

## Common Interest Groups CHARTER

Valid from 1 January 2026

### AIM OF A MATERINEX CIG

The aim of a MateriNex **Common Interest Group** (CIG) is to stimulate collaboration between stakeholders around a specific MateriNex innovation theme. This is achieved through the organisation of activities such as:

**Open events** centred on a MateriNex (sub-)theme, offering opportunities for knowledge exchange and networking, and open to the wider public;

**Closed events**, exclusively for CIG members, including:

- Focus groups to contribute to the development and updating of innovation roadmaps and to share project results.
- In-depth sessions.

### TARGET GROUP

A MateriNex Common Interest Group (CIG) is open to all stakeholders within the innovation ecosystem related to a specific MateriNex innovation theme. Participation is particularly encouraged from representatives of:

- Companies
- Research groups<sup>1</sup> at Knowledge institutions
- Collective research centers
- Spearhead clusters (SPC's), Innovative Business Networks (IBN's), and clusterorganisations active in complementary innovation domains
- Sector organisations

### BENEFITS OF CIG MEMBERSHIP

- Make use of free membership
- Gain access to closed events
- Receive regular information and updates on activities
- View innovation roadmaps and contribute to their ongoing updates
- Nominate a chair and co-chair and participate in their election
- Gain insight into project results
- Receive invitations to in-depth sessions
- Participate in targeted networking opportunities

### CONDITIONS FOR CIG MEMBERSHIP

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<sup>1</sup>A Research group brings together scientists who focus on a specific field of research and collaborate on it. Research groups are recognised by the university's Research Council or by the senior management of the research institution.

Any organisation that falls within the defined target group may join a MateriNex Common Interest Group (CIG) at any time. Upon registration, organisations are asked to submit a **Letter of Commitment (LoC)** confirming their intention to actively participate in the CIG.

Each organisation appoints one representative, and optionally a substitute, as the main contact person for the CIG. For knowledge institutions, one LoC per research group is required and must be signed by the person responsible for that group.

Once MateriNex has received a signed LoC, the organisation will be granted access to both open and closed CIG activities relevant to its commitment. Confirmation of membership and access will be provided by email to the designated representative(s).

Representatives may participate in multiple CIGs. Organisations may change their representative or end their participation at any time by notifying MateriNex by email.

Representatives of VLAIO and WEWIS, in their role as commissioning bodies and subsidising authorities, have access to closed CIG activities.

By participating in MateriNex CIGs, organisations grant permission for the use of their logo on the MateriNex website, exclusively for informational and identification purposes. This use may include references to collaborations, events, or publicly available materials. Use of the logo does not imply endorsement, sponsorship, or partnership, unless explicitly stated otherwise. If an organisation does not wish its logo to be displayed, it may contact MateriNex via [info@materinex.be](mailto:info@materinex.be). Upon request, the logo will be removed immediately.

## GOVERNANCE OF THE CIG

Each CIG is governed by a core team consisting of the MateriNex team (coordinator, innovation manager(s), and community manager) and a chair and co-chair elected from, respectively, the relevant business community and the research community.

Only organisations representing either a company or a research group<sup>2</sup> affiliated with a research institution (meeting the criteria of a research and knowledge dissemination organisation as defined in the European Framework for State Aid for Research, Development and Innovation<sup>3</sup>) **and** having signed a Letter of Commitment (LoC) are eligible to nominate candidates for the position of chair or co-chair and to participate in the election of both the chair and the co-chair.

Representatives of the commissioning authorities (VLAIO and EWI) and of other organisations such as Spearhead Clusters (SPCs) and sector organisations do not participate in the election of the chair and co-chair.

A CIG is established for the period from 1 January 2024 up to and including 31 December 2028, corresponding to a total duration of five years. The mandate of the chair and co-chair is set at two and a half years; both may stand for re-election.

<sup>2</sup> The term 'research group' was defined above within the context of MateriNex.

<sup>3</sup> Framework (2022/C 414/01) of 19 October 2022 on State aid for research, development and innovation. Specifically, a research and knowledge dissemination organisation is defined in point 16, ff) of this O&O&I Framework Regulation.

For the election of the chair and co-chair of each CIG, a call for candidates was launched in mid-2024 for the first operational period of two and a half years (January 2024 to June 2026). For the second operational period of the CIGs, also lasting two and a half years (July 2026 to December 2028), a new call for candidates will be launched towards the end of the first operational period (spring 2026).

Per university association or knowledge institution, a maximum of one candidate for the position of co-chair may be nominated per CIG. Each university association or knowledge institution is entitled to one vote per CIG in both the vote for the co-chair and the election of the chair. In practice, this means that the participating research groups within a given university association or knowledge institution may, by consensus, nominate one candidate for co-chair per CIG and, likewise by consensus, express their preference for both the chair and the co-chair of the relevant CIG.

Each university association or knowledge institution shall designate a primary contact person, who will communicate the nominations for co-chair from within their organisation to the MateriNex team for each CIG. This primary contact person will also receive all nominations for chair and co-chair submitted to MateriNex and will complete the voting procedure on behalf of their university association or knowledge institution.

All nominations received for the positions of chair and co-chair for each CIG are communicated by the MateriNex team by email to the voting members of each CIG (see the chapter "Conditions for Membership") and to the primary contact persons of each university association or knowledge institution. These parties may subsequently indicate their preference for both the chair and the co-chair of the CIG in which they participate by means of a digital vote.

Candidates who receive the highest number of votes are appointed by the MateriNex coordinator as chair and co-chair of the respective CIGs for a term of two and a half operational years. In the event of a tie in the election of the chair and/or co-chair for any CIG, the vote for the chair and/or co-chair shall be repeated among the candidates who obtained the highest number of votes. The outcome of the election is communicated by the MateriNex coordinator to all CIG participants.

If a chair or co-chair wishes to terminate their mandate prematurely, they shall notify the MateriNex coordinator in writing by email. A new chair or co-chair will then be elected as soon as possible, in accordance with the same voting procedures as set out in this Charter.

## CODE OF CONDUCT

MateriNex Common Interest Groups are built around shared interests, constructive dialogue, and mutual trust.

MateriNex encourages open and honest discussion to support progress. Participants are invited to freely share ideas, questions, and feedback in a respectful manner, with the aim of gaining new insights and working together towards common goals.

To support a safe and productive environment, the following principles apply:

**1. Open and responsible collaboration**

MateriNex promotes open cooperation and trust-based knowledge sharing during all CIG activities, in full compliance with applicable legislation.

**2. Compliance with competition law**

Participants are expected to comply with the Belgian Code of Economic Law and applicable European competition rules. Discussions must remain within the bounds of fair competition.

**3. Confidentiality (Chatham House Rule)**

The Chatham House Rule applies: participants are free to use the information received, but neither the identity nor the affiliation of the contributor may be disclosed.

**4. Respectful and constructive conduct**

All participants are expected to engage in open dialogue with mutual respect and to contribute constructively to discussions..