



**Call for  
ICP Connect 2022  
Concept Note  
Stage 1 – Pre-assessment**

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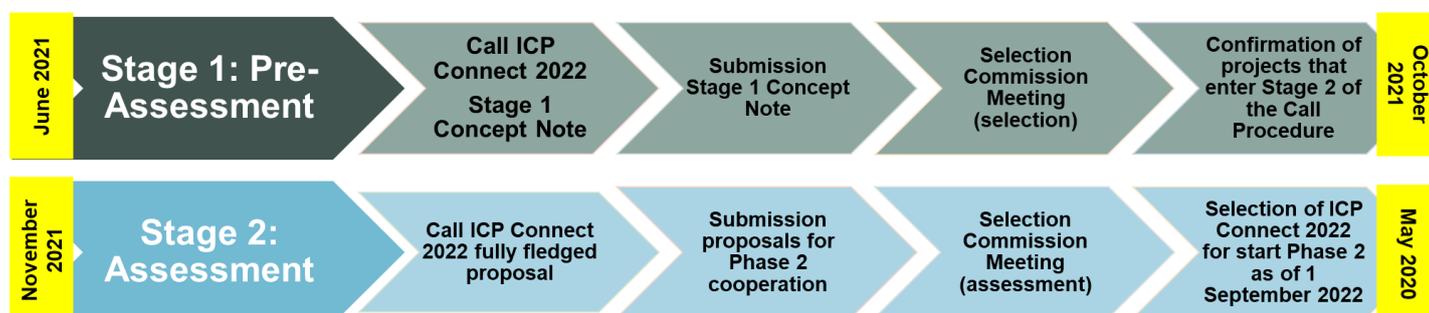
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## Summary

<b>Name</b>	<b>ICP Connect 2022 – 5 year funding 2022-2026</b>
<b>Link with VLIR-UOS Outcomes</b>	(1) 'Individuals apply newly acquired state-of-the-art knowledge and skills'; (2) 'Higher quality and more inclusive education'; (4) 'Higher quality and needs-oriented research'.
<b>Description (objective, project strategy)</b>	Through an ICP Connect project, a selection of accredited international study programmes organized at one or more Flemish universities and focusing on subjects in line with the Agenda 2030 and SDG principles are supported to integrate global perspectives and strengthen the global south and network dimension into existing international study programmes. This implies a strategy that aims to spur the internationalization and networking of the programme by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- adapting content, didactics and approaches;</li> <li>- foreseeing modalities to enhance the quality of the learning process and engage participation of international students;</li> <li>- linking it with the local context of one or more partner countries by means of student and / or professor mobility and/or partial delocalization of the programme to (one or more) partner institutions;</li> <li>- staying connected with graduates of the programme, and by connecting alumni with each other and with students and (network) partners, at providing learning opportunities and support mechanisms to alumni.</li> </ul>
<b>Duration - budget</b>	Selected study programmes can receive funding for max. 2x5 years. This call is <b>for a second phase of 5 years funding</b> . 1-year study programme can apply for max 500 000 EUR (5y) – 2-year study programmes can apply for max 750 000 EUR (5y) In addition, positive assessment implies entitlement to an annual intake of 10 new 1 <sup>st</sup> year scholarships per programme per academic year during a five-year period (2022-2026)
<b>Who can apply for funding</b>	Only the 15 existing, accredited English master programmes of 60, 90 or 120 credits, organised at a Flemish university, that received incremental funding between 2017-2021
<b>Countries</b>	- Master programme organised at one or more Flemish universities (BE) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Partnerships with institutions from partner country list</li> <li>o Scholarships for students from scholarship country list</li> </ul>
<b>ICP Connect 2022 – 2 stage procedure: This Call = Stage 1 – Pre-assessment</b>	
<b>Launch Stage 1 call</b>	- 25 June 2021
<b>Deadline submission</b>	- 1 October 2021
<b>Selection Commission meeting</b>	- Week of 18 October 2021
<b>Ratification of Selection</b>	- 22 October 2021 (Bureau UOS, ratification of selection of ICP Connect funding (yes/no) for 2022-2026 phase

# 1. Timeline – ICP Connect 2022

The ICP Connect Call 2022 consists of 2 procedural stages leading to the start of ICP Connect projects for a Five-Year Phase 2022-2026 on 1/9/2022. Below you will find a visualisation of the stages :



The present **call for pre-assessment** is the first stage in the ICP Connect intake process. A table with further detail with regard to the different steps (timing of certain steps is still indicative) is included below.

The current ICP projects are invited to formulate a proposal based on:

- a self-evaluation and retrospective with lessons learned, based on the conclusions and recommendations from the ICP mid-term evaluation, and the VLIR-UOS management response;
- way forward: motivation for submitting an ICP Connect 2022 fully fledged proposal with focus on consolidation, broadening to network configuration and/or innovation, linked to the new conceptual framework of ICP Connect.

The selection criteria for stage 1 will be the original Incremental Funding selection criteria from 2016, but without weights. The result of the assessment will be "fit for purpose" or "not fit for purpose".

Positive pre-assessment will guarantee funding for FYP2, both project funding and the intake of 10 new scholarships / year for 5 years, and will lead to the invitation to the submission of a fully-fledged project proposal for a next five-year phase of ICP Connect cooperation.

In stage 2, proposals will be assessed against the four new VLIR-UOS criteria, aligned with the ICP Connect conceptual framework. This assessment is aimed at optimising the proposals, as the guarantee of funding will already have been given. Special attention will be given to sustainability. The ICP Connect projects should not be a pure continuation of what they already did/do; there should be a shift towards sustainability and delocalisation. This assessment focuses on a quality assessment, formulating, if so necessary, optimisation recommendations and will result in the start of a 2<sup>nd</sup> phase of ICP Connect funding as of 1 September 2022.

ICP Connect 2022 – 2-stage procedure:		This Call = Stage 1 – Pre-assessment
Launch Stage 1 call	-	25 June 2021
Deadline submission	-	1 October 2021
Selection Commission meeting	-	Week of 18 October 2021
Ratification of Selection	-	22 October 2021 (Bureau UOS, ratification of selection of ICP Connect funding (yes/no) for 2022-2026 phase

ICP Connect 2022 – 2-stage procedure:		Stage 2 – Fully Fledged Proposals
Launch Stage 2 call	-	2nd half of November 2021
Deadline submission	-	1st half of April 2022
Selection Commission meeting	-	Mid/2nd half of May 2022
Ratification of Selection	-	End of May/June 2022
Preparing contracts/start	-	June – August 2022
Start ICP Connect 2022	-	1 September 2022

## 2. Background

### 2.1. A new ‘SDG proof’ Five Year Programme

‘Agenda 2030’ is used as the overall framework for the new VLIR-UOS Five-Year Programme (2022-2026). A new VLIR-UOS vision, describing what contribution we want to make to Agenda 2030 through ‘Higher Education Partnerships for Sustainable Development’, was developed and further translated into a Theory of Change (ToC) with a number of objectives and impact areas. The ToC clarifies what impact we want to contribute to and how and why VLIR-UOS and its portfolio is expected to achieve this intended impact. The underlying principles of Agenda 2030 (‘Leaving no one behind & inclusiveness’, ‘Interconnectedness & indivisibility’ and ‘Multi-stakeholder partnerships’) are used to render the VLIR-UOS portfolio and all activities, results and impact ‘SDG proof’. Having an organizational ToC implies that all projects and programmes that are funded by VLIR-UOS have to match with this ToC, including the ICP Connect projects.

### 2.2. VLIR-UOS Theory of Change

The VLIR-UOS portfolio contributes to the 2030 agenda by realizing a societal impact, implying an impact on local communities/civil society, governments, private sector or other HEIs. VLIR-UOS has identified 3 main impact areas to which it wants to contribute (sphere of interest): 1. Knowledge-driven global partnerships; 2. Skilled individuals act as global citizens in relevant sectors; 3. Applied solutions and evidence-based policies.

Contributing to the attainment of the main VLIR-UOS impact areas are a number of outcomes. These are the medium-term effects of an intervention on the level of the direct (incl. staff and students at HEI, individual students and professionals) or in some cases indirect beneficiaries. The outcomes are beyond the sphere of control of an intervention but fall within its sphere of influence. VLIR-UOS has identified 6 main outcomes:

1. Individuals apply relevant co-created knowledge, skills and attitudes
2. HEIs provide higher quality and more inclusive education
3. HEIs conduct higher quality and needs-oriented research
4. HEIs make use of more effective organizational systems and processes
5. HEIs create enhanced conditions for uptake of new knowledge, applications, or services
6. HEIs and their stakeholders engage in knowledge driven science-society interactions

ICP Connect projects contribute to a number of these outcomes and impact areas.

## 3. ICP Connect – basic concepts

### 3.1. General description

ICP Connect projects aim to more systematically integrate global perspectives and strengthen global south and network dimensions into existing master's programmes. This implies a strategy that aims to spur the internationalization and networking of the programme by:

- adapting content, didactics and approaches;
- foreseeing modalities to enhance the quality of the learning process and engage participation of international students;
- linking it with the local context of one or more partner countries by means of student and/or professor mobility and/or partial delocalization of the programme to (one or more) partner institutions;
- staying connected with graduates of the master programme, and by connecting alumni with each other and with students and (network) partners, at providing learning opportunities and support mechanisms to alumni.

### 3.2. Scholarship framework

Each master programme that is selected in the framework of ICP Connect is also awarded with a number of **scholarships** for students from one of the VLIR-UOS scholarship countries. Part of the ICP Connect projects thus focus on supporting scholarship beneficiaries (and broader international students) in terms of learning environment, stimulating exchange and collaboration, network opportunities and strategies and initiatives to support them in taking an active role as change agent during and after completion of the study. The ICP scholarships also fit into the general VLIR-UOS scholarship framework whereby scholars are seen as potential agents of change that can contribute to societal change in their home country (or region) after finishing their studies.

Scholars get embedded in a coordinated network of students, alumni, staff, partner institutions (HEI) and possible other partners (e.g. NGOs, private sectors), allowing them to build long-term collaborations and contribute to positive change. At the other hand, scholarships are also supportive to help realize (parts of) the incremental project strategy<sup>1</sup>. Scholarship beneficiaries often have a broader experience horizon, since many have relevant prior work experience often beyond academia. This often positively affects the learning processes and potential learning outcomes of all students, as well as the quality level of collaborative (research) projects with a societal impact. It also leads to altering or experimenting with other didactic styles and methodologies as to allow for more participative class interaction and more adequately valorize the “wisdom of the class”. Scholarship beneficiaries are also often networked in their country/region, which can lead to collaborative projects with alumni and part of their network.

### 3.3. Phase 1 vs. Phase 2

The partnerships and networks that were initiated/developed in the framework of a Flemish master programme, require a solid basis and consolidation which goes via long term support. Therefore a project

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<sup>1</sup> Ace Europe (2020). Mid-term evaluation of the incremental funding.

cycle is foreseen in different phases, up to 10 years max. in order to ensure that partnerships can develop and consolidate into solid educational networks. A master programme can receive funding for maximum 2 project phases (2x 5 years), subject to positive evaluation by a VLIR-UOS selection commission.

Phase 1 and phase 2 of ICP connect projects have distinct results and activities, especially with regard to partnerships and alumni.

- **Phase 1:** Master programmes selected for an ICP Connect project are expected to **develop a solid strategy** to gradually strengthen/build the global South a dimension of the ICP through cooperation via HEI partnerships. This first phase also includes strategy implementation, e.g. from detecting potential partners to realizing concrete agreements/MoU and involvement of partners in different aspect of the educational programmes; prepare a delocalization of curriculum components; develop an alumni strategy and policy with first initiatives to stay connected with alumni and develop an alumni network etc. How far-reaching first implementation can be, evidently depends on whether the ICP Connect projects can build upon existing partnerships/networks. Programmes are however expected to keep in mind the longer term objectives and anticipate on network- and capacity building of/with partner institutions and creating a true partnership context from the very beginning.
- **Phase 2 (Current call):** A second 5-year phase builds on the results of the first cycle and focuses on **consolidation and sustainability**. Programmes no longer focus on strategy-development but intend to implement and consolidate, **further strengthen** procedures and connect partners with each other in a broad educational network building upon innovations, learning opportunities and alumni initiatives and networks that were developed during the first phase of the project. Programmes also aim at realizing **sustainability** of different aspects of the ICP Connect project (e.g. delocalized curriculum components, fieldwork for students, ...). This does not necessarily mean that the network must be financially self-sufficient. It can generate revenue for example by commercializing products and services, introducing membership fees, encourage in-kind contributions, but can also still rely on (non-VLIR-UOS) donor support for some of the financial resources.

### 3.4. Extension of Phase 1, and duration of Phase 2

Due to the COVID 19 pandemic all VLIR-UOS projects were heavily impacted. This led to the request for an extension of Five Year Programme 2017-2021. In the case of ICP, the current phase of ICP Incremental Funding projects is extended with 8 months until 31 August 2022. The details on this procedure are being discussed and formalized. This means the next phase of ICP Connect funding will start on 1 September 2022 and as of then activity years will run along academic years (1 September Year X to 31 August Year 'X+1'). As such the next phase of ICP Connect funding will run from 1 September 2022 to 31 August 2027 over 5 activity years.

### 3.5. Partner institutions

An important aspect of ICP Connect is building and strengthening partnerships that can lead to the establishment and operationalisation of international networks. Partners involved in the ICP Connect projects not only contribute to the further strengthening of the Flemish master programme but they also get the opportunity to build capacity by being active partners that co-create, co-design, co-host etc. With

support of the Flemish master programme and network, they get e.g. to organise curriculum components, courses, or even master programmes themselves, for national and international students at their institution.

Partner institutions for an ICP Connect project are those **institutions in a VLIR-UOS partner country** that have an explicit role in the execution of the project that is beyond ad-hoc interventions or the support of individual academic colleagues (for e.g. for master thesis supervision) and with whom a strong interaction and collaboration with focus on capacity development is envisaged in the project. The first phase of ICP Connect projects allows for developing such a vision, exploration of partners, developing a shared strategy, setting-up small-scale mutual collaborative projects, setting-up agreements and management structures etc. During the second phase, partnerships can be further strengthened, expanded in terms of topics and involvement of different partner institutions and consolidated. Responsibilities can also shift gradually, with the partner institution(s) taking up more tasks and responsibilities during the last 5 years of ICP Connect Projects.

It has already proven fruitful to (further) develop partnerships that can build upon existing or former links between institutions in one of the partner countries and one or more Flemish universities (e.g. former IUC partners, former NETWORK partners, alumni, former PhD students, Erasmus Mundus partners, etc.)<sup>2</sup>. Building further on (already) existing long-term relations, that have created trust, is an important factor contributing to the elaboration of the project and also support synergy and complementarity between different VLIR-UOS projects and programmes.

It is important to involve potential partners from the very beginning of the development of the ICP Connect project in order to create clarity and understanding of the mutual expectations, tasks and responsibilities. Strong and supportive academic environments are essential to enable ICP Connect projects, especially if delocalization of curriculum components would be envisaged.

## 4. Budget and implementation

### 4.1. Project budget

If an ongoing ICP incremental project is positively evaluated by the selection commission – fit for purpose -, funding can be attributed for a period of maximum 5 years (second phase).

One-year masters can apply for max 500 000 EUR (100 000/year), two-year masters can apply for max 750 000 EUR (150 000/year) for this second phase.

Financial guidelines will be part of the second stage of ICP Connect 2022. This phase focuses on self-assessment and way forward.

### 4.2. Scholarships

Positive assessment also implies entitlement to an annual intake of 10 scholarships per programme per academic year during a five-year period (2022-2027). The scholarships aim to facilitate participation of attendants coming from the VLIR-UOS scholarship country list.

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<sup>2</sup> Ace Europe (2020). Mid-term evaluation Incremental Funding.

### 4.3. Implementation

The present call refers to the five-year period 2022 - 2027. More specifically, after positive evaluation, ICP Connect funding will be provided for the period 1/09/2022 – 31/08/2027. Both the project funding and the scholarships are linked to the academic years with a first intake of 10 scholars in September 2022 (AJ 2022-2023), a second intake in September 2023 (AJ 2023-2024) etc. up until the last intake in September 2026 (AJ 2026-2027).

## 5. Eligibility criteria

Eligibility criteria define whether or not a proposal can be accepted to enter the selection process. Eligibility criteria will be checked on the basis of an objective and simple yes/no answer. Therefore, eligibility criteria which are not fulfilled, will in principle result in the rejection of a proposal. In terms of eligible programmes it is clear that **this call only addressed the ICPs selected during stage 1** of this procedure. No other programmes can apply.

**Only eligibility criteria related to submission modalities apply for this call for proposals.** The proposal must meet the application and submission requirements as described in section 7 of this call ‘Application modalities’. Non-compliance with the mandatory format could lead to non-acceptance of the proposal.

## 6. Selection criteria

### 6.1. Selection criteria

VLIR-UOS has been applying the same set of **6 selection criteria** for all its calls for project proposals up until 2021. These criteria are further defined and translated into a non-exhaustive list of **descriptors** that are illustrative but provide an objective interpretation of the criteria, both for the applicant as well as for the selection commissions.<sup>3</sup> A standard list of criteria and descriptors were applied to the **International Masters Programme (ICP)** call in 2015<sup>4</sup>.

Since this call for ICP Connect 2022 (Stage 1) is focusing on a simple Yes/No decision based on a reflection/self-assessment on the current state of ICP project development and a view on the way forward towards a continued Phase of ICP Connect funding for 2022-2026, the selection commission will not apply weights in the pre-assessment phase for the current ICPs but focus on assessment of minimal quality standards (Yes/No).

### 6.2. Selection commission

In 2019 the ICP&ITP Selection Commission has been recomposed to assess the proposals for ICP and ITP projects selection rounds. The ICP selection commission meeting for the Stage 1 Selection round

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<sup>3</sup> Based on the ERC (European Research Council) and OECD-DAC (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development-Development Assistance Committee) definitions.

<sup>4</sup> Bureau UOS, 31 March 2015. This set was established for the 2017-2021 ICP call (launched June 2015).

will take place in October 2021. The selection commission will assess the proposals and check whether they are fit for purpose and reach the minimum requirement for selection/funding. Doing so the commission formulates a binding advice as to the funding of ICP programmes for a next Phase of ICP Connect funding. The Bureau UOS will ratify the selection advice during its meeting of 22 October 2021.

## 7. Application modalities

An ICP Connect proposal needs to be in line with the requirements of this first stage of ICP pre-assessment. This is translated into the format (annex 1) that needs to be completed by the ICP promoters. The format needs to be submitted in English. Besides the documents listed below, other annexes are not accepted. They will not be taken into consideration.

### 7.1. Formats and annexes

A proposal for the first stage of ICP Connect only consists of an ICP Connect pre-assessment Concept Note, to be elaborated using the compulsory format.

Format	Explanation
<u>Annex 1</u> : Format for an ICP Connect pre-assessment Concept Note	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A self-evaluation and retrospective with lessons learned;</li> <li>- Way forward: motivation for submitting a stage 2 proposal, with an indication of the main outlines: consolidation, broadening to network configuration and/or innovation, linked to the concept of ICP Connect</li> </ul>

Annex 1 includes indications on the maximum number of pages per section, ideal font type & size, and must be submitted in English. All compulsory fields are to be completed within the format. The format must be signed by the Flemish promoter(s) (can be an electronic signature). Besides the documents listed above, no other annexes will be accepted nor taken into consideration.

### 7.2. Deadline

Applicants should submit their proposal directly to VLIR-UOS, not through the VLIR-UOS database. Of course, before sending the proposals to VLIR-UOS, interaction with the ICOS of your institution is advisable. If applicable, the applicant can update the proposal on the basis of the ICOS feedback.

The deadline for submission of the application format to VLIR-UOS is **1 October 2021, 23h59**. Please submit to [isedesmet@vliruos.be](mailto:isedesmet@vliruos.be) and [info@vliruos.be](mailto:info@vliruos.be) with copy to the ICOS of your institution.

### 7.3. Contact addresses

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ICOS KU Leuven Association	Tupac Calfat	+32 16 37 94 40	<a href="mailto:Tupac.Calfat@kuleuven.be">Tupac.Calfat@kuleuven.be</a>
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## 8. Background documents

The following background documents can be downloaded from the VLIR-UOS website.

<u>Background document 1</u>	<a href="#">Mid-term evaluation of the Incremental Funding to International Master programmes (ICP)</a>
<u>Background document 2</u>	Theory of Change ICP Connect
<u>Background document 3</u>	ICP Incremental Selection criteria/descriptors