

Call for Experts – "IO-Link Ex"

Today, IO-Link is not specified for use in hazardous (explosion-prone) areas. Industries such as pharmaceuticals, food & beverage, water/wastewater and chemical processing still rely on conservative, intrinsically safe interfaces (e.g. 4–20 mA) whenever sensors and actuators operate in explosive atmospheres. A standardized extension of IO-Link into hazardous areas would close this gap and bring the diagnostics, remote configuration and transparency of IO-Link to the process industry.

A survey among member companies confirmed strong support for this direction, on the agreed basis of *no changes to the IO-Link protocol*. Based on this feedback, the STECO has decided to include IO-Link Ex in the upcoming IO-Link specification V1.2. Project title: "IO-Link Ex".

A new working group "IO-Link Ex" is looking for experts from device, master, system and software manufacturers as well as functional-safety and Ex-certification specialists, who are willing to actively contribute their experience and requirements by:

- Use case and requirement definitions for hazardous-area applications (zones / divisions)
- Definition of the physical layer and power constraints (intrinsic safety, current and power limits)
- Barrier architecture (integrated in the master vs. separate component)
- Certification and conformance framework
- Prioritization of the relevant device classes
- Positioning and delimitation towards Ethernet-APL

All interested member companies are invited to join this working group. Please sign in if you are interested until **August 14th, 2026** via e-mail to luca.hoffmann@teconcept.de. Questions on the project group and possible attendance please address directly to the preliminary project group leader.