



Innovation vouchers –Terms of Reference

Water Test Network

Version 1.3

September 2018

Table of contents

1. Characteristics of the innovation voucher
2. Areas for application
3. Procedure for call and selection
4. Selection criteria
5. Feedback obligations
6. Case studies
7. Appendix

Definitions

Application Review Panel (ARP)

Panel that will review stage 2 applications.

Innovation chaser

A Water Test Network partner, or individual, specific to a region in the project area, in charge of providing high level information to candidate SMEs regarding services and facilities, funding, timings, queries emerging from the voucher call or access documents, etc.

Project Steering Group (PSG)

Composed by one representative of each of the partners and will collegially review stage 2 applications if no decision can be reached at the ARP.

SME

SME: the main factors determining whether a company is a SME are: the staff headcount (less than 50 for Small, 250 for Medium); and either turnover or balance sheet total less or equal to 10m€.

(<http://ec.europa.eu/growth/SMEs/business-friendly-environment/SME-definition/>)

1. Characteristics of the innovation voucher

The project WATER TEST NETWORK is funded under the INTERREG NWE programme (www.nweurope.eu) and has the objective to enhance innovation performance of enterprises throughout North West European regions. A map of the eligible NW Europe regions can be found in on the project website (www.nweurope.eu/water-test-network). Within the WATER TEST NETWORK, innovation vouchers are offered to SME's. These vouchers provide access to a transnational network of testing facilities and of research know how to allow them to test, demonstrate and develop new products for the water sector and its end users.

The main characteristics of the innovation voucher are;

- The voucher application process is used to assess the feasibility of the SME's proposal and will assist in tailoring the support for the selected SME's.
- All SME's from North West Europe can apply
- The voucher is awarded to projects with a well-defined innovation aim and convincing business opportunity.
- Applications can be submitted at any point from (11-December-2018) until (01-August-2021).
- Applications will be evaluated on a monthly basis (indicative interval, actual interval will depend on amount of applications coming in). They need to be submitted before the last Friday of the month to be evaluated in the next month.
- Applications are evaluated by the WATER TEST NETWORK Application Review Panel (ARP, see point 3 and Appendix 1).
- The voucher allocated to the SME is a mechanism to gain access to a certain level of support, which will be in any of 3 components:
 - 1. A diagnostic report, delivered by the supporting Innovation Chaser, who will capture information for the initial assessment. This will help the project to understand the SME needs and enable the Innovation Chaser to recommend to the SME the best route through the Water Test Network support on offer.
 - 2. Access to a test facility to allow the SME to test their technology. Access required varies from a few days in a lab to several months in a full-scale (waste) water plant.
 - 3. Support with validation and verification to assist market entry, where necessary. This will include supporting SMEs to get ISO 14034 certification following the European General Verification Protocol (EU GVP).

Support for a SME will not exceed €50,000, except where a special case is made for high potential. All costs will be de minimus, with appropriate recording.

- The support packages will use a phased approach. Meaning that the SME will need to submit a new Stage 2 application form for each support component.
- Depending on the support being granted, the voucher will cover the cost incurred by the test centre in hosting the trial. All the SMEs costs, including but not limited to own staffing, travel, accommodation and logistics, must be met by the SME.

2. Areas for application:

All submissions for support are considered irrespective of its application as long as it is relevant to the water sector and/or its end users.

3. Procedure for call and selection

- The call is continuously open from (11-December-2018 till 01-August-2021)

- The SME is required to first submit the Stage 1 Application Form to prove their eligibility and alignment with the WATER TEST NETWORK project scope.
- The Stage 1 Application Form will go through a review by the Innovation Chaser. The SME will only be directed to the Stage 2 Application Form if the Stage 1 Application Form has been approved. Feedback for Stage 1 approval/rejection will be provided by the Innovation Chaser through a letter of approval/rejection.
- For the stage 2 application the innovation chaser will continue supporting the SME. If required, the SME will be referred to the innovation chaser linked to the preferred test centre. Who will then become the supporting innovation chaser.
- The SME drafts the stage 2 application form, based on the discussions with the innovation chaser and according to the outline provided in the innovation voucher guidelines. The SME needs to send the completed stage 2 application form to the supporting Innovation Chaser. The voucher application is submitted when the supporting innovation chaser sends the application to the WATER TEST NETWORK ARP.
- SMEs will not receive any money directly.
- The voucher allocated to the SME after their Stage 2 application has been approved is a mechanism to gain access to a certain level of support, which will be in any of 3 components as mentioned in part 1. A voucher will be sent to the SME in the form the letter of approval as stated below.
- All WATER TEST NETWORK partners are bound by confidentiality regarding data provided by the SMEs. To protect the confidential nature of information exchange anything Intellectual Property or Non-Disclosure Agreement related will be covered in the contract between the SME and the relevant testing facility (See Appendix 1).
- The WATER TEST NETWORK ARP meets once a month (indicative interval, the interval will depend on the amount of applications coming in) to discuss the voucher applications. Approval by the ARP must be unanimous. In a case where there is disagreement within the ARP the application will be submitted to the Project Steering Group (PSG) for decision. The PSG will then review the application in full. Majority rule applies to this vote to approve an application. All other outcomes will result in the refusal of the SME application.
- After the ARP meeting, the assisting innovation chaser informs the SME about the outcome via a letter of approval/rejection. When the voucher is not granted, the SME receives feedback about why the application was rejected. When the voucher is granted, the SME will receive the following document:
 - A letter of approval that describes the work that will be done for an agreed value. This description fits the scope of work in the voucher application form as close as possible.
- After accepting the offer the SME will be contacted by the testing facility (to plan the trial, sign the contract and all other site-specific required paperwork). The trial programme will be agreed for the work to be done. Since all testing need to be finalised by (06-Oct-2021), the SME should allow enough time for project delivery, agreed in advance with the testing facility. Therefore, no applications are admitted into the call after (01-August-2021)
- The test facility has the right to refuse the project on certain grounds (for example, but not limited to; safety concerns, permits). The reason for refusal will be commented in the feedback towards the SME.
- After the tests are completed, the SME will receive the test results in a format agreed between the SME and the relevant test facility. A de minimis notification showing the total value of received support in the Water Test Network project will be send to the SME.

4. Selection criteria

Each application is evaluated on the following criteria;

Assessment categories
1. Innovative Elements
2. Commercial potential
3. Impact on sustainable development
4. Fit with Water Test Network aims and objectives
5. Ability to Execute / Resourcing Efficiency

Applications are judged on aforementioned criteria primarily. In case the remaining funds become limited (This is anticipated being MID PROJECT), the representation of the different NWE countries might be used as an additional criterion to select among proposals of equal quality.

5. Feedback obligations

For the WATER TEST NETWORK project to achieve meaningful results and collect evidence for capitalisation, feedback from each supported company will be collected.

Questions are added onto the Stage 2 application form to capture feedback on the application process and project promotion.

Feedback regarding the test facilities will be collected locally.

6. Case studies

Successful applicants will be asked to show in a portfolio of case studies to demonstrate the impact that WATER TEST NETWORK has on the innovation performance of enterprises throughout North West European region.

Publication of the case studies will be done in agreement with the relevant applicant.

7. Appendix

Appendix 1

List of Innovation chasers and their contact details

Partner name	Innovation Chaser	Email	Telephone
SWH	Daniel Gerdes	daniel.gerdes@scottishwater.co.uk	+447484509431
CEW	Jordi Moreno	j.moreno@cew.nl	+31 582100919 (landline) +31 657772569 (mob)
WVV	Peter-Jan van Oene	PvanOene@valleiveluwe.nl	+ 31612986083
TZW	Beate Hamsch	beate.hamsch@tzw.de	+49 721 9678220
BRGM	Christophe Mouvet	c.mouvet@brgm.fr	+33 2 38 64 39 08
VITO	Charlotte Boeckert	cb@vlakwa.be	+3256241261
JHL	Richard Allan	Richard.Allan@hutton.ac.uk	+44 1382 568952
Enterprise Ireland	Liam Curran	Liam.curran@enterprise-ireland.com	+35361777014 (Landline) +353876813794 (Mob)