PROJECT ACRONYM

**PRE-APPLICATION ICON PROJECT**

(version of September 2025)

# Guidelines

ICON is an acronym which stands for:”Interdisciplinair Coöperatief Onderzoek”. This project type is meant to create a strong collaboration and synergy between industry and the research community. In such a project, companies and research organisations contribute jointly to reach a common goal while mutually inspiring each other. The collaboration in the project is based on a balanced partnership between research organisations and companies. A MateriNex ICON project should fit within the demand-driven roadmaps of MateriNex.

An ICON project combines a basic research part (conducted by research organisations) and an industrial research part (conducted by companies), and has the following characteristics:

* the consortium must consist of at least 3 unaffiliated companies and 1 research organization. Vito and other Strategic Research Centers can never participate as the sole research partner. A minimum of 2 and a maximum of 6 companies must be eligible for support from VLAIO, and no company may account for more than 70% of the accepted costs of the industrial part.
* the project realises an effective collaboration between all project partners, i.e. not only between the companies and the research organisations, but also between partners within each project part;
* a significant participation from the companies is required: the total budget of the industrial partners should be larger than the total budget of the research organisation(s) in the basic research part;
* the contribution of the research organisations in the basic research part differs from their typical contributions to industrial research or contract research, in an ICON it needs to go **beyond** the **international scientific state of the art** with high-risk research of which the **results** will be **applicable** for a group of companies that is **broader than the project partners**;
* research organisations not meeting these criteria should participate as **research partners in the industrial part.**

Pre-application of a MateriNex ICON is mandatory and includes both pre-application to MateriNex and pre-application to VLAIO. For efficiency reasons, applicants need to submit both at the same time.

1. For VLAIO, please fill in the [VLAIO ICON pre-application template](https://www.vlaio.be/nl/media/2399) and submit it following the instructions in that form. The assessment is done by VLAIO advisors who also check the financial status of the industrial project partners. Please note that it can take 6 to 8 weeks for complete feedback to come from VLAIO.
2. For MateriNex, fill in the present form and e-mail it, together with a copy of the completed VLAIO-pre-application template to projects@materinex.be. External (national and international) experts appointed by MateriNex in consultation with VLAIO, will use the pre-application to evaluate the scientific, technical and economic value, the fit in the MateriNex roadmap(s) and the match with the valorisation expectations of the industrial project partners.

**Only consortia that get a GO from MateriNex can write the full proposal and submit it in the VLAIO-portal**.

The final evaluation of the full proposal is done by VLAIO and international experts.

Before submitting your pre-application, make sure you are familiar with the most recent information on the [VLAIO website](https://www.vlaio.be/nl/vlaio-netwerk/projecten-voor-speerpuntclusters/aanvraagprocedure-projecten-voor-speerpuntclusters), especially with the VLAIO ICON manual (*Toelichtingsdocument ICON-projecten,*  available in Dutch only). Note that VLAIO recently updated the document in July 2025.

# Information for MateriNex

## General information

**Project acronym and title**

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| --- | --- |
| Acronym | *TODO* |
| Title | *TODO* |

## FIT in MateriNex roadmap

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| **Name of the roadmap**: *TODO*-**Contribution to the roadmap strategy and objectives of the application areas of MateriNex****- How does the project address the transversal challenges of the roadmap?** |

# Experts to be avoided

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| *Max 15 per partner and 30 per project.* |

# Commitments when submitting ICON project through MateriNex

By pre-applying an ICON project via MateriNex, the project partners accept the following:

* The project proposal is simultaneously pre-announced to VLAIO and to MateriNex. (see the *Guidelines* on page *2* )
* When the full proposal is approved by VLAIO/HBC, a one-off success fee has to be paid to MateriNex. This amounts to 3.000 euros for research institutions and large enterprises and to 1.500 euros for SMEs. These contributions will be used by MateriNex to organize the follow-up of the project.
* The companies of the industrial advisory board of the SBO part of the ICON project are informed by the project consortium of their financial contribution upon approval of the project. Until the end of the project, an annual fee will be paid to MateriNex equal to the amount requested for participation in the advisory board of an SBO submitted through the FWO. This currently amounts to 1.000 euros/year for a large enterprise and 250 euros/year for an SME. These contributions will be used by MateriNex for dissemination of the (public) project results and to trigger follow-up projects.
* Upon submission of the full project proposal, only the term sheet at market terms can be chosen.
* If the project is approved,
	+ - The main-applicant will e-mail a copy of the VLAIO-decision (‘beslissingsbrief’) to projects@MateriNex.be
		- The MateriNex template will be used for the cooperation agreement, which stipulates, among other things:
	+ Access rights to results of a project partner, for valorisation of its own project results, will be paid at market price, as stated in the term sheet;
	+ All communication regarding the project mentions that the support comes from VLAIO/FIO via MateriNex;
	+ The MateriNex and VLAIO logos are used in all communications and presentations;
	+ VLAIO and MateriNex are included in the acknowledgements of all publications;
	+ MateriNex automatically becomes a member of the industrial advisory board;
	+ MateriNex is invited to the progress meetings as an observer;
	+ The knowledge institutions in the SBO part of the ICON project will share non confidential results with MateriNex for wider dissemination;
	+ The project partners are willing to present project results at dissemination events organised by MateriNex and at the meetings of the [Common Interest Group (CIG) of the related roadmap](https://materinex.be/nl/common-interest-groups-cig).