|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Project title and acronym** |  |
| **Project duration in months** |  |
| **Project start date** |  |
| **Funding amount approved** |  |
| **Applicant data[[1]](#footnote-1)** |  |
| **Applicant email** |  |
| **Applicant research group** |  |

By signing below, the Applicant:

1. Agrees to execute the project above according to the IMDEA Materials Institute proof-of-concept (PoC) call 2025 (“Materialise 2025”) and the proposal submitted to this call, both attached as annexes.
2. Declares that neither they nor their research group are receiving funding for the same activities.

|  |
| --- |
| Applicant data, signature and date here |

By signing below, the Principal Investigator of the research group to which the Applicant belongs approves their participation in the abovementioned project[[2]](#footnote-2).

|  |
| --- |
| PI data, signature and date here if needed |

**Annexe I: IMDEA Materials Institute proof-of-concept (PoC) call 2025**

**GOAL AND DESCRIPTION**

There is a gap between the progress made through research funding and what industry and investors view as an interesting commercial opportunity. While researchers usually receive funding to explore new concepts and conduct early-stage research, there are many challenges in transitioning those results into practical applications or commercial products. This **funding gap** is often called the **“valley of death”**. To bridge this gap and facilitate the transition from research to practical application or commercialization, **proof-of-concept** (PoC) programs are essential.

PoC programs aim to fund and demonstrate the commercial potential or research results to de-risk the technology for industry and investors. The end goal of these programs is to **produce evidence that the technology works, has commercial potential, and is ready for** **investment** of some kind.

Unfortunately, PoCs are scarce in our environment. This is why IMDEA Materials has decided to launch the first call of its PoC program, **Materialise 2025**, which is expected to be continued with regular calls every 1-2 years, depending on the approved annual budget of the Institute.



The **goal** of Materialise 2025 is to:

* Address the low maturity/Technology Readiness Level ([TRL](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Technology_readiness_level)) of IMDEA Materials’ research results to make them more attractive for industrial uptake.
* Develop technological (prototypes, validated technologies, etc.) and non-technological aspects (early customer discovery and problem-solution fit, use case definition, intellectual property (IP) strategy, etc.) to instil confidence in potential customers, licensees or investors.
* Enable technology transfer pathways such as spin-offs, license agreements, contracts, and partnerships in innovation projects.

The **expected outcomes** of Materialise 2025 are:

* Prototypes and validated technologies.
* IP filings (patents, etc.) and other IP rights.
* Structured commercial avenues increasing the Institute’s impact on material sciences applications across industries.
* Increased technology transfer activities and awareness among IMDEA Materials’ staff.

**FUNDING, DURATION AND NUMBER OF PROJECTS**

**One project**, up to **45.000 €** of direct costs, plus **support** from external experts (valued at **5.000 €**) and IMDEA Materials’ Technology Transfer and Innovation Office (TTIO) for non-technological aspects, with a **1-year** duration maximum.

**TIMELINE**

* Call announcement: 8/01/2025
* Call open: 27/01/2025
* Call deadline: 1/04/2025
* Evaluation: 2/04/2025 – 31/05/2025
* Call results: 1/06/2025
* Project start dates: 1/06/2025 – 30/09/2025

**ELIGIBILITY AND REQUIREMENTS**

**Applicants**

* The applicant has to be a **researcher** (all levels allowed, from Research Assistants to Principal Investigators (PIs)) **or technical staff** (Laboratory Technicians, Instrument Scientists, etc.) at IMDEA Materials with a contractual employment relationship with the Institute covering the whole project execution period, or with a commitment from the PI of the research group to which they belong to extend their contract during that period, or whose salary cost is covered under the proposal submitted to this call.

If the applicant is not a PI, they must have the approval of the PI of the research group to which they belong.

Both the applicant and other possible team members of the project team must have available time outside grants to work on the project.

* An applicant can only submit **one proposal** to this call.
* The applicant may carry the project **alone or teaming** with other IMDEA Materials Institute colleagues, who should be mentioned in the technical proposal.
* This project is **incompatible with similar calls funding the same activities** (PoC from AEI, ERC PoC, EIC transition or similar schemes).

**Projects**

* Project proposals must be based on a **research result carried out at IMDEA Materials** that has been **at least disclosed and positively evaluated by the TTIO** **before the** call **deadline**. Project proposals can, of course, be based on patent applications or granted patents, registered software/code (or for which an application for registration has been submitted) or results protected via industrial secret at IMDEA Materials.
* **Entry TRL: 2-3** (technology concept formulated - experimental proof of concept), **exit TRL: 4-5** (technology validated in the laboratory - technology validated in relevant environment )
* The **activities supported are**: developing prototypes or demonstrators, validating research ideas, customer discovery to test market potential, protecting intellectual property (IP), gathering data for regulatory, technical, or economic feasibility, engaging with industry partners for feedback or pilot collaborationand similar activities. Activities to explore new concepts and conduct early-stage research are **not within the scope of this call**, and the requested budget can’t be used for them. The project must be what venture builders would call “**the killer experiment**”: a project designed to answer the technological/regulatory doubts they need to clarify in order to invest.

**MONITORING AND SUPPORT SERVICES**

* Mentoring services conducted by an external consultancy throughout the project to work on **early customer discovery and project-solution fit**, understand the knowledge gaps (market and technical), prepare conversations with potential customers or stakeholders and guide the future development roadmap.
* Monthly follow-up meetings with the TTIO.

**APPLICATION DOCUMENTS, PROCEDURE AND TEMPLATES**

Applicants should send a **technical proposal** (**5 pages** maximum) covering all the following sections in PDF format to techtransfer.materials@imdea.org (subject: “PoC call 2025 proposal”) before the call deadline.

* Project and applicant data (and PI approval, if needed)
* Summary of technology and problem-solution fit
* Market potential and commercialization path
* TRL and IP status
* Objectives, team and work plan
* Budget breakdown and justification

**Templates**

* *Invention disclosure templates: patent, trade secret, software*
* *Technical proposal template*
* *Project acceptance document*
* *Report summarizing the external consultancy support*
* *Final report*

**EVALUATION**

Evaluation will be conducted by a **panel of experts**. They will sign a Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) to ensure confidentiality before evaluating proposals.

The evaluation **criteria, subcriteria, score** and procedure are as follows. Proposals must achieve a minimum overall score of 70% to be considered for funding. The call will be declared void in case proposals don’t reach this threshold.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Weight (%)** | **Score range (1-10)[[3]](#footnote-3)** | **Subcriteria** |
| Industrial applicability and market impact | 40 | 1-10 | **- Problem-solution fit:** Does the project address a real and significant industry or market need?**- Market potential**: Is there evidence of market demand, customer interest, or commercial feasibility?**- Industry readiness:** Are there identified pathways for market entry (e.g., pilot tests, industry validation, partnerships)?- **Impact:** What is the technology’s expected economic, social, or environmental impact? |
| Novelty and scientific quality | 25 | 1-10 | - **Innovation**: Does the project introduce a novel technology, method, or application?- **Scientific rigour**: Does a solid technical/scientific foundation support the research?- **State of the art**: Does the project represent a significant improvement over existing technologies?- **Technical feasibility**: Are the proposed technical solutions realistic and achievable within the proposed timeframe? |
| Team, work plan and feasibility | 25 | 1-10 | - **Team**: Does the team have the necessary time, skills, qualifications, and experience to execute the project successfully? Is their level of involvement described? Is it reasonable and realistic?- **Work plan**: Are the objectives, milestones, and tasks well-defined, realistic, and achievable within the proposed timeframe? - **Resource allocation**: Is the budget reasonable, justified, and aligned with the project goals? Are the costs eligible under this call?- **Risk management**: Are the main risks identified with mitigation/contingency plans defined? |
| TRL and IP status and progression | 10 | 1-10 | - **Current TRL**: Is the project within the expected TRL range? Is the TRL progression feasible and justified? - **IP status**: Is an existing IP strategy described and justified (e.g., patent filed or planned)? - **IP progression**: Does the project propose steps to advance the IP status (e.g., patent application, trade secret)?  |

Evaluation process:

* Individual review: each evaluator assesses the proposal independently using the criteria and subcriteria above.
* Consolidated scoring: scores are averaged across reviewers to ensure objectivity.

**ACCEPTANCE**

The applicant and their PI, if needed, will sign a project acceptance document, which they will commit to carrying out the project following the guidelines described in this document.

**DELIVERABLES**

* The applicant commits to deliver an **early-stage deliverable** summarising the work, conclusions and recommendations of the **support from the external consultancy** to techtransfer.materials@imdea.org(to be delivered within 15 days after the end of the support from the consultancy).
* The applicant commits to deliver a **final report**, including **results**, **customer discovery** and **industry feedback**, a **future development roadmap** and a summary of the activities performed to techtransfer.materials@imdea.org(to be delivered within the last 15 days of the project).
* The applicant commits to deliver **presentations to relevant stakeholders**, including IMDEA Materials’ annual meeting, IMDEA Materials’ Industrial Advisory Board (IAB) meetings and other events flagged by the TTIO during and after the project execution period.

**IMDEA MATERIALS IP POLICY**

Projects under this call are subjected to IMDEA Materials’ IP policy, regulating, amongst others, the communication, ownership and protection of results and distribution of net profit.

*IMDEA Materials reserves the right to modify the rules to improve the development of the call for proposals.*

**Annexe II: Proposal submitted by the Applicant to IMDEA Materials Institute proof-of-concept (PoC) call 2025**

Proposal submitted here

1. Name, Surname and Professional category (Research Assistant, Research Associate, etc.). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. PI approval is required if the Applicant is not the Principal Investigator of their research group. If the contractual employment relationship of the Applicant with IMDEA Materials Institute doesn’t cover the whole project execution period, by signing this document the PI **commits** to extend their contract during that period in case the related salary cost is not budgeted and covered within the project. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Each criteria is scored on a scale of 1 to 10, where:

	* 1–3: Poor – Criterion is insufficiently addressed or lacks clarity and justification
	* 4–6: Fair – Criterion is partially addressed; some details are unclear or insufficient
	* 7–8: Good – Criterion is well-addressed with clear, justified, and relevant information
	* 9–10: Excellent – Criterion is fully addressed with outstanding quality, clarity, and supporting evidence. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)