisation.

By doing research, the ValuSect project aims to clarify questions from SMEs regarding different topics. These topics include **1) quality improvement of the sustainable production of insects**, taking into account environmental factors such as the emission of greenhouse gasses and the use of side streams as substrate, **2) the quality improvement of produced insects and food safety** including the nutritional composition, microbial load and shelf life of insects and insect-based products and **3) the consumers' attitudes towards insect-based products**. Four insect species are included in the ValuSect project, namely the yellow mealworm (*Tenebrio molitor*), the migratory locust (*Locusta migratoria*), the house cricket (*Acheta domesticus*) and the black soldier fly (*Hermetia illucens*).

ValuSect enhances innovation performance of NWE food and feed companies by transferring the build knowledge on these topics and work in co-creation with enterprises. Cases of companies using insects in food and feed applications will be supported by ValuSect by delivering the companies relevant services (e.g. R&D advice, life testing) through the voucher scheme.

The voucher scheme

The aim of the voucher scheme is to increase the level of innovation of companies active in the insect food and feed industry of the NWE area. ValuSect aims to support these enterprises by offering vouchers to accelerate the creation of a long-term consumer market for insect applications.

The voucher scheme allows to transfer knowledge from the ValuSect consortium to enterprises from the whole supply chain. Such knowledge transfers between stakeholders will be key for the development of the insect food and feed market.

These vouchers can be used to consult services offered by the partners of the ValuSect project with a broad expertise on the topic. Cases will be selected by predefined criteria by all partners and performed by the consortium. These cases can involve insect breeding and processing, (semi) finished food & feed products, food & feed technology and commercialisation. The knowledge will be transferred to enterprises by pilot demonstration and real-life testing in close collaboration with consumers or end-users.

SMEs can apply for vouchers of different value, ranging from €10.000 for small cases, €20.000 for medium cases and €40.000 for large cases. With these vouchers, offered services (defined in the menu of services) can be provided by the project partners.

Over the duration of the ValuSect project, 60 cases will be supported by the voucher scheme. These are divided in three different calls: two addressing the industry that uses insects for food applications (40 cases) and 1 addressing the feed industry (20 cases). **This manual is drawn up for the third call, aiming on applications for the insect feed industry.**

A further objective of the voucher scheme is to develop a program supporting the transnational knowledge exchange and implement it to accelerate the development of the insect business in Europe. The project aims to help European regions and national governments to face challenges and achieve goals in their support for companies in this early stage of the market. This is by putting into place a collaborative framework across Europe. This way, regions and enterprises can take advantage of the globalisation benefits, and Europe can promote competitiveness and cooperation in an effective and cross-national way.

The funds provided for the voucher scheme comes directly from the funds of the European Project Valusect (Interreg NWE) funded itself by the European Commission under NWE Programme project - NWE 1004. The voucher part of the project is divided into three open calls which have a specific budget. From the funds, the vouchers are made available in the form of services for SMEs located in North-West Europe to support them to develop their innovative idea with the application of insects in feed.

Application guidelines

SME's with activities linked to insect for feed in the NWE-region can apply for a voucher. The ValuSect voucher calls are public and every interested SME can apply. Cases will be selected to receive a voucher through predefined criteria by the ValuSect consortium. These cases can involve insect breeding and processing, (semi) finished products, innovative technology and commercialisation.

SMEs with an innovative idea for the development of the insects business in Europe and with application of insects in animal feed can apply for a voucher worth up to €40.000 **provided in services**. These services are offered by partners of the ValuSect project, experts in their particular field. Knowledge will be transferred to enterprises by pilot demonstration and real-life testing.

20 of the most promising cases will be selected for receiving a voucher. For each case, the maximum amount of services granted for an individual company is 40.000 euro. Small and medium cases may qualify for €10.000 and €20.000.

Note: Successful applicants can only redeem their vouchers for the services provided by the ValuSect partners.

Eligibility criteria

As a global criteria, SMEs or Start-ups established within the NWE Europe region, active in the feed industry, and with focus on one or more of the four insect species targeted by ValuSect project can apply for vouchers of call 3. Detailed information can be found in the following sections.

Eligible companies

Participants, either SMEs or Start-ups, established in the following countries and territories that are residents of the following countries, will be eligible to apply for a Voucher: Ireland, the United Kingdom, Belgium, Luxembourg, Switzerland, parts of France, Germany and The Netherlands.

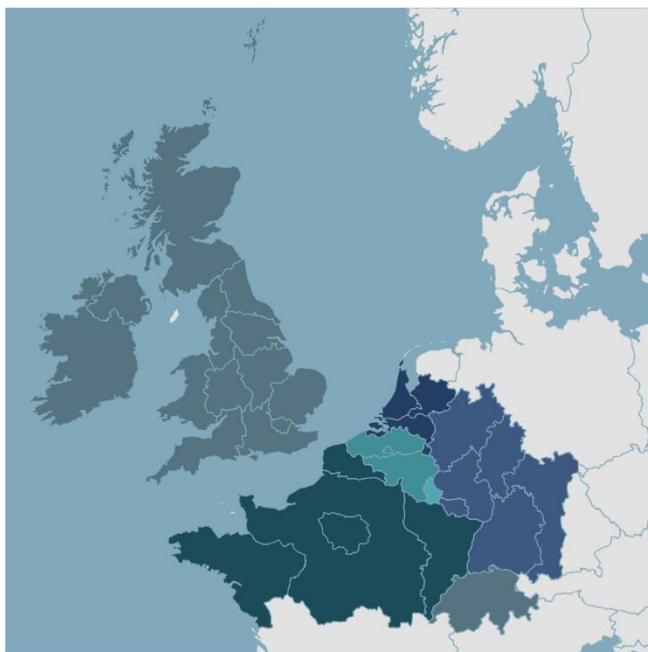


Figure 1 The highlighted countries located in the NWE region of Europe.

Accepted topics

In order to be eligible for the ValuSect vouchers, applicants and their proposed cases should address one or more of the following topics:

- Insect-based products (in development),
- Innovative feed products,
- Optimising insect breeding condition,
- Insect composition
- Insect processing for use in feed applications
- Requires services available from the “Menu of services”.

Cases can proceed different stages along the insect business value chain. Cases in an early concept phase (preparation), prototype or finished product phase will be accepted as long as they are relevant for the animal feed industry.

Accepted insect species

Cases should include at least one of the four insect species included in the ValuSect project. These insect species are:

- yellow mealworm (*Tenebrio molitor*)
- house cricket (*Acheta domesticus*)
- migratory locust (*Locusta migratoria*)
- black soldier fly (*Hermetia illucens*)

Cases targeting other insect species will be rejected.

Application documents

All documents related to the application for the vouchers can be found [on ValuSect's website](#). They include:

- Application form
- Menu of Services
- ValuSect Quick Look Guide
- Data Privacy Policy,
- Guidelines for Applicants (this document)
- SME Declaration
- De-minimis self-declaration

These documents include all necessary information about the Open Call and the application process. It is highly recommended to consult these documents when applying for the vouchers.

In the **application form**, applicants will be asked to fill in general information about their business and provide contact information. The participant should provide a detailed description of the proposal, including goals and results. The proposal should fit with the objectives and services of the ValuSect project.

The list of available services, called **Menu of Services**, that can be provided by the partners includes technological services, feed development and innovation, marketing and communications services and strategic business services, all related to insect-based feed products. Please note that a **quick look guide** will show you a summary of the services provided, the application process and the deadlines.

The **Data Privacy Policy** provides an explanation on how the personal data is used when the applicant engages in the programme, for instance by using the ValuSect website, participating in ValuSect events or implementing the projects approved by the programme.

The application documents also include a **SME Declaration** and a **De-minimis self-declaration**. By signing these documents, applicants confirm being aware of the fact that the support granted by the ValuSect voucher scheme is a support for SME. These documents should be submitted (signed) together with the application form in order to be eligible for receiving a voucher.

Submission of the application should be done by sending the application form, the de-minimis self declaration and the SME-declaration to valusect@thomasmore.be

Language guidelines

English is the official language for ValuSect Open Calls. Submissions done in any other language will not be evaluated. English is also the only official language during the whole execution of the ValuSect project. This also means that any requested submission of deliverables will be provided in English.

Application content

As described in the application form, it should contain a description of following:

- Title and summary of the case
- Introduction of the idea
- Innovation
- Relevance
- Goal
- Network
- Services
- Applicability

The applicant should mention a **title** for the case and should be able to describe their idea simply and concisely. The **summary** should contain a brief and clear description (max. 250 words) of the idea including the main goal and expected results. Consider that, if the application is selected, the summary will be published through all communication channels of the project, therefore it should not contain confidential information.

In the **introduction** section, the applicant should be able to clearly describe the problem, the challenges or the opportunities and indicate how this idea fits in the call. Provide a brief explanation of the context and the need for a case in which you would like to be supported.

Applicants should describe the innovative character of their proposal. The novelty should be described as well as the level of **innovation**, i.e. what is the current status of your case.

Applicants should indicate the **relevance** of their case to the ValuSect project. It should be described how the proposal is relevant to the overall insect-based feed market and/or industry.

The main **goal** as well as sub goals that have to be achieved with the project should be completely described. In this section, provide the intended results that would be achieved with the support of

the ValuSect service vouchers (e.g. new research requests, network activities, prototypes, testing, (business) models, methods, working methods, demonstrators, processes, product concepts and/or service concepts).

If any, the applicant should describe other parties that are involved in the proposal as a **network**. For example, other SMEs, knowledge institutes, organisations, clusters, trade associations, unions, etc. Name them and briefly describe the part they will or can take in this application.

Applicants should include the **services** which seem relevant for their case in the way they are described in the menu of services. More than one service can be suggested. This allows the consortium to form a relevant jury according to the topic of the case and to estimate the total value of the voucher.

In the **applicability** section the applicant should show how they will apply the obtained results from their case to the North-West Europe insect sector. What is the contribution of the project to the insect-based feed sector? This section indicates how results can be disseminated (if relevant) and what the possible long-term effects for the European market are.

Documentation Formats

All documents requested during the submission process must be submitted electronically **in PDF format** without restrictions for printing.

Timeline of the voucher call

All proposals must be submitted by February 21st 2022. Proposals submitted after the deadline will not be taken into consideration.

Open call 3	
Application	Date
Open for submission	January 17 th 2022
Deadline for submission	February 21st 2022
Evaluation results and contracting	April 2022
Implementation	From May 2021

Note: The opening and closing dates can be subject to change in case of any modifications in the project's schedule.

Evaluation of the applications

Evaluation process

The proposal will be reviewed by three different experts of the ValuSect consortium (according to the topic of your proposal), who will evaluate the quality and the feasibility of the case.

Specific criteria referring to the proposal will be evaluated. The maximum number of points is 48. Only the proposals that reach a score 30 will enter the final ranking. The ranking will be used as a basis for selection, but also the availability of the services will be taken into account. The top ranked proposals will be selected.

The applicants will receive the results of their evaluation of their case by the end of April 2022. In case of approval, after receiving the evaluation, they will be contacted by the voucher leader in order to agree on the services, the deliverables and the timing. Based on this agreement, a voucher service contract will be composed. This contract describes the services, the deliverables and the agreements about timing, collaboration and the follow-up of the progress. Once the contract is signed, successful SMEs can start implementing their vouchers in cooperation with the respective services from the ValuSect project.

The vouchers will consist of one or a combination of services, and the implementation will be done under the guidance of a voucher leader assigned by ValuSect. The implementation timeline will be depending on the character of the voucher application, on the compilation of the services and on the capacity of the ValuSect partners. The timeline will not exceed 12 months.

Evaluation criteria

The proposals will be evaluated through a scoring system. Each of the sections has a certain weight and receives a score of 0-3. Any proposal which scores 1 or less on any criteria will be rejected automatically. Proposals have to achieve a minimum score of 2 for Innovation, Relevance, Goal and Applicability to be eligible.

criteria	0	1	2	3	Weighting	Score 0 - 3
<p>Introduction</p> <p>Describe the problem, challenge, need or opportunity in which you would like to be supported.</p>	PCNO is not mentioned or does not fit the scheme.	PCNO is quite simple/or narrow or not really fitting.	PCNO is clearly addressed to the project demands/goals.	PCNO is clearly addressed it is of high complexity and fits all project demands and goals.	2	
<p>Innovation</p> <p>Describe the innovative character of your idea. What is the current status?</p>	Proposal fails to describe the status of the idea.	Criterion is inadequately addressed or there are serious inherent weaknesses.	Proposal addresses the criterion well, describes the current status.	Proposal successfully addresses all relevant aspects of the criterion.	3	
<p>Goal</p> <p>Describe the intended project results that would be achieved through the use of the ValuSect service vouchers.</p>	Proposal fails to describe the goal or cannot be assessed due to missing or incomplete information.	Proposal inadequately addresses the goal or there are serious inherent weaknesses.	Proposal describes the goal well, but a number of shortcomings are present.	Proposal successfully describes the goal and all the relevant aspects of the criterion. Any shortcomings are minor.	3	
<p>Relevance</p>					3	

<p>Describe how your proposal is relevant to the insect industry/sector</p>	<p>Relevance not clear.</p>	<p>Relevance is quite small for accelerating the sustainable increase of the sector.</p>	<p>Relevance is clear for a sustainable acceleration of the sector but is restricted to just a section of it.</p>	<p>Relevance is clear for a sustainable acceleration of the whole sector or wide parts of it.</p>	
<p>Network (if any)</p> <p>If any, describe other parties involved in this application.</p>	<p>No mention of any networks</p>	<p>One or several mentioned but not suitable.</p>	<p>One or several mentioned which are suitable.</p>	<p>Several mentioned which collaborate in a well-established network.</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>Services</p> <p>Which service(s) apply from the “Menu of Services” to fulfil the voucher request for development.</p>	<p>No services are available for the applicant.</p>	<p>Services available do only fit the request partly.</p>	<p>Services available are suitable to support the applicant's request.</p>	<p>Services are fully available and can support the applicant in reaching the required goals.</p>	<p>2</p>
<p>Applicability:</p> <p>Show how you will apply the results obtained to the insect business in North-West Europe.</p>	<p>No application mentioned.</p>	<p>Application of the results is not clear or not feasible</p>	<p>Application of the results is clearly described and feasible.</p>	<p>Application of results is convincingly described with time schedule and measurements to report success.</p>	<p>3</p>

Additional information

Reporting/Monitoring

ValuSect as a network is still being established and we want to learn and improve; we also have a requirement to demonstrate impact for the funding received for this project. Each voucher and service funded through this call provides information to help to build the network. Therefore, it is a condition of the voucher award, that each recipient is required to report about the progress by participating in surveys and writing feedback/progress reports. Project progress must be reported on a monthly basis using report templates provided by ValuSect. Information on network interactions and services required is to be reported every six months.

The collected data will be generalised and used to describing 'best practice'-cases. They will be published to inspire, share, learn – for the benefit of the network.

Responsibilities of ValuSect partners

The ValuSect partners who redeem the vouchers (services) receive indirect funds from the European Commission. As such, they are responsible for the correct use of the funds and ensuring that the beneficiaries meet the obligations under the specific requirements of Interreg NWE as described in the Interreg NWE Program Manual (2014-2020, version 7).

Intellectual Property Rights

The following Intellectual Property Rights conditions should be followed:

- The proposals submitted should be solely based on original works by the applicants and their foreseen developments are free from third party rights, or they are clearly stated.
- All products (material and intellectual) that derive from the project will be the property of the partnership in their entirety. The outcome and results of the projects have to be made available to the general public free of charge.
Unless otherwise agreed
 - Each of the joint owners shall be entitled to use their jointly owned results for non-commercial research and educational activities on a royalty-free basis, and without requiring the prior consent of the other joint owner(s).
- The managing authority reserves the right to use them for information and communication actions in respect of the programme. In case that there are pre-existing intellectual and industrial properties rights which are made available to the project, these are fully respected. Any communication or publication by the funded Vouchers shall clearly indicate that the project has received funding from the European Union, and ValuSect project displaying the ValuSect logo on all printed and digital material, including websites and press releases.
- Parts of the projects selected for funding (including the publishable summary of the proposal) will be used for ValuSect dissemination purposes.
- Selected applicants shall, throughout the duration of the Project, take appropriate measures to engage with the public and the media about the project and to highlight the Voucher support of the European Commission. Moreover, all outcomes of the Vouchers and services should be published as open data (unless an exception it is fully justified), respecting ValuSect Data Management Plan and any Ethical issues defined by the European

Commission and National Regulations. Any publicity made by the Voucher consortium in respect of the project, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, must specify a) that it is funded by the European Commission via the ValuSect project and b) that it reflects only the author's views and that the European Commission and ValuSect is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained therein. Moreover, the European Commission and the ValuSect consortium shall be authorised to publish, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, information related to the project.

Conflict of Interest

The Voucher applicant must take all measures to prevent any situation where the impartial and objective implementation of the Vouchers and services is compromised for reasons involving economic interest, political or national affinity, family or emotional ties or any other shared interest ('conflict of interests').

They must formally notify to the Commission (via the ValuSect Voucher leader) without delay any situation constituting or likely to lead to a conflict of interests and immediately take all the necessary steps to rectify this situation. The ValuSect coordinator may verify that the measures taken are appropriate and may require additional measures to be taken by a specified deadline.

If the Voucher applicant breaches any of its obligations, the ValuSect partners reserve the right to terminate the Voucher.

Data Protection & Confidentiality

During implementation of the voucher and for five (5) years after the end of the voucher, the parties must keep confidential any data, documents or other material (in any form) that is identified as confidential at Voucher contract signing time ('confidential information'). If a beneficiary SME requests, the ValuSect consortium may agree to keep such information confidential for an additional period beyond the initial five years. This will be explicitly stated at the Voucher offer.

If information has been identified as confidential during the Voucher execution or only orally, it will be considered to be confidential only if this is accepted by the ValuSect Lead partner and confirmed in writing within 30 days of the oral disclosure. Unless otherwise agreed between the parties, they may use confidential information only to implement the Agreement. For more information see [Privacy policy document](#).

The Voucher consortium may disclose confidential information to the ValuSect consortium, who will be bounded by a specific Non-Disclosure Agreement.

Promoting the Action and Giving Visibility to the EU Funding

The consortium of SME and ValuSect Partners must promote the approved Vouchers and services, ValuSect project and its results, by providing targeted information to multiple audiences (including the media and the public) in a strategic and effective manner and to highlight the financial support of the EC.

Unless the EC or the ValuSect Voucher leader requests or agrees otherwise or unless it is impossible, any communication activity related to the action (including in electronic form, via social media, etc.), any publicity, including at a conference or seminar or any type of information or promotional material (brochure, leaflet, poster, presentation etc.), and any infrastructure, equipment and major results funded by the grant must include the ValuSect logo.

For communication activities: “This project has indirectly received funding from the European Union’s Interreg NWE program (2014-2020), via an Open Call issued and executed under project Valusect (NWE Programme project - NWE 1004)”.

For infrastructure, equipment and major results: “This is part of the Vouchers that has indirectly received funding from the European Union’s Interreg NWE program (2014-2020), via an Open Call issued and executed under project ValuSect (NWE Programme project - NWE 1004)”.

When displayed in association with a logo, the European emblem should be given appropriate prominence. This obligation to use the European emblem in respect of projects to which the EC contributes implies no right of exclusive use.

Any publicity made by the beneficiary in respect of the project, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, must specify that it reflects only the author’s views and that the EC or ValuSect project is not liable for any use that may be made of the information contained therein.

The EC and the ValuSect partners shall be authorised to publish, in whatever form and on or by whatever medium, the following information:

- the name of the Voucher and all consortium members
- contact address of the Voucher and all consortium members
- the general purpose of the project
- the amount of the financial contribution foreseen for the project; after the financial transaction, the amount of the financial contribution actually received by the Voucher
- the geographic location of the activities carried out;
- the list of dissemination activities and/or of patent (applications) relating to foreground;
- the details/references and the abstracts of scientific publications relating to foreground and, if funded within the Voucher, the published version or the final manuscript accepted for publication;
- the publishable reports submitted to ValuSect;
- any picture or any audio-visual or web material provided to the EC and ValuSect in the framework of the project / Voucher.

The Voucher leader shall ensure that all necessary authorisations for such publication have been obtained and that the publication of the information by the EC and ValuSect does not infringe any rights of third parties.

Upon a duly substantiated request by the Voucher applicant on behalf of the Voucher consortium members, the Valusect consortium, if such permission is provided by the EC, may agree to forego such publicity if disclosure of the information indicated above would risk compromising the beneficiary’s security, academic or commercial interests.

By applying to the ValuSect Open Call, the applicant automatically accepts all the rules and conditions set in the **Guidelines for Applicants**.

Contact information

For more information, contact ValuSect: valusect@thomasmore.be

The ValuSect consortium:

Organisation	Contact
Thomas More University of Applied Sciences	Sabine Van Miert Toon Peeters
Inagro vzw	Carl Coudron
Aberystwyth University	Alison Kingston-Smith
Stichting Fontys	Marcel Roosen
Boerenbondvereniging voor projecten vzw	Kristof Severijns
Teagasc Agriculture and Food Development Authority	Carlos Alvarez
New Generation Nutrition Pro-Active	Marian Peters
AliénorEU	Elise Regairaz
DGfZ - Deutsche Gesellschaft für Züchtungskunde e.V.	Bettina Bongartz