

# Chief Operating Officer

## Summary

Ionics SA (<https://www.ionics-group.com/en>) is a Belgian company specialised in vacuum plasma treatment of powders and balls, in ion implantation of metallic, glass and polymeric materials on strips and surfaces, and in electroplating. Ionics development is supported by a strong group of shareholders who are convinced of the industrial potential of Plasma and Ion Implantation technologies.

Ionics is looking for an experienced **Chief Operating Officer (COO)** to lead this industrial transition, and to achieve operational profitability of the PVD and Ionics Implantation activities by 2023. The COO recruited could become the Chief Executive Officer of the company, after achieving successful results within 24 months of taking up the post.

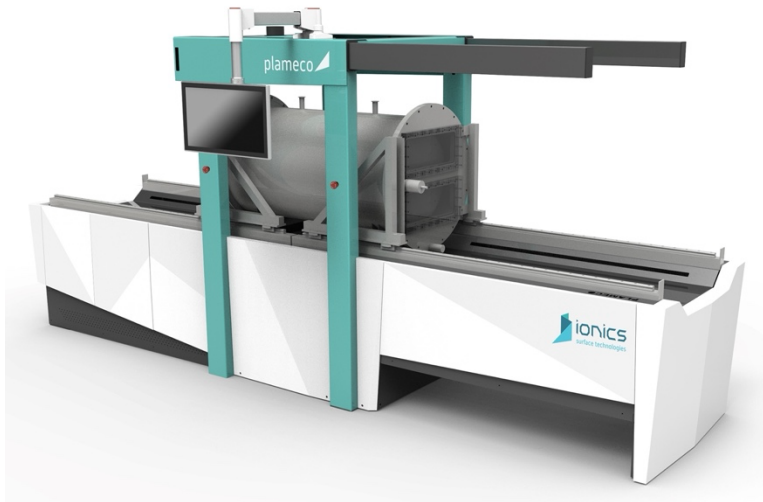
Applicants should have a minimum of 5 years' experience and a proven track record of success in the deployment of high technology products/services in industry. The main initial responsibilities of the COO will be in prospecting industrial customers and negotiating strategic contracts.

## Company

Ionics SA (<https://www.ionics-group.com/en>) is a Belgian company specialised in vacuum plasma treatment of powders and balls, in ion implantation of metallic, glass and polymeric materials on strips and surfaces, and in electroplating:

1. **Vacuum Plasma:** Ionics performs essentially two types of deposition: Physical Vapour Deposition (PVD) and Plasma-Enhanced Chemical Vapour Deposition (PECVD). With the support of Materia Nova, its main shareholder, Ionics has developed a plasma technology adapted to the coating of powders and small parts and has designed and built specialised equipment for these applications.

Examples of coating applications include precious metal powders (Ag, Pt, Rh), powders with Ti alloys for additive manufacturing, and high-value abrasive powders (corundum, diamond). Together with Materia Nova, Ionics holds several patents covering several applications.



2. **Ion implantation:** Ionics has developed an original and patented micro-implanter, using multi-charged, multi-energy ions, allowing deeper and more uniform penetration.

Examples of applications to strips include the uniform diffusion of gold micro-layers on critical automotive contactors (reducing the deposited thickness by a factor of 4 and guaranteeing equivalent performance) or on thin wires for surgical purposes preventing metal diffusion into the human body, surface hardening of cutting blades, etc.

Applications on flat surfaces cover a wide range of purposes: anti-reflective and anti-scratch properties on glass and sapphire, tribological properties of contact surfaces in orthopaedic surgery, anti-adhesion properties of frying pans, etc.

Ionics has led the development and construction of 6 pilots in the framework of the Walibeam project: Ionics has an implanter test and calibration bench, three pilots for the treatment of flat samples up to 1600 x 1800 mm and a Roll-to-Roll line for the treatment of both sides of coils in continuous.





3. **Electroplating:** Ionics performs copper, nickel, tin, gold and silver plating on bulk parts or coils. The main markets are the automotive industry and household appliances. Ionics is IATF 16949 certified.



Ionics' technological, technical, and commercial developments have been made possible by a group of shareholders who are convinced of the industrial potential of Plasma and Ion Implantation technologies:

- Materia Nova (<http://www.materianova.be/en/>) conducts the R&D phases in PVD and Ion Implantation and assists Ionics in the Proofs of Concept ordered by the clients;

- AGC Glass (<https://www.agc-glass.eu/en>) leads the commercial development of Ion Implantation applications in the glass and watch industry;
- IMBC (<http://www.imbc.be>), SRIW (<https://www.sriw.be/en/>) and Invest for Jobs (<https://investforjobs.be/fr/>) contribute to the financing of the industrial deployment of Ionics and bring their networks of participating companies and partners

Ionics owns its headquarters in Liers (Herstal) where it plans to regroup all industrial activities. Ionics is temporarily renting a hall in Herstal for its engineering activities and a hall shared with Materia Nova in Mons for R&D and PoC activities. In total, Ionics currently employs 25 people.

## **Position**

Ionics is looking for an experienced **Chief Operating Officer (COO)** to lead this industrial transition, and to achieve operational profitability of the PVD and Ionics Implantation activities by 2023.

The COO recruited could become the Chief Executive Officer of the company, after achieving successful results within 24 months of taking up the post.

## **Industrial challenge**

The final stages of the technological challenge undertaken since 2014 are about to be won. Ionics has a solid and highly qualified technical team and an equipment platform that is unique in the world: these enable to validate the technical and economic aspects of innovative treatments on a pre-industrial scale and to test the market with pre-series. New investments are underway: on the one hand a PVD Powder and Ball line with 20 times the production capacity of the equipment currently used for PoCs, and an extension of the Roll-to-Roll Ion Implantation line which will increase its functionalities and production capacity. The new equipment will be available for production in Q1 2023.

The current challenge is industrial in nature: to accompany the first customers from the PoC phase to job coating contracts and to intensify business development to achieve sufficient production infrastructure load rate in 2023; and concurrently, to lead the evolution of the Ionics team towards the industrial exploitation of advanced technologies.

Ionics' commercial portfolio currently includes more than 20 advanced qualified opportunities, of which several significant contracts are to be concluded in Q3 and Q4 2022.



## **Role**

Based on a solid commercial, technical and financial understanding of our applications, you will manage our internal sales team and oversee projects with strategic partners related to Plasma and Ion Implantation applications.

You will personally act as a prospector for priority projects in Europe, supported by the internal technical and administrative team. This activity corresponds to at least half of your occupation during the first 18 months. You will manage the journey of customers through the PoC, pre-series and industrial production phases, ensuring that internal best practices are implemented.

As COO, once the volume of Plasma and Ion Implantation business has reached the level set in our business plan, you will be responsible for day-to-day management of the Marketing & Sales, Sourcing, Purchasing, Supply Chain, Production, HR, Administration & Legal staffs.

You will report to Luc Langer, CEO. After your training phase, Luc Langer will focus on the dynamics of the evolution of the R&D projects (at Materia Nova) towards PoCs (at Ionics); he will also support you in your prospecting actions and will take care of the improvement of the technical processes.

At the end of this second phase, marked by significant and sustained business development results, and with experience gained in the operational functions of the company, you could become CEO.

## **Profile**

You have a minimum of 5 years' experience and a proven track record of success in the deployment of high technology products/services in industry.

You are particularly competent in prospecting industrial customers and negotiating strategic contracts. You are a civil or industrial engineer – or alternatively you hold a master's degree in physics or chemistry - and have a good command of the basic disciplines of engineering and production management. You are familiar with B2B marketing techniques.

You can work and prospect autonomously. You are ready to travel in Europe whenever required or useful, and to operate from the office when you are not travelling: your physical presence in Liers is a must to ensure an effective contribution of your team in company's projects.

You are energetic, proactive, take leadership and engage your team members in a clear way.

You can think and work both on conceptual and details levels. You have a pragmatic approach, and you are solution oriented. You are strong in devising the appropriate method to find effective solutions. You have a healthy dose of persuasion.

You are proficient in French and English. Commands of German or Dutch are assets.

You are ambitious, geared to success shared with your team, and excited by the perspective of becoming Ionics' CEO after achieving convincing results.

## **Our Offer**

An open and nice working atmosphere with colleagues working at a high level of expertise, striving altogether to achieve ambitious objectives.

Depending on your choice, either a permanent employment contract with a competitive salary package and fringe benefits, or a free-lance service contract.

A truly international environment, multidisciplinary work, at the edge of advanced technology trends, in close connection with one of most renewed research institutes in Europe.

## **Practical information**

If you are interested in this challenging job opportunity, we ask you to send your application to Luc Langer, Chief Executive Officer, at [luc.langer@ionics-group.com](mailto:luc.langer@ionics-group.com).