



IMEC.ICON MANUAL

CALL 2022-1

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I CONTEXT AND OBJECTIVE

This manual provides an explanation of the imec.icon projects (Interdisciplinary Collaborative Research).

imec.icon projects are interdisciplinary collaborative projects between external partners and imec.

The imec.icon procedure has been highly tailored to the industrial R&D project procedures from Agentschap Innoveren & Ondernemen (VLAIO), to allow external partners based in the Flanders or the Brussels Capital region to apply for respectively VLAIO funding¹ or Innoviris funding, embedded in the imec.icon application. The decision-making procedure is the joint responsibility of VLAIO, Innoviris and imec. Hereinafter VLAIO and Innoviris will be referred to as regional funding agencies.

imec.icon projects have to comply with imec's mission, which is to generate an economic and social added value through excellent research and the creation of human capital within the nanoelectronics and digital technology.

To accomplish this mission, imec wants to:

- carry out interdisciplinary demand-driven research in an open-innovation context;
- generate an added value through close collaboration with economic and social players in Flanders and in the whole world;
- support researchers and companies in becoming world players.

One of imec's major instruments in achieving this goal is imec.icon: by carrying out multidisciplinary research, imec wants to contribute to overall solutions, combining multiple domains, including not only technological research, but also legal and societal aspects.

Jointly with this imec.icon call for projects, imec organizes a specific "Media ICON" call for projects in collaboration with the Flemish ministerial cabinet for Media. For this Media ICON call, the same eligibility criteria and the same procedure will apply as for imec.icon. However, only the following topics are eligible for funding under the Media ICON call: 1) improving the findability of Flemish media content, 2) technology and digital tools to increase the efficiency or quality of media production, storage, distribution and value creation, 3) media platforms of the future and 4) fighting disinformation. The decision-making procedure for Media ICON project proposals is the joint responsibility of VLAIO, Innoviris, imec and the ministerial cabinet for Media.

¹ With support from the Fonds voor Innoveren en Ondernemen (formerly known as Hermesfonds). VLAIO fulfills the operational tasks in name of and on behalf of the Fonds voor Innoveren en Ondernemen.

2 CHARACTERISTICS OF IMEC.ICON PROJECTS

The main characteristics of imec.icon projects are the following:

- demand-driven Research & Development;
- within the scope of the imec market segments;
- collaborative and interdisciplinary consortium; - well-balanced composition of the consortium;
- economic, cultural and/or societal added value;
- delivering demonstrators;
- duration of 2 years;
- the joint contribution of the subsidized external partners in the project must be larger than the joint contribution of the research partners.

Each of these characteristics is clarified below.

2.1 DEMAND-DRIVEN R&D

Interdisciplinary Collaborative Research is based on demand from the (Flemish) social, cultural or industrial sector or public authorities. Project proposals are realized bottom-up from the perspective of users and/or stakeholders and executors.

2.2 WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THE IMEC MARKET SEGMENTS

The imec.icon projects should be situated in one of imec' market segments:

- Smart Infotainment
- Smart Health
- Smart Energy
- Smart Cities
- Smart Mobility
- Smart Industries
- Smart Education
- Smart Agrofood

A description of these market segments can be found on the imec website.

2.3 THE CONSORTIUM

Projects should always be submitted by a consortium in which several partners may participate. There is no restriction with respect to organizational structures, i.e., the public sector, non-profit

organizations, SMEs, as well as large companies and local branches of multinationals can participate together with the Research groups ².

Partners who wish to apply within their imec.icon project proposal for funding with one of the regional funding agencies should also comply with the guidelines for funding. All companies, from SMEs to small non-profit organizations or the Flemish or Brussels branch of a multinational company, can submit an R&D project funding application on the condition that they are a legal entity at the time the funding agreement is signed. Applicants must also have significant valorization prospects for the results in (although not exclusively) Flanders -for funding from VLAIO- and in the Brussels Capital Region -for Innoviris funding.

2.3.1 COLLABORATIVE AND INTERDISCIPLINARY CONSORTIUM

The consortium should have a collaborative and interdisciplinary composition. This implies that a (sufficient) number of companies or cultural or social institutions take an active part in the project, together with imec research groups and preferably also with potential clients and users. Furthermore, there should be a mix of large and small enterprises and, preferably, at least one SME should participate. In order to maximize the quality and the usability of the research results, the project should aim at an interdisciplinary collaboration and approach. The participation of representative actors within the value chain of the project as well as multiple complementary research groups with different competences guarantees the interdisciplinary nature of the project.

2.3.2 WELL-BALANCED COMPOSITION OF THE CONSORTIUM

The composition of the consortium is based on the complementary roles of the partners in the research project, i.e., a supplier of technological solutions, a group of customers or users, a company providing services etc. The consortium should be composed in a balanced way with each partner providing added value to the success of the project. Each partner's contribution should be relevant and in proportion to the size and capacity of the company.

2.3.3 USER GROUP

The consortium can decide to set up a user group if this is useful to the progress of the project. The user group is a counselling committee with representatives of (a) relevant economic and/or societal target group(s). Their task is to give advice concerning the progress of the imec.icon project and the valorization possibilities of the developed Foreground³.

² Meaning of Research groups is: all research groups within imec, the Flemish universities or the Flemish research organizations (where their research, like that of all participating research groups, qualifies as generic (i.e. more broadly applicable than the specific case of a project) and beyond the state-of-the-art (new and risky)), and who request imec funding.

³ Foreground relates to all results being generated in the scope of an ICON project, including information, whether or not these can be protected.

A user group is not a project partner and hence cannot apply for funding from VLAIO or from Innoviris within the imec.icon project nor can they claim the developed Intellectual Property Rights (IPR).

2.4 ECONOMIC, CULTURAL AND/OR SOCIAL ADDED VALUE

The projects must generate an economic, cultural and/or social added value. This means that 'non-for-profit' partners are also eligible to participate on the condition that the economic added value generated by all the consortium partners is sufficiently large.. For example, social added value can be found in the cultural, healthcare or public sector, etc.

2.5 DELIVERING DEMONSTRATORS

Apart from research results, “demonstrators” should be delivered at the end of a project. By preference, this is done at one or more users or customers in the market segment of the research project. A demonstrator is not a solution pilot ready for commercialization but should be a “proof-of-concept” test set-up, allowing demonstration of the research results in a setting that is as realistic as feasible.

2.6 FORMAL CHARACTERISTICS

2.6.1 DURATION OF 2 YEARS

imec.icon projects have a 2-year duration. An extension of the project can be requested to a maximum of 1 extra year when necessary for the execution of the project. The imec.icon program manager can approve the motivated request.

2.6.2 MINIMUM CONTRIBUTION OF 50 % BY THE EXTERNAL PARTNERS

The joint contribution of the external partners with funding⁴ in the project should be more than the joint contribution of the research partners⁵. over the total duration and realization of the project. Imec will only finance the imec research share in the project.

2.6.3 THE RESEARCH LEADER IS AN IMEC RESEARCH GROUP LEADER

The research leader is either an imec research group leader or a person assigned within his/her own research group. The research leader is the first point of contact from the Research group and will coordinate and lead the research activities.

⁴ From Agentschap Innoveren en Ondernemen, Innoviris or any other funding agency

⁵ When calculating the balance, strategic research centers Flanders Make, VIB and VITO are part of the research contribution

2.6.4 BALANCED CONSORTIUM

Every external partner's contribution shall be smaller than 70% of the total contribution of the external partners.

3 SELECTION AND EVALUATION PROCEDURE

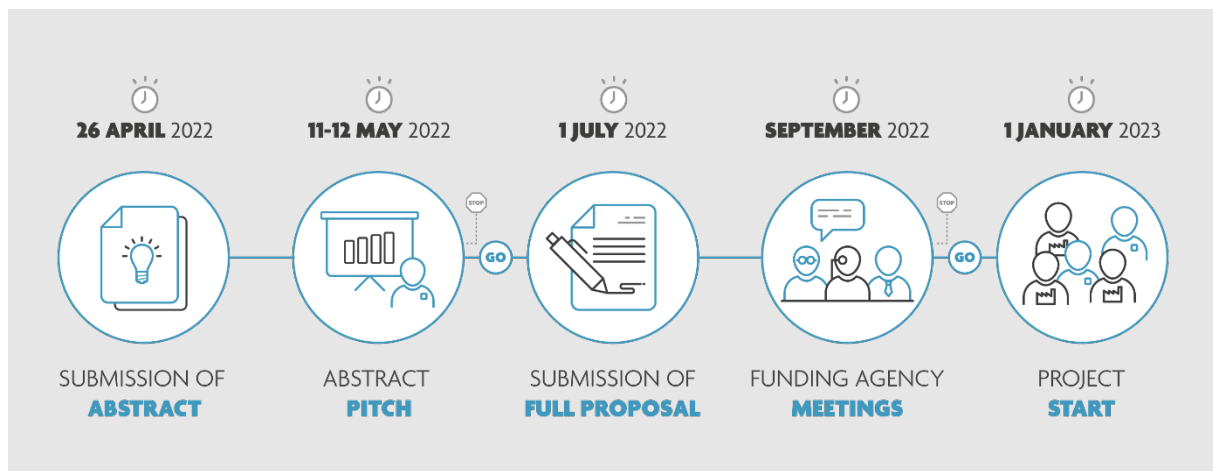


Figure 1: Overview of the 2 phases of the submission procedure: extended abstract and full proposal

3.1 SUBMISSION AND EVALUATION OF THE EXTENDED ABSTRACT

3.1.1 SUBMITTING THE EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The extended abstract must be submitted on time in order to be eligible for the submission of a full proposal. The extended abstract must elaborate following items:

- Project idea and innovation objectives, what are the cause and the context of the project?
- An explanation concerning the expected social and economic added value of the project.
- The consortium: which **external partners and Research group(s)** are involved? A minimum of 1 imec research group is required. For the external partners, a distinction must be made between core partners and other partners. Core partners are essential to the project in such extent that the full proposal will only be eligible when all core partners mentioned in the extended abstract are also included in the full proposal. In the period between the submission of the extended abstract and the full proposal, new core partners can join, but applicants must consider that the collaborative nature of the consortium will be an important criterion for the evaluation of the abstracts. Other external partners also enter into an agreement, but if they withdraw their commitment, this goes without a penalty.
- The names of the project leader and the research group leader must be mentioned.

- In the abstract **each partner** must clearly demonstrate the added value of his contribution to the project as well as the importance of the project for the partner. The Research groups will also motivate the importance of the project for their strategy.
- Each partner will indicate the expected workload for the project as well as the most important milestones / deliverables.

The extended abstract must be in English and has to be submitted via the MyProjects platform. More detailed instructions can be found in the Abstract template. You can download⁶ the template via the [imec website](#).

In the following situations, extra documents must be handed in:

- The project has already been submitted⁷ in a previous imec.icon call, requiring a side letter resubmission, see also 3.3.2. (resubmission letter)
- A Research group requesting imec funding participates for the first time in an imec.icon call, requiring a motivation letter

For more info on these extra documents, please consult the Abstract template on the imec website.

3.1.2 ELIGIBILITY OF THE EXTENDED ABSTRACT

The extended abstracts have to comply with the formal criteria for eligibility, which will be verified by imec. Only projects with a positive score on every criterion will be eligible for further selection and evaluation.

The abstract was submitted using the provided templates
The proposal was submitted on time
The prescribed character limit is complied with
There is a minimum of 2 Research groups of which 1 imec research group
There is a minimum of 3 independent Flemish industry partners that intend to request VLAIO funding
The 50/50 rule is complied with (see 4.1)

3.1.3 SHORT PRESENTATION OF THE PROJECT IDEA TO A PANEL (“PITCH”)

The consortium will give a short presentation based on the extended abstract to an imec panel. The most relevant partners of the consortium need to be present, with a maximum of 5 people.

⁶ The template is available from start of the call until the abstract deadline

⁷ A project can only be resubmitted once, unless the project idea is completely rewritten. This will be judged by the imec.icon program manager during a sparring session for submission.

Members of the imec panel will be representatives of imec as well as external experts, appointed by imec.

There will be a very short presentation (max. 6 minutes), followed by 10 minutes of Q&A. The panel will then deliberate behind closed doors. The panel members will not be giving personal/direct feedback to the project submitters afterwards.

Each project is scored on these aspects:

- Assessment of clearly defined and realistic research objectives;
- To what extent is the project proposal in line with imec's vision, mission and strategy?
- Assessment of the proposed (social and / or economic) valorization of the project
- Assessment of the composition of the consortium, taking into account the participation of core partners, other partners and Research groups.

**** The above procedure will be applied in case a physical meeting is allowed.**

In case physical meetings are prohibited, this procedure will be replaced with a written equivalent. The pitch and Q&A will then be cancelled and replaced with a written rebuttal.

The consortium will receive a feedback document with questions from the experts that need to be answered before a decision can be made. The consortium will then get a few days to formulate their rebuttal and submit it via MyProjects.

3.1.4 DECISION OF ABSTRACT PANEL

The jury of the abstract panel (Panel) will decide on every abstract. This decision can be:

- **Admission to submit a full proposal**
The Panel decides that the project answers to an existing need. Furthermore, the quality of the abstract and the consortium justify investing in a full proposal. This decision however holds no guarantee that the project will in fact receive support. In the Full Proposal phase, there will be a final selection of all proposals, taking into account the number of eligible proposals, the quality (valorization potential and research quality) of the proposals and the available funding. The Panel can issue directives for the adjustment of the project and/or the consortium. During the final evaluation of the full proposals the level of compliance with these adjustment directives will be taken into account.
- **No admission to submit a full proposal**
The Panel decides that the demand-driven aspect of the project is not demonstrated adequately. Furthermore, they can decide that the initial quality of the proposal or the consortium is insufficient to justify investing in a full proposal. The consortium will therefore not be admitted to submit a full proposal during the current call.

Communicating the decision of the Panel

Each consortium will receive the motivated decision (feedback form) of the Panel by email.

Upon request, a feedback meeting with imec is possible.

3.2 SUBMISSION AND EVALUATION OF THE FULL PROPOSAL

Only projects for which an extended abstract was submitted and that received a positive decision of the Panel are allowed to submit a full proposal. All other proposals are inadmissible.

3.2.1 FULL PROPOSAL - ELIGIBILITY

Firstly, it will be verified whether the projects meet the formal requirements for eligibility. Special attention will be paid to the fact whether the alterations in the project between abstract and full proposal are allowed. Only the projects that meet this requirement will be evaluated.

Evaluation of formal eligibility by imec

The eligibility of the proposals will be verified by imec. This evaluation will be carried out by the imec.icon administration and management. Only projects with a positive score on every criterion will be eligible for further selection and evaluation.

An eligible extended abstract was submitted
The consortium was given admission to submit a full proposal
A valid Letter of Intent or Letter of Declaration for each partner was submitted
The file contains enough information to start the scientific evaluation
The file contains enough information to assess the valorization potential (general information + more detailed info for partners requesting funding)
The proposal was submitted on time
The 50/50 rule is complied with (see 4.1)
The research leader is an imec research group leader or someone appointed within his/her group
The prescribed maximum number of characters is complied with

Possible alterations in the Full proposal in relation to the abstract

The project idea, including the project context and the innovation objectives cannot be altered in the full proposal in comparison to the abstract. Refinements and a more detailed explanation are allowed.

The valorization path needs to remain the same in essence, the business case can however be refined.

The proposed core partners within the consortium must remain, other (non-core) partners may opt out, be replaced or be added.

New partners – both core and other – are allowed to enter the project in the phase between abstract and full proposal.

The full proposal takes into account the advice and the directives that the imec management board sends to the consortium along with the admission to submit a full proposal.

The budget of the Research groups in the full proposal must be in line with the budgets (represented by person-months) specified in the abstract.

The final assessment on whether the proposal meets all the requested formal criteria is an unambiguous YES or NO.

Early start of the project by imec

For reasons of effective collaboration, it is important for the project members to aim for a synchronization of the start date.

If a partner is considering starting early, this must be discussed with the imec.icon program manager. This is the primary contact person between imec and the consortium.

The target start date of the imec.icon project is January 1st 2023. External partners may start earlier on their own risk (at earliest the first day of the month following the submission of an eligible project at VLAIO, i.e. August 1st 2022). This is a project start 'on their own risk'. 'On their own risk' means that in case the project is not approved, they can't reclaim the costs within the scope of financial support. Research groups cannot start early with the project.

Eligibility of the regional funding agencies

The regional funding agencies decide on the eligibility for funding applications and will communicate their decision to the project leader.

3.2.2 FULL PROPOSAL - EVALUATION

An expert committee will evaluate the full proposals after an oral defense from the consortium. The committee is composed of experts appointed by VLAIO. It is recommended to have one representative per partner present during the defense.

One week before the oral defense, the consortium will receive a report with the most important comments and questions from the experts. This gives the consortium the time to prepare for the defense.

During the oral part the consortium will present the project shortly followed by a Q&A. Afterwards, the committee will evaluate and score the project behind closed doors. The experts will not give any personal or direct feedback to the consortium.

The evaluation criteria are (<https://www.vlaio.be/nl/media/850>):

- Goals

- Potential to achieve the goals
- Impact
- Potential to achieve the impact
- ICON specific criteria
- Additionality

The experts' decision will be included in a recommendation.

**** The above procedure will be applied in case a physical meeting is allowed.**

In case physical meetings are prohibited, this procedure will be replaced with a written equivalent.

The defense and Q&A will then be cancelled and replaced with a written rebuttal. The consortium will receive a feedback document with questions from the experts that need to be answered before a decision can be made. The consortium will then get a few days to formulate their answer and submit it via MyProjects. Afterwards the experts will discuss and provide their assessment of the projects, based on the Full Proposal and the rebuttal documents.

Evaluation

Each project will be judged as a whole, taking into account possible amendments provided during the evaluation process.

A positive advice can also be made subject to specific conditions that have to be fulfilled at the start or during the project. These conditions can either be organizational, financial or with respect to content.

The evaluation criteria are aligned with those of public funding authorities R&D projects.

Final Approval/Decision

Based on all available information, including the recommendations of the external experts, a report will be drawn up, containing the information on the project (with emphasis on the innovation purpose), the evaluation and a budget proposal. For those projects requesting funding, the valorization potential will also be evaluated extensively. Concerning possible funding from VLAIO, these projects will be assessed according to the regular selection mechanism for company R&D funding. Depending on their scores, projects will be classified in different priority categories. The Fonds voor Innoveren en Ondernemen and Innoviris Boards of Directors, and the ministerial cabinet for Media for Media ICON projects, will decide whether or not to grant respectively VLAIO or Innoviris funding and will advise imec on whether or not to grant funding.

Subsequently the decisions of the Boards of Directors will be communicated to the imec Executive Board, which will then decide on possible imec funding.

The recommendation of the regional funding agencies on imec.icon evaluations is binding as far as the quality classification goes, and the imec Executive Board will respect these classifications (as well as the recommended ranking when given) when making its selection, in conformity with imec's budgetary limits and R&D portfolio.

Relation imec.icon – R&D Application

The evaluation of the imec.icon application is an evaluation of the complete proposal and is the responsibility of imec. If there is a funding application with a regional funding agency embedded in the imec.icon file, that funding application is the sole responsibility of that regional funding agency. The general regulatory process for that regional funding agency’s R&D projects will therefore be applicable in full on this segment.

However, it should be noted that participation in an imec.icon project by an external partner should not depend on whether or not that partner will receive funding, as this would jeopardize the efforts of the consortium as a whole.

Below, we have listed a number of possible (theoretical) combinations of decisions. If the application for funding receives a positive evaluation, the funding can only be allocated definitely when the imec.icon project has been approved by the imec Executive Board (and will be executed).

Project funding imec and VLAIO	✓	✓	×
Industry funding VLAIO/Innoviris	✓	×	Not evaluated
		(if consortium has 3 funded Flemish industry partners and if 50/50 rule is still met)	
	imec EB selects projects based on full proposal evaluation ranking		

3.3 CONFIDENTIALITY, RESUBMISSION, RECONSIDERATION, COMPLAINT

3.3.1 CONFIDENTIALITY

All staff members of imec and the involved researchers, the regional funding agencies, external experts and members of the Board of Directors of VLAIO, Innoviris and imec are bound to keep all information made available to them confidential and will not provide any of that information to third parties or use it for their own benefit. In case of a conflict of interest during the evaluation by a member of the panel, the jury member will refrain from reading and evaluating the proposal.

3.3.2 RESUBMISSION

In case of a rejected abstract or full proposal, a reworked project idea can be submitted in a next call, on the condition of a feedback meeting and an approved resubmission letter. A resubmission letter contains a description of the most important changes between this submission and the previous one (what shall be added/deleted/clarified w.r.t. the previous project idea). This resubmission letter has to

be submitted to the imec.icon program manager before the feedback meeting, and afterwards needs to be uploaded on the MyProjects platform (same deadline as abstract submission). For more details see the abstract template.

If an imec.icon project is rejected, external partners who had requested funding through the imec.icon project are free to apply for funding with the regional funding agencies for a regular industrial project that is not linked to an imec.icon project.

3.3.3 RECONSIDERATION

As for the abstract, there can be no requests for reconsideration.

As for the full proposal: via the imec.icon program manager the consortium can request to reconsider an application that has been rejected by the imec Executive Board, in which case the Executive Board will decide on the reconsideration during the next imec.icon call.

This request for reconsideration has to be submitted within 30 working days following the Board's decision and must be based on clear and verifiable elements. These can be elements that, according to the applicants, were not appraised in a correct manner, or relevant additional information that did not reach imec/the regional funding agencies in time, or important adjustments in response to the comments. The new elements have to be significant enough to reconsider the decision. The imec Executive Board will report on the status of the reconsideration within 75 working days following receipt of the request for reconsideration. This period will be extended by an additional 30 working days if new external experts have to be consulted. The results of a possible reconsideration can only be implemented within the framework of a next imec.icon call.

The innovation goal cannot be changed in a request for reconsideration. If the innovation goal has been altered thoroughly, a new application can be submitted (at a next abstract deadline) which will be subject to the same terms and conditions, including the terms with respect to the start date and the period for justification of costs.

3.3.4 COMPLAINT

In case applicants are dissatisfied with the way their application was handled, the consortium can submit a written or electronic complaint via the proposal manager. Complaints will be dealt with within 45 days following receipt.

4 FINANCING MODEL

4.1 MINIMUM CONTRIBUTION OF 50% OF THE TOTAL PROJECT COST BY THE EXTERNAL PARTNERS

The joint contribution by the external partners with funding in the project must be more than the joint contribution of the research partners for the total duration and implementation of the project⁸.

Only the Research groups in the project will be funded by imec.

4.2 THE COST MODEL

Approved project costs consist of personnel expenses (personnel expenses and PhD grants for research institutions) on the one hand and operational costs on the other hand.

For the external partners, the cost model of the applicable regional funding agency applies in full.

VLAIO: <https://www.vlaio.be/nl/media/1760>

Innoviris: <https://innoviris.brussels/nl/program/rd-projects>

4.3 SUBCONTRACTING

Subcontractor costs can be accepted as direct costs in the project⁹, but research activities can never be subcontracted, either in part or in full, without the prior written consent from imec.

This consent is not necessary for a.o. routine tasks that are not part of the core components of the project and that are not taken on directly by one of the partners (i.e. routine testing, development of part of a prototype, part of the programming, etc.). For more information, please contact an Innovation Manager.

For non-routine tasks, please contact your Innovation Manager.

Subcontracting between project partners is not permitted.

Companies can only operate as subcontractors in a project when they are not participating at their own risks, when they have no valorization rationale and when they don't acquire intellectual property.

⁸ When calculating the balance, strategic research centers Flanders Make, VIB and VITO are part of the research contribution

⁹ Subject to the rules of the cost model of the funding agency

5 AGREEMENTS CONCERNING COOPERATION

5.1 THE IMEC.ICON COLLABORATION AGREEMENT (CA)

The imec.icon Collaboration Agreement covers all practical rules concerning collaboration, financing, confidentiality, IPR rules, reporting and some other rights and obligations between the partners in the consortium. Moreover, the Collaboration Agreement is an essential condition for activating the Funding Agreement of the regional funding agency (see below). At the same time, the partners in the consortium commit themselves to their intended efforts by means of the Letter of Intent, regardless of whether the regional funding agency will grant funding.

In the imec.icon Collaboration Agreement the intellectual property rights (Article 8) are defined in such a way, they are in line with the ICON decree and the “Handbook of Responsible Partnering” from the European Commission. In general, the IPR arrangement can be outlined as follows:

Principles of ownership

- Background = ownership of contributing party
- Foreground from own work = ownership of generating party
- Foreground from work of one or more knowledge institutions = ownership knowledge institution(s) + co-ownership imec
- Foreground of which the contribution of the related project partners cannot or cannot properly be separated = co-ownership by the related project partners

Principles of co-ownership

- Every co-owner owns the non-exclusive right to exploit co-ownership and grant non-exclusive licenses to third parties without consent from or compensation to other co-owners (“without accountancy”)
- Protection (e.g. Patent) is arranged in consultation
- Damage claim for breaches is arranged in consultation

Access rights

- Listing Background/Sideground through positive list
- Criterion = “needed for valorization of the own foreground”
- Granted after written motivated request unless granted through an agreement - Non-exclusive and worldwide
- No transfer costs
- Rights expire 2 years after termination of the project
- Negotiation on conditions should be in writing and within 2 years following termination of the project. Patent application can extend this term to a maximum of 6 months after publication of the search report

Schematic representation of ownership and access rights

Ownership	Each partner is and remains sole owner of own Background, Sideground and Foreground. Co-ownership between all parties that contributed only when the contribution to the Foreground cannot or cannot properly be separated.	
Access rights necessary for project execution	Background/Sideground/Foreground: free of charge	
	Same work package	Different work package
Access rights when necessary for exploitation/use of own Foreground	Back & Sideground: market conditions Foreground: Free of charge (after extensive collaboration)	Back&Sideground: market conditions Foreground: Favorable

Specific agreements on:

- Access rights to Software
- Access rights to Object code and/or API
- Access rights to Source code
- Open Source Software policy
- Admission of Party after start of project
- Excluded or withdrawn Party

The signing of the imec.icon Collaboration Agreement within 4 months following the start of the project is a condition for the acceptance of project costs of the imec.icon project by both imec and regional funding agencies.

5.2 THE FUNDING AGREEMENT

5.2.1 FUNDING AGREEMENT FROM VLAIO

The VLAIO Funding Agreement is not a separate document anymore, but is replaced by a combination of the Letter of Declaration and the Decision Document.

Letter of Declaration: while submitting the full proposal, a declaration of intent is expected from every partner. For partners requesting VLAIO funding, this will be the Letter of Declaration. In addition to a letter of intent, in this Letter of Declaration the partner also agrees to the general and project-specific conditions of VLAIO:

- [Terms and Conditions innovative funding](http://www.vlaio.be/nl/media/1706) (Version 2021.1): www.vlaio.be/nl/media/1706
- Program-specific conditions (ICON version 2020.1): www.vlaio.be/nl/media/1707

The Decision document: The decision by the Fonds voor Innoveren en Ondernemen (Hermes) Committee is communicated in the decision file that, when approved, will be sent to each VLAIO funded partner. In this decision document, the following things will be communicated:

- Funding assigned to the partner within the project
- Overview of the periods in which funding instalments will be paid out
- Special conditions the partner needs to meet in order to be able to receive funding instalments

By being present at the kick-off meeting of the project and not objecting to the start of the project, the partner agrees to the conditions mentioned in the decision document.

It is recommended that the project leader in the imec.icon project is also the lead partner in the VLAIO Funding Agreement in order to ensure an optimal flow of information and reporting.

The imec.icon Collaboration Agreement is a condition sine qua non for the VLAIO Funding Agreement and shall be signed by the partners in the consortium within 4 months following the project start.

5.2.2 INNOVIRIS FUNDING AGREEMENT

An Innoviris funding agreement is signed between the Innoviris funding recipient partner and Innoviris. Innoviris will handle this procedure and imec will not intervene here.

The imec.icon Collaboration Agreement is a condition sine qua non for the Innoviris Funding Agreement and shall be signed by the partners in the consortium within 4 months following the signing of the funding agreement.

6 REPORTING

6.1 IMEC.ICON STATUS REPORT – PROGRESS REPORT

The imec.icon status reports describe the progress of the project. The project leader submits the reports to imec on a 6-monthly basis by using the MyProjects platform. imec will pass on the report to the regional funding agencies where they will regard this as a progress report in case of funding.

Within the scope of granted regional funding, the regional funding agency may implement supplementary conditions concerning reporting. These conditions will be stipulated in the Decision Document of the regional funding agency.

Status reports – Terms:

- On project level
- At least once every 6 months
- Using MyProjects
- By the project leader
- imec will forward to the regional funding agency (if necessary)

6.2 STEERING GROUP MINUTES

The project steering group will meet at least once every six months. The project leader will submit the minutes of this meeting to imec via MyProjects.

Steering Group Minutes – Terms: -

- On project level
 - At least once every 6 months
 - By the project leader
 - Using MyProjects
 - imec will not forward to the regional funding agency

6.3 YEARLY FINANCIAL REPORTS

All partners must submit a financial report including effort tracking per calendar year.

On 31st January of each year at the latest and within two months of the project end, each partner must submit a financial report covering the previous calendar year using the MyProjects platform. This report contains a detailed breakdown of used resources and people. The Research groups will receive an Excel document provided by imec for their reporting and will add the supporting documents to support any claim. Only actual costs in accordance with the cost model are eligible.

6.4 END REPORT

The end report must be submitted to imec via MyProjects within 2 months following the end of the project.

This end report contains collective and individual reporting:

- a collective narrative (content) report;
- individual valorization reports, both for Research groups and partners.
Partners receiving VLAIO funding have the possibility to submit this part directly to VLAIO if it contains confidential information that cannot be shared with other partners.

Overview of the sections of the final report:

	Content	What
Final report	Section I Collective report	1 doc/project
	Section II Individual valorization report for Companies	1 doc/partner
	Section III Individual valorization report for Research groups	1 doc/research group

The final report needs to be submitted via MyProjects.

As regards the financial reporting, the Research groups and the partners have to make sure they have delivered all yearly financial reports to imec (see 6.3). No additional report needs to be submitted to the regional funding agency.

The end report is only admissible after all parts have been handed in.

Up to 2 years after the project has ended the final report can be adjusted (e.g. to get access rights to Foreground or Background from other partners (under the IP conditions in the collaboration agreement)); 2 years and 2 months after the end of the project, it will be closed.

6.5 OVERVIEW REPORTING

	Status report	Steering committee minutes	Yearly financial report	Final report
What	Report regarding content	Meeting reports of Steerco	Financial and PM report	Report regarding content
When	Min. every 6 months	Min. every 6 months	Each calendar year + no later than 2 months after project end	No later than 2 months after project end
How	MyProjects	MyProjects	research groups: Excel Others: MyProjects	MyProjects
Submitted by	Project lead – one report per project	Project lead – one report per project	Financial responsible - one report per partner	1 collective report + 1 report per partner
The regional funding agency	imec transfers to the regional funding agency	No transfer to the regional funding agency	imec transfers to the regional funding agency for companies with R&D funding	imec transfers to the regional funding agency

7 PRACTICAL GUIDELINES FOR APPLICATION

7.1 DEVELOPING AN IMEC.ICON IDEA

If you have a project idea, the best thing to do is to contact imec (icon@imec.be). They will give you more information on the imec.icon program and they will refer you to the relevant collaborators within the Research groups. In case of specific questions on the application for funding, preliminary discussions with the regional funding agency can be organized.

7.2 SUBMITTING AN EXTENDED ABSTRACT

An extended abstract consists of multiple elements (see table in the abstract template). Some of the information needs to be submitted directly in the MyProjects platform, other information needs to be uploaded on the MyProjects platform in the form of a .doc or .pdf document.

The proposal must be submitted in English because of the international referees.

7.3 SUBMITTING A FULL PROPOSAL

The proposal must be submitted in English because of the international referees.

The following parts have to be translated into Dutch as well:

- The title
- The management summary
- The innovation goals

An imec.icon proposal must be submitted by a consortium of companies and institutions, the proposal manager/submission coordinator will be responsible for the consistency of the application file. The imec.icon proposal must be submitted using the MyProjects platform. imec.icon proposals including an application for partial funding by individual external partners must be submitted to imec. However, imec will not serve as intermediary for VLAIO R&D funding applications that are not linked to an imec imec.icon proposal. These latter types of applications should be addressed to the regional funding agencies directly.

As imec is responsible for the eligibility assessment of the proposals, all **components should be submitted to imec**. This implies that failure by one of the partners to submit a document can lead to imec blocking the complete file.

The imec.icon proposal consists of a number of sections. The table below lists who should complete which sections and how it should be submitted. The proposal will only be eligible once all required sections have been submitted.

Next to the general part, which is being submitted by the proposal manager, the proposal also contains a number of sections that have to be submitted by the individual partners directly. It is therefore crucial that the naming of the files be consistent.

The following guidelines should be observed.

	Documents	Section	Content	to experts
1 per project	Document A	Section A	Information on the whole imec.icon project and big picture on valorization	✓
	Document B	Section B	Partner general background information	
1 per partner	Document C	Section C	Detailed valorization information for the industry partners	✗
1 per partner with VLAIO funding	Document F	Section F	Additional financial information on the industry partners with VLAIO funding	
1 per partner/university	Lol	Letter of Intent	Intention of each partner to execute its tasks in the project + acceptance of CA	
1 per partner with VLAIO funding	LoD	Letter of Declaration	Intention of the partner + acceptance of the terms and conditions (general and icon program specific)	

7.4 LETTER OF INTENT AND CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

The application (full proposal) can only be eligible when every party has submitted a signed Letter of Intent or a Letter of Declaration as applicable based on the imec template (see www.imec-int.com/en/icon). When submitting an extended abstract, no letter of intent is needed.

A PDF copy of the signed document must be uploaded on the MyProjects platform. Submission of the Letter of Intent is subject to the same deadline as submission of the proposal.

Preceding the signing of the Lol, the partners can protect the preparatory proposal discussions by signing an NDA. For this purpose, you can use an imec-template NDA that you can request at icon@imec.be.

8 QUESTIONS

If you have any further questions about this manual, please contact imec (icon@imec.be), Innoviris (smaas@innoviris.irisnet.be) or VLAIO (marc.tiri@vlaio.be).