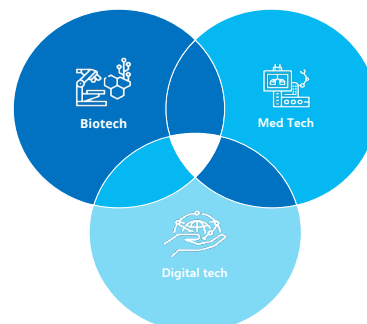


flanders.healthTech

Spearhead cluster call 2022

1 Positioning of the call

Disruptive innovations often happen when different technology domains join forces. That is why flanders.healthTech together with VLAIO is opening a spearhead cluster call for subsidy proposals that enable the interaction between two or more technology domains. At least three technology domains qualify for this call: biotechnology (BioTech), medical technology (MedTech) and digital technology (DigiTech).



The resulting partnerships should be aimed at jointly developing disruptive solutions for a clearly defined unmet need in the field of **healthcare**. Alternatively, the consortia can pool their research strengths to gain knowledge that would clearly lead to such solutions. Valorisation of these solutions should lead to a quantifiable increase in investment and employment in Flanders.

This year we are promoting a full bottom-up approach for project ideas. To get access to the €8M budget reserved for this call, the applicants have to check the admissibility of their project idea with a flanders.healthTech Prioritisation Panel by means of a project pitch.

We open four different VLAIO grant schemes for this call. flanders.healthTech will assist potential participants to the best of its ability in the preparation of their proposal. However, participants bear full responsibility for writing and preparing a proposal that meets the eligibility and evaluation criteria set by VLAIO for the respective grant schemes.

2 Criteria for the call

2.1 VLAIO eligibility and evaluation criteria

For the call 2022, flanders.healthTech has activated four VLAIO grant schemes¹:

- Feasibility study²
- Research Innovation Grant³
- Development Innovation Grant⁴
- ICON Grant⁵. The ICON grant schemes are relatively new and not yet well-known, but they fulfil a bridging function between academic (more fundamental) research and industrial R&D. An ICON project must thus contain both these elements.

¹ <https://www.vlaio.be/nl/media/668> (a mandatory document to be read)

² <https://www.vlaio.be/nl/subsidies-financiering/oo-haalbaarheidsstudie>

³ <https://www.vlaio.be/nl/subsidies-financiering/onderzoeksproject>

⁴ <https://www.vlaio.be/nl/subsidies-financiering/ontwikkelingsproject>

⁵ <https://www.vlaio.be/nl/subsidies-financiering/subsidi databank/thematische-icon-projecten>

VLAIO will evaluate all submitted full proposals that fit the VLAIO eligibility and budgetary criteria as defined on the VLAIO website (see links in footnote for the respective grant schemes). It is the applicants' responsibility to ensure that their proposal meets all applicable VLAIO eligibility, budgetary and evaluation criteria

2.2 flanders.healthTech eligibility criteria

On top of the VLAIO eligibility criteria, each proposal must also match additional flanders.healthTech eligibility criteria

2.2.1 Proposals must match with our cluster vision

The call is open for projects covering at least two technology domains identified by flanders.healthTech leading to innovations in health and/or healthcare. These domains are biotechnology, medical technology and digital technology.

2.2.2 Proposals must match with our cluster strategy:

Each project must fall within one of the four overarching themes of the spearhead cluster: Value-based healthcare⁶, personalised medicine⁷, digital medicine⁸, and disruptive health solutions⁹.

We have defined in total 14 subdomains that applicants can use as source of inspiration for the scope of their project proposal. These subdomains are summarised in the table below

Overarching theme	<i>Examples of topics matching the theme</i>
Value Based Efficient Healthcare	<p><i>Develop technologies to reinforce operational excellence in advanced clinical trials</i></p> <p><i>Support better performing and interconnected medical practice workflows (hospital and beyond) – and personal care trajectories</i></p> <p><i>Create faster access for physicians to appropriate diagnostics data & comparative treatment options</i></p> <p><i>Use technologies to optimise use of required resources during COVID-like acute events/healthcare crises + continuity of care</i></p>

⁶ **Value-Based Healthcare** is focused on maximizing the value of patient care and providing efficient healthcare.

⁷ **Personalized medicine** refers to a medical model using characterisation of individuals' phenotypes and genotypes (e.g. molecular profiling, medical imaging, lifestyle data) for tailoring the right therapeutic strategy for the right (group of) person(s) at the right time, and/or to determine the predisposition to disease and/or to deliver timely and targeted prevention.

⁸ **Digital medicine** uses digital technology and algorithmically driven products to measure or intervene to improve human health.

⁹ **Disruptive health solutions** cover any kind of disruptive health or healthcare solutions which result from a collaboration between 2 or more technology domains and that don't fall under the other three definitions.

Personalised Medicine	
	<p><i>Supportive technologies to improve patient stratification in selection of treatments</i></p> <p><i>Merge technologies to support approval of personalised Cell & Gene therapies</i></p> <p><i>Realise more patient specific manufacturing & logistics</i></p> <p><i>Build optimised implants, surgical tools, exoskeletons,...</i></p>
Digital Medicine	
	<p><i>Supportive technologies to improve patient stratification in selection of treatments</i></p> <p><i>Merge technologies to support approval of personalised Cell & Gene therapies</i></p> <p><i>Realise more patient specific manufacturing & logistics</i></p> <p><i>Build optimised implants, surgical tools, exoskeletons,...</i></p>
Disruptive Health Solutions	
	<p><i>Create new disease insights through unmatched technologies & cross tech platforms</i></p> <p><i>Gain new insights through exploration of existing clinical data</i></p> <p><i>Explore the promise of new smart sensing and smart delivery technology</i></p> <p><i>Strengthen the development of innovative biocompatible materials</i></p>

2.2.3 Proposals must pass the Flanders.healthTech selection procedure

flanders.healthTech has implemented a ranking (by international jury) and counselling procedure that will oversee the concept and quality of the proposals (see heading 3).

2.2.4 Special eligibility conditions for a feasibility study under this spearhead cluster call

Each project must consist of a consortium of

- At least three independent Flemish companies (whereby Flemish hospitals/care institutions count as Flemish companies).
- At least one of these Flemish companies is an SME as defined by VLAIO rules¹⁰
- At least one of the partners is member of flanders.healthTech

Maximum grant per company partner (profit & not for profit): 50.000EUR

2.2.5 Special eligibility conditions for a research innovation grant or a development innovation grant under this spearhead cluster call

Each project must consist of a consortium of

- At least three independent Flemish companies (whereby Flemish hospitals/care institutions count as Flemish companies).
- At least one of these Flemish companies is an SME as defined by VLAIO rules¹¹
- At least one of the partners is member of flanders.healthTech

Maximum grant per company partner (profit & not for profit): 250.000EUR

2.2.6 Special eligibility conditions for ICON project under this spearhead cluster call

Each project must consist of a consortium of

- At least one Flemish research group
- At least three independent Flemish companies (whereby Flemish hospitals/care institutions count as Flemish companies).
- At least one of these Flemish companies is an SME as defined by VLAIO rules
- At least one of the partners is member of flanders.healthTech

Maximum grant per partner

- For companies (profit & not for profit): 250,000 EUR
- For research organisations: 300,000 EUR¹²

¹⁰ <https://www.vlaio.be/nl/subsidies-financiering/kmo-portefeuille/voorwaarden-voor-subsidie-de-kmo-portefeuille/de-europese>

¹¹ <https://www.vlaio.be/nl/subsidies-financiering/kmo-portefeuille/voorwaarden-voor-subsidie-de-kmo-portefeuille/de-europese>

¹² The maximum budget for an academic partner has been set a bit higher such that the project can engage on average more than 1 academic FTE for 2 years, including overhead costs and working costs.

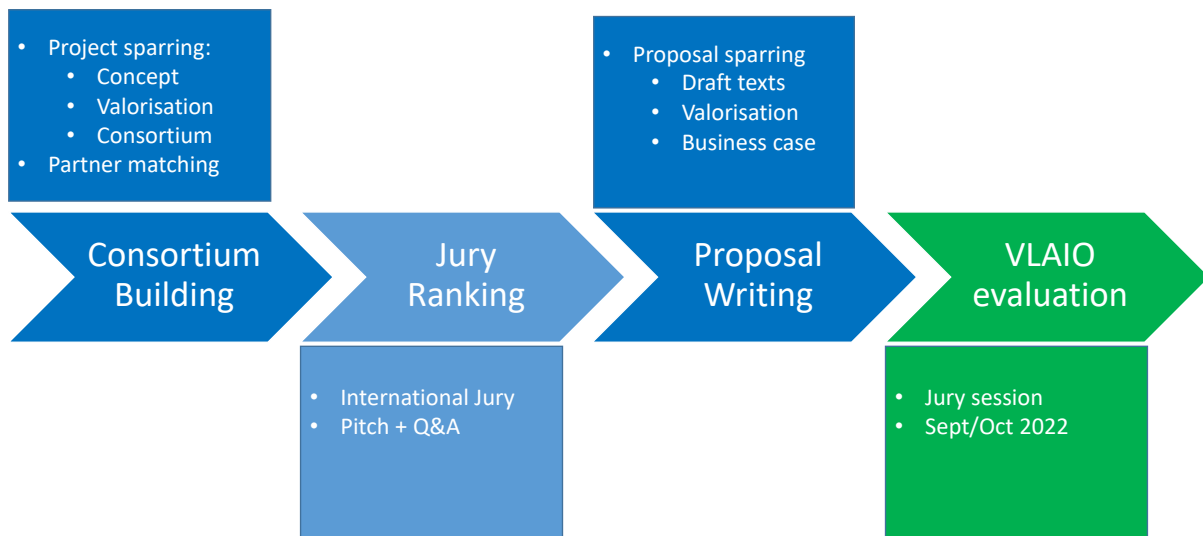
2.3 Grant reimbursement percentages

The reimbursement percentages are governed by the guidelines of the four VLAIO grant schemes that are accessible through the spearhead cluster call. These range between 25% and 60%.

2.4 Call budget

The total call budget is €8 million.

2.5 Procedure



The procedure consists of four phases:

1. Consortium building & project concept summary
 - Support by Flanders.healthTech: sparring on your project idea and project concept summary, help you find partners for the consortium, help you selecting the most appropriate VLAIO grant scheme
 - Deadline: April 29, 2022 – submit your project concept summary through the flanders.healthTech website
2. Ranking by the international jury
 - Each consortium will be invited to pitch their project concept to an international jury on May 9, 10 or 11
 - After the pitch (6 min), a Q&A with the jury will follow (9 min)
 - At the end of the three days, the jury will have ranked all proposals and advise flanders.healthTech on which proposals can continue to the full proposals stage.
 - Each consortium will receive written feedback from the jury.
 - The decision is final, no appeal is possible for this call, resubmission in future calls can be considered.
3. Full proposal writing
 - Each consortium is responsible for writing the full proposal text and preparing a project budget according to the appropriate VLAIO templates
 - Deadline:

- i. June 1 – your project proposal must be registered in VLAIO's KRIS portal.
- ii. June 8 – your final Feasibility study proposal must be submitted via the KRIS portal of VLAIO before midnight.
- iii. July 8 – your final Research innovation, development innovation or ICON proposal must be submitted via the KRIS portal of VLAIO before midnight.

4. VLAIO evaluation

- After submission all proposals will be evaluated according to the VLAIO evaluation process for the corresponding grant scheme.

2.5.1 Template for submitting a feasibility study

Since the amount of text required to submit a VLAIO feasibility study is limited, we will immediately use the VLAIO feasibility study template ¹³as a template for your project concept summary. This document will serve as draft proposal that can be further adapted based on feedback from the international jury.

2.5.2 Templates for innovation grant, research grant or ICON

As the VLAIO templates for an innovation grant, research grant or ICON grant are more elaborate, a separate template will be made available on the [flanders.healthTech](https://www.flanders.healthTech.be) website for the project concept summary. For the full proposal stage, the respective VLAIO templates must be used.

2.6 [flanders.healthTech](https://www.flanders.healthTech.be) ranking jury

[flanders.healthTech](https://www.flanders.healthTech.be) have appointed five experts that combine a broad technology/healthcare horizon with specific complementary expertise. This allows the knowledgeable jury as a whole to cover the different domains possible for [flanders.healthTech](https://www.flanders.healthTech.be) projects.

This jury will rank all proposals according to quality, fit with VLAIO criteria and [flanders.healthTech](https://www.flanders.healthTech.be) strategy. Based on quality and budget simulations the highest ranked proposals will receive positive feedback to continue for full proposal.

All proposals will receive written feedback from the jury. A feedback meeting can be scheduled with [flanders.healthTech](https://www.flanders.healthTech.be) to help you interpret their feedback.

Note: VLAIO will use a second set of independent experts for the evaluation of the full proposals.

¹³

2.7 Summary of submission deadlines

Proposals that have passed the Flanders.healthTech selection and counselling procedure must submit their proposal on the VLAIO website by July 8th (24:00h)¹⁴

When	What	Deliverable	Strategic support by flanders.healthTech
Now	Consortium building	Mandatory sparring	Project sparring: ideas, concept, valorisation, partner matching, fit with program, project type, ...
April 29	Deadline for project idea	Abstract (O&O / ICON) Draft proposal (HBS)	
May 9/10/11	Ranking Jury	Pitch + Q&A	
May 15	Results of Jury	Go/NoGo	Interpreting Jury feedback to go forward
	Writing full proposal		Proposal sparring: draft texts, work plan, business case, ...
June 8	Deadline Haalbaarheidsstudie	Final proposal	
July 8	Deadline for O&O / ICON	Final proposal	
December	Final decision funding		
January 2023	Project start		

¹⁴ At the general request of our members, we have scheduled the deadline before the summer holidays.