

Platform for Alternative Feed Ingredients Evaluation (PAFIE) - Black soldier fly larvae (BSFL) in Kenya

Commercial livestock feeds primarily rely on plant-based protein sources such as corn and soybean. However, these ingredients are highly susceptible to price instability and supply disruptions due to their dependence on rainfed agriculture and generally low productivity. This challenge is especially pronounced for small-scale farmers, who often cannot afford commercial feeds, resulting in limited access and low livestock productivity.

Black soldier fly larvae (BSFL) offer a promising, sustainable and locally available alternative as a high-protein feed ingredient for poultry, pigs, and fish. However, despite the growing interest and increasing private sector investment, the BSFL value chain in East Africa remains underdeveloped, with most producers operating on a small scale, using diverse organic waste streams to cultivate larvae. The larvae waste conversion efficiency remains low. It is unclear whether BSFL can be profitably produced at scale to drive the livestock feed sector in Africa in a way to enable reliable and affordable access to small scale farmers.

The PAFIE-BSFL research project will explore the potential to produce BSFL at scale to transform livestock feed production in Africa through a business model with enhanced linkages with upstream and downstream actors. The project will be conducted in Kenya and Tanzania and will run from December 2024 – December 2028. Our key project partners include BSF Breeding (South Africa), InsectiPro (Kenya) and Chanzi Ltd (Tanzania).

At an inception workshop held in Limuru- Kenya on the 23-24 July 2025, participants from the central and country governments, academia, private sector and civil society discussed and provided input into the project scope, activities, sites among others. The following are some of the key recommendations that participants made:

- Incorporate the public health component under the Directorate of Veterinary Services but align it within the existing KEPHIS Standing Committee on imports and exports, with involvement from KEBS.
- While there is no standalone regulatory framework for BSFL, a production protocol is already in place and should be referenced.
- Explore partnerships with microfinance institutions and agricultural finance providers to support the scale-up efforts.
- Engage additional partners with an interest in the circular economy, such as United Nations Environment Programme, to broaden the dialogue and collaboration.
- Ensure the inclusion of the National Environment Management Authority in discussions related to waste management and environmental compliance.
- Policy and Regulation- Currently, businesses are required to obtain separate certifications from KEBS, NEMA, and KEPHIS for each product, significantly increasing the cost of doing BSFL related business. There is a need to streamline the regulatory process to make it more efficient and cost-effective. ICIPE has an existing working group on policy, and engagement with this group is recommended for continued follow-up and possible inclusion.