General Procedure for Submitting Project Proposals to MateriNex

Version 20261103

1. Submission of Project Proposals to MateriNex

MateriNex issues **annual calls for proposals**, setting out the submission arrangements for the relevant budget year.

Dedicated pathways may also be established and announced to support the exploration, preparation and submission of project proposals within selected themes ('**project accelerator**').

Only collective feasibility studies may be submitted on a rolling basis.

Projects must demonstrably address the needs of Flemish companies and align with at least one of the following MateriNex roadmaps:

English versions will be available soon.

- materialen voor batterijtechnologie
- materialen voor bouw en constructie
- strategische en kritieke grondstoffen

2. Project Types

The following project types may be eligible for submission under a call for proposals or a project accelerator:

- cSBO: Strategic Basic Research
- ICON: Interdisciplinary Cooperative Research
- cO&O: Cooperative Research (excluding development activities)

Only the following project type is eligible for submission on a rolling basis:

- Feasibility Studies:Submitted by a consortium of at least three independent companies to prepare for an ICON or cO&O project.

3. Mandatory Pre-application

Pre-application is mandatory for all project types.

3.1 ICON Projects

- Pre-applications for ICON projects must be submitted to both VLAIO and MateriNex.
- The submission to MateriNex must include a copy of the VLAIO pre-application and a brief MateriNex pre-application.

- VLAIO assesses the financial health of the participating companies. Undertakings in difficulty are not eligible for financial support from FIO. VLAIO also assesses whether the project proposal meets the requirements of the ICON funding instrument.

3.2 cSBO Projects

- For cSBO projects, only a dedicated MateriNex pre-application is required.

3.3 Feasibility Studies

- Given the limited scope of feasibility studies, the full proposal must be submitted to MateriNex before submission to VLAIO.
- Applicants are strongly encouraged to contact MateriNex at the outset of developing a feasibility study proposal.

3.4 MateriNex Assessment Criteria

MateriNex assesses pre-applications in consultation with VLAIO against the following criteria:

- Compliance with the conditions of the call for proposals (ICON, cSBO, cO&O);
- Fit with the relevant roadmap(s);
- Complementarity with the innovation themes of the spearhead clusters.

4. Submission Process for an ICON Project

4.1 Initial Guidance

During the initial guidance phase, the project idea is assessed to determine whether it falls within MateriNex's scope and meets the conditions of the current call for proposals. Applicants are encouraged to contact a MateriNex innovation manager at an early stage.

MateriNex provides detailed guidance on the ICON project type and can, where necessary, help identify suitable project partners.

4.2 Pre-application

A pre-application is mandatory to establish formally whether the project idea may proceed to the development of a full proposal.

For an ICON project, the pre-application must be submitted to both VLAIO and MateriNex.

MateriNex, in consultation with VLAIO, assesses whether the project idea aligns with the innovation roadmaps and the conditions of the call for proposals. Complementarity with the spearhead clusters is also assessed.

VLAIO assesses the financial status of the participating companies: an 'undertaking in difficulty' is not eligible for funding. VLAIO also assesses whether the proposal meets the requirements of the ICON funding instrument.

4.3 Approval to Proceed (GO) and Advice

The pre-application forms the basis for deciding whether the project idea may be developed further. The consortium incorporates the feedback received and refines the proposal to meet the requirements of the ICON project type.

ICON projects require approval to proceed from both MateriNex and VLAIO. Once both approvals have been obtained, the consortium may finalise and submit the full project proposal.

4.4 Full Project Proposal

Before submission, MateriNex may support the consortium in further refining the proposal. The consortium must submit the full project proposal to VLAIO via the KRIS portal.

Following submission, the proposal is assessed by VLAIO advisers, supported by international experts. For ICON projects, VLAIO holds a clarification meeting before forwarding the proposal to the experts. Once the international experts' feedback has been received, the consortium may be asked to respond to their questions and/or comments.

4.5 Decision and Project Start-up

Following VLAIO's formal decision, the project coordinator must provide MateriNex with the HBC decision letter.
If the project proposal is approved, a meeting is organised with the project coordinator, the research component coordinator and the MateriNex innovation manager and community manager to discuss project start-up and the establishment of the Industrial Advisory Board.

The project coordinator invites the MateriNex innovation manager to the project kick-off meeting, key progress meetings and meetings of the Industrial Advisory Board.

MateriNex supports the dissemination of project results. VLAIO is responsible for the technical and financial evaluation.

5. Collaborative Projects with Spearhead Clusters

Where an ICON or cO&O project proposal aligns with the roadmap of one or more spearhead clusters, MateriNex consults the relevant cluster(s). Following this consultation, a decision may be taken to submit the proposal as a joint SPC–MateriNex project.

The following arrangements apply to a joint SPC–MateriNex project:

- The lead spearhead cluster coordinates the process, and its procedures apply.
- Companies implementing the project and companies represented on the Industrial Advisory Board must meet the requirements of the lead spearhead cluster.
- MateriNex does not charge project partners any additional fees.
- MateriNex remains involved in the project as a member of the Industrial Advisory Board and supports the dissemination of project results

- MateriNex must be acknowledged as a collaborating partner in all communications and publications relating to the project.

6. Following Approval by VLAIO

Following approval by VLAIO, the project coordinator must provide MateriNex with a copy of the HBC decision letter.

6.1 Collaboration Agreement and Monitoring

- For approved ICON projects, MateriNex supports the preparation of a collaboration agreement (SWOK) using a mandatory template.
- For approved cSBO projects, project partners may use their own collaboration agreement template.
- MateriNex monitors project progress and supports the dissemination of project results.
- For cO&O projects, MateriNex does not need to be involved in the collaboration agreement, project monitoring or dissemination. No fee is charged.

6.2 Industrial Advisory Board (IAB)

An Industrial Advisory Board must be established for each cSBO project and for the research component of each ICON project. This is not required for cO&O projects.

All members of the Industrial Advisory Board must enter into an Advisory Board Agreement (ABA) with the consortium. The agreement is concluded with the project coordinator for cSBO projects and with the research component coordinator for ICON projects.

This agreement:
- Sets out the roles and responsibilities of Industrial Advisory Board members;
- Defines the mutual commitments of the parties involved;
- Specifies the practical arrangements for the operation of the Industrial Advisory Board;
- Establishes the applicable financial contribution in accordance with the relevant guidelines.

6.3 Financial Contributions

Contributions	Applies to	Amount
One-off Success Fee	Project partners in approved ICON projects	€ 3.000 (research organisation and large enterprise) € 1.500 (SME)
Annual Industrial Advisory Board Contribution	Members of the Industrial Advisory Board for approved cSBO projects	€ 1.000/jaar (large enterprise) € 250/jaar (SME)

6.4 MateriNex's Involvement During the Project

Consortia undertaking ICON and cSBO projects are asked to invite the MateriNex innovation manager to the project kick-off meeting, key progress meetings and meetings of the Industrial Advisory Board.

7. Contact and Enquiries

For enquiries about submitting project proposals to MateriNex, please email projects@materinex.be or use the MateriNex contact page.