



DIAMONDS4IF

DISCOVERY, IDENTIFICATION, APPLICATION, AND MONITORING OF
DEVELOPED SOLUTIONS FOR INNOVATION FUND

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D10.2 – PUBLIC WORKSHOPS AT SECTOR ORGANISATIONS 1

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Description
AI	Artificial Intelligence
C&D	Communication and Dissemination
BMWK	Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action
CAPEX	Capital Expenditure
BEC	Bilbao Exhibition Centre
CCU	Carbon Capture and Utilisation
CCUS	Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage
CRMA	Critical Raw Materials Act
CINEA	European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency
CORDIS	Community Research and Development Information Service
CSA	Coordination and Support Action
DEVEX	Development Expenditure
DBFZ	German Biomass Research Centre
DLE	Direct Lithium Extraction
DG	Directorate General
EC	European Commission
EIB	European Investment Bank
ETS	Emission Trading System
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
H2020	Horizon 2020
IF	Innovation Fund
INNEN	INNOVATION ENGINEERING srl
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
KEI	Kompetenzzentrum Klimaschutz in energieintensiven Industrien
KIT	Karlsruhe Institute of Technology

NKS	National Contact Point
MEYER BURGER	MEYER BURGER (Industries) GmbH
OEMs	Original Equipment Manufacturers
OPEX	Operational Expenditure
PV	Photovoltaic / photovoltaics
PNO	PNO Innovation GmbH
Q&A	Questions and Answers
R&D	Research and Development
R&I	Research and Innovation
RAAMS	RAAMS AS
RP	Reporting Period
RTOs	Research and Technology Organisations
RWE	RWE Offshore Wind GmbH
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SSPs	Small-scale projects
TGZ	Technology and Start-up Centre / Technologie- und Gründerzentrum
TRL	Technology Readiness Level
WP	Work Package

INTRODUCTION

PROJECT SUMMARY AND OBJECTIVES

DIAMONDS4IF aims to support Horizon 2020 (H2020) beneficiary companies in further developing their projects and applying to the ETS Innovation Fund (IF), helping them overcome barriers in transforming R&D (Research and Development) results into viable business ventures. One of the main outcomes of the project will be the development of at least five sound proposals, including detailed plans for scalability, commercialisation and financial models for submission to the IF.

WP10: CREATING SYNERGIES, DISSEMINATION AND COMMUNICATION (RP2)

WP10 ensures the continuation and expansion of the dissemination and communication activities initiated under WP9. It strengthens cooperation with CINEA (the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency), the other Coordination and Support Action (CSA) projects, and all relevant stakeholders involved in the Innovation Fund programme.

In addition to fostering synergies with CINEA and sister CSA projects, WP10 also encompassed a wider communication strategy targeting the renewable-energy industry, and research organisations.

Under Task 10.4 – Networking with sector and industry associations (M19–36), DIAMONDS4IF focuses on building strong links with relevant industrial networks, sector organisations and market actors to increase the visibility and practical uptake of the project's results.

Through online dissemination tools, participation in major sector events, and collaboration with European associations and Innovation Fund beneficiaries, the consortium promoted DIAMONDS4IF results and raised awareness of the Innovation Fund framework. These activities are expected to ensure long-term visibility and sustained impact beyond the project's duration.

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This deliverable reports on the public workshops and related networking activities organised under Task 10.4, Networking with the sector/industry associations (M19–36), with a specific focus on the Innovation Fund in the renewable energy sectors.

The first chapter outlines the objectives, workshop programme and target groups addressed by DIAMONDS4IF under Task 10.4 and explains how these activities contribute to the project's broader dissemination and stakeholder engagement strategy. The second chapter presents the workshops, events, meetings and complementary dissemination actions carried out so far, highlighting the main topics addressed, the target audiences reached, and the outcomes achieved through each activity. Finally, the third chapter summarises the main conclusions and lessons learned, reviews the key outputs achieved so far, and provides a short outlook on the remaining activities planned until the end of the project.

1 WORKSHOP PROGRAMME AND OBJECTIVE

According to the Grant Agreement (GA) and as described previously in the Dissemination Plan, there are three different types of workshops that must be organized by the consortium members (Type 1 and 2) or on invitation by CINEA (Type 3):

Type 1: Two Workshops with other funded projects under this call for knowledge exchange and synergies (PNO); target group: **other CSA** (Coordination and Support Action) projects in this call, also other sectors; aim is to improve tools and methods for Innovation Fund project development.

Type 2: Twelve public workshops at six large events on Innovation Fund in renewable sectors (all); target groups: members of sector associations; aim is to present the project and its results (see also Task 9.4).

Type 3: Workshops organized by **CINEA** (participation on demand).

In this document we will focus on the activities and workshops related to Type 2.

1.1 Target Groups

The dissemination and communication activities aim to reach a wide range of audiences, from industrial stakeholders to European and national policymakers. The following list highlights the main target groups and how DIAMONDS4IF, in cooperation with the other CSAs and CINEA, intends to engage with them:

- **Companies in the renewable energy sector**, including those active in the manufacturing of components and technologies for energy generation, storage, distribution, and transformation.
 - *Focus:* potential Innovation Fund applicants and project owners.
- Industrial associations in the renewable energy sector
 - *Role:* act as multipliers by promoting the project outcomes among their members and supporting awareness of Innovation Fund opportunities.
- Other CSA projects
 - *Focus:* mutual support for the deployment of R&I results relevant to climate mitigation, exchange of lessons learned, coordination of communication activities, participation in joint events, and joint development of best practices and recommendations for the European coordination of the Innovation Fund.
- CINEA and European/national policymakers
 - *Focus:* provide input and feedback for improving the Innovation Fund processes and templates, share recommendations derived from project experience, and contribute to a continuous improvement of the Innovation Fund framework.
- Multipliers and intermediaries, including National Contact Points, European and national working groups, committees and expert networks relevant to the Innovation Fund and renewable energy topics.

- *Role:* raise awareness and ensure broader dissemination through established communication and stakeholder channels.

2 WORKSHOPS AT SIX LARGE EVENTS

An updated version of the DC plan (D9.4) was published as planned in M18. The DC plan contains both the planned development of **communication materials** and **tools** to promote public awareness of the project, including a public website, social media channels, and print materials (the latter to be found less useful and, hence, being rejected). The DC plan describes the planned events, participation, and organisation of the three different types of workshops on various public or closed events. Among others, the following are planned: “12 public workshops at 6 large events on Innovation Fund in renewable sectors. *Target groups*: members of sector associations; aim is to present the project and its results”.

Networking with sector and industry associations under Task 10.4 remained a continuous activity throughout the project period. The list below illustrates DIAMONDS4IF's participation in events, meetings and workshops organised with or involving sector and industry associations. It includes both events where project partners delivered workshops and events where the consortium participated primarily for networking purposes, distributing leaflets and sharing information on DIAMONDS4IF activities and Innovation Fund opportunities.

#	Year	Event Name	Approx. nr. of participants
1	2024	National Information Day on the EU Innovation Fund. Ernst Gockel (MB) / Ariane Kroker (PNO).	30
2	2024	Congress Future of Solar. Ernst Gockel (MB)	20
3	2024	Session at DMEC (Dutch Maritime Energy Centre). Ariane Kroker (PNO).	25
4	2024	Intersolar Europe, Munich (June 24). Meyer Burger, Workshop during VDMA-session at Intersolar: “IF – A finance support program of the EU: Participate and do the best to win”.	20
	2024	International Solar Manufacturing Initiative (ISMI) Kick-off meeting. Øyvind Nielsen (RAAMS) Collaboration with multiple companies to support the re-establishment of the PV industry in Europe (Solar Power Europe, PVA Tepla, Lapmaster Wolters, Rena).	15
5	2024	Symposium on Direct Lithium Extraction and IF Opportunities for Geothermal Sector Projects, Karlsruhe. Workshop of Nader Akil (PNO Innovations).	100
2025			
	2025	The smarter E Europe 2025 (Focus on Intersolar Europe); Munich PNO + Meyer Burger. No workshops. Networking, discussions with various companies and establishing new contacts and project ideas.	50

#	Year	Event Name	Approx. nr. of participants
	2025	EU PVSEC 2025; Bilbao Exhibition Center, Bilbao (Spain); Dr. Stephan Kröner (PNO) and ESMC. No workshops. Networking, discussions with various companies and establishing new contacts and project ideas.	15
6	2025	European Solar Manufacturing Council (ESMC); Online Workshop: Innovation Fund Opportunities for PV Manufacturing ; Online; PNO Senior Experts, Ariane Kroker	70
	2025	Lausitzer Fachkonferenz 2025 – Climate-Neutral Industry; Messe Cottbus (Germany) & digital; PNO Senior Experts, Ariane Kroker. Only leaflets and presence. No workshops. Networking, discussions with various companies and establishing new contacts and project ideas.	20
7	2025	BusinessTreff – Finance & Funding (hosted by BioEconomy e.V.). TGZ Weinberg Campus, Halle (Saale); Annemarie Reiche (PNO) held a Workshop on “Funding opportunities for the bioeconomy: chances and risks for companies.”	15
	2025	2 nd BMW Energy Research Conference – Energy Innovations for Competitiveness and Resilience. Ariane Kroker (PNO).	30
	2025	Innovation Fund reality check (CINEA / ESMC). Closed-door stakeholder dialogue. Ariane Kroker (PNO). No workshops. Networking, discussions with various companies and establishing new contacts and project ideas.	15
8	2025	Workshop : Online Infoday: Unlocking EU Innovation Fund Opportunities – The IF25 Call Explained (LEADS + DIAMONDS4IF)	150
9	2025	DIAMONDS4IF Webinar : Innovation Fund opportunities for the Bio-based industry, 18 December 2025.	47
2026			
	2026	ESMC Annual General Meeting. Ariane Kroker (PNO). No workshops. Networking, discussions with various companies and establishing new contacts and project ideas.	
10	2026	Solar Power Europe (SPE), Workshops “Manufacturing Workstream Meeting” , Ariane Kroker (PNO), Patrizia Bolognesi (PNO)	20
11	2026	Final Public Conference : Accelerating clean industrial deployment – insights, challenges, and opportunities. Patrizia Bolognesi (PNO), Benjamin Fischer (RWE), Silvia Colella (PNO Digital).	60
12	09.2026	Wind Energy HAMBURG (PNO / RWE)	<i>Tbd</i>
	09.2026	PNO - VDMA (Verband Deutscher Maschinen- und Anlagenbau) - Jahrestagung 2026 der VDMA Fachabteilung Photovoltaik Produktionsmittel	<i>Tbd</i>

#	Year	Event Name	Approx. nr. of participants
		VDMA (German Mechanical Engineering Industry Association) – 2026 Annual Meeting of the Photovoltaic Production Equipment Department	
13	12.2026	DIAMONDS4IF Webinar: IF2026 call novelties	<i>Tbd</i>

Table 1: Summary of Completed and (2026) Planned Workshops

Following more detailed information regarding the workshops mentioned in Table 1.

2.1 National Information Day on the EU Innovation Fund

January 19, 2024; Berlin; Ernst Gockel (MB) / Ariane Kroker (PNO)¹.

On January 19th, 2024, at the premises of the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action of Germany (BMWK) in Berlin, as well as via a live stream, stakeholders interested in funding opportunities had the possibility to get acquainted about the European Innovation Fund (IF). Experts from the European Commission, the European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency (CINEA), the National Contact Point (NKS) for the EU Innovation Fund, and the BMWK presented detailed information about the application process for the IF23 Calls and the IF23 Auction. In addition to the focal points of the funding programmes, the participants received information about the support options offered by the NKS, managed on behalf of the BMWK. During the event, participants had the opportunity to get in touch with each other and to participate in open discussions and individual counselling sessions. Experts from Meyer Burger (Ernst Gockel) and PNO Consultants GmbH (Ariane Kroker) had there the chance to **present and explain the “Dos and Don'ts of Applying for the European Innovation Fund”**.

They also presented to the auditorium the opportunities offered by the newly launched European project DIAMONDS4IF, which supports project ideas in the field of renewable energy. The high amount of feedback received indicates that the Innovation Fund is attracting significant attention and that many applicants intend to submit proposals and new innovative projects.



Figure 1: German National EU IF Info-Day. Image source: KEI, Jan Kumpfer

¹ [Nationale Kontaktstelle informiert zum EU-Innovationsfonds | Kompetenzzentrum Klimaschutz in energieintensiven Industrien \(KEI\) \(klimaschutz-industrie.de\)](https://www.klimaschutz-industrie.de/nationale-kontaktstelle-informiert-zum-eu-innovationsfonds)

2.2 Congress Future of Solar

On the 31. of January 2020 in the beautiful frame of Louwman Museum in Den Haag took place the biggest knowledge and networking event for the solar sector: the Congress Future of Solar.

Ernst Gockel, expert from our project-partner Meyer Burger attended the events and presented both their Technologies as well as goals and structure of the DIAMONDS4IF project. This one-day Solar event is an information platform for key players in the Benelux Renewables and Solar market. Key players in this context are C-level as well as C-1 Level persons particularly focusing on new Technologies as well as on sales/distribution with particular interest to future products and solutions. The auditorium, composed of around 250 people, hosted presentations by high-level experts followed by appropriated Q&A sessions in combination with podium discussions. That gave each participant new networking opportunities and the chance to exchange information and ideas in a great inspiring setting.



Figure 2: Image's Source: Press material from the webpage - Press | Solar Business Day (congressolar.com)

2.3 Session at DMEC (Dutch Maritime Energy Centre)

On 11 June 2024, the periodic Deep Dive Session, hosted by DMEC, took place in The Hague.

The event brought together ocean energy innovators, NGOs, students, technology and project developers, policymakers, representatives of the Dutch government, and DMEC members. As coordinator of DIAMONDS4IF, PNO senior IF-expert Ariane Kroker joined the event and presented "*Innovation Fund Insights and Opportunities in the Renewable Sector*". PNO also introduced the DIAMONDS4IF support services available to potential applicants.



Figure 3: Ariane Kroger (PNO) at the session of DMEC (Dutch Maritime Energy Centre), 11 June 2024.

2.4 Intersolar Europe

DIAMONDS4IF partner Meyer Burger participated in Intersolar Europe in Munich, delivering a workshop during the VDMA session titled “*Innovation Fund – A finance support program of the EU: Participate and do your best to win*”. The intervention took place on the PV Manufacturing Stage and focused on EU IF opportunities for the solar industry within one of the world’s leading solar trade fairs (over 1,300 exhibitors).²



Figure 4: Image Source, Meyer Burger, © csm_Intersolar-2024_Presse_002_a146266b9d; 19-21 June 2024

² [Intersolar Europe – Start - Intersolar Europe](#)

2.5 International Solar Manufacturing Initiative (ISMI) Kick-off Meeting

11 July 2024; DIAMONDS4IF attendee: Øyvind Nielsen (RAAMS).

Collaboration with multiple companies to support the re-establishment of the PV industry in Europe (Solar Power Europe, PVA Tepla, Lapmaster Wolters, Rena). During the kick-off, participants also discussed open questions on the main opportunities and challenges for EU solar manufacturing business in third markets, how the EU can best support companies to enter and operate in those markets, and expectations for ISMI in terms of concrete projects, business models, and an input paper to the European Commission.



Figure 5: Screenshot of the ISMI presentation, 11.07.2024

2.6 Symposium on Direct Lithium Extraction and IF Opportunities for Geothermal Sector Projects

Karlsruhe; Workshop of Nader Akil (PNO Innovations).

On 17 October 2024, KIT Campus South (Karlsruhe) hosted the Symposium on Direct Lithium Extraction and IF Opportunities for Geothermal Sector Projects, bringing together research and industry to discuss the latest DLE technologies (e.g., extraction routes, membranes/precipitation, electrochemical processes, brine purification, and battery conversion). Around 100 organizations participated. Nader Akil (PNO Innovations) presented DIAMONDS4IF during the morning industry session, *highlighting the Free Initial Self-Assessment tool and The EU IF funding program, supporting research, innovation, and investment.*



Figure 6: Symposium on Direct Lithium Extraction and IF Opportunities for Geothermal Sector Projects; 17.10.2024

2.7 The Smarter E Europe 2025 (Focus on Intersolar Europe)

7-9 May 2025; Munich; PNO & MB.

The Smarter E Europe is recognized as the world's leading exhibition for the solar industry and a central platform for showcasing cutting-edge photovoltaic solutions and integrated energy systems. It therefore served as a key opportunity for DIAMONDS4IF representatives from Meyer Burger and PNO to engage with stakeholders across the PV value chain. The team targeted companies actively in solar innovation, grid integration, storage and system digitalization, with the aim of establishing contacts for future project collaboration. Several strategic meetings were held with both large players and SMEs, opening concrete discussions around Innovation Fund readiness and deployment of H2020 results. The event significantly increased awareness about DIAMONDS4IF and its support services.

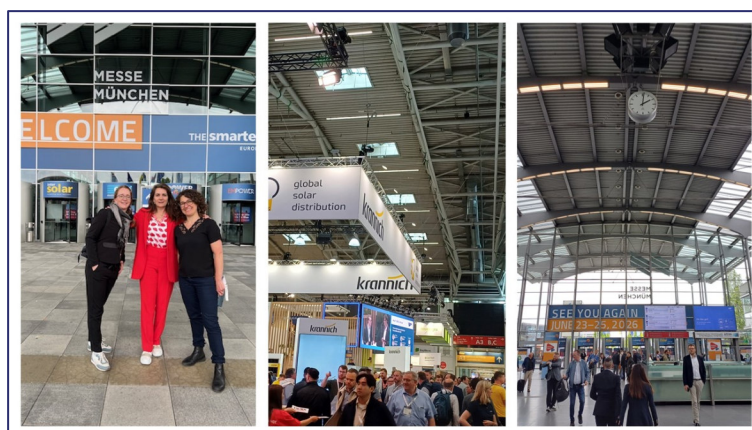


Figure 7: PNO Team at the Intersolar Europe; 07.05.2025

2025, Ariane Kroker (PNO).

[illegible]

2.9 EU PVSEC 2025 - 42nd European Photovoltaic Solar Energy Conference and Exhibition

On 24 September 2025, PNO Innovation Germany (DIAMONDS4IF coordinator) attended the 42nd EU PVSEC 2025, the key innovation platform for the global PV sector. Following PNO's official membership in the European Solar Manufacturing Council (ESMC), **PNO and ESMC jointly engaged** stakeholders at Stand B7 and offered meeting slots with Dr. Stephan Kröner (PNO senior expert) to discuss IF opportunities. The collaboration links PNO's IF expertise with ESMC's PV industry network to strengthen IF applications and accelerate renewable technology deployment.

The EU PVSEC is the largest international Conference for Photovoltaic research, technologies and applications and at the same time a PV Industry Exhibition, where specialized PV Industry presents technologies, innovations and new concepts in the upstream PV sector. It gathers the global PV community to present and discuss the latest developments in photovoltaics, to network and to conduct business. It is the world-renowned science-to-science and science-to-industry platform uniquely focused on the global PV Solar sector. The conference scientific program will be coordinated by the European Commission Joint Research Centre.



Figure 9: Dr. Stephan Kröner (PNO senior expert) at the EUPVSEC; 24.09.2025, Bilbao

2.10 European Solar Manufacturing Council (ESMC);

Online Workshop: Innovation Fund Opportunities for PV Manufacturing; October 7, 2025; PNO Senior Experts Ariane Kroger.

PNO joined ESMC, combining the expertise of the Innovation Fund with European photovoltaic manufacturing. A new partnership to strengthen photovoltaic manufacturing and clean energy projects in Europe. During the webinar, PNO experts will guide interested applicants through the Innovation Fund application process, focusing on challenges and opportunities and highlighting the potential of the DIAMONDS4IF projects. They will provide essential information and support to help seize upcoming funding opportunities. The aim is to maximize the number of high-quality applications for the next IF25 call scheduled for December 2025.



Figure 10: Webinar - Innovation Fund Opportunities for PV Manufacturing in Europe; 7.10.2025

2.11 Lausitzer Fachkonferenz 2025 – Climate-Neutral Industry

6 November 2025; Messe Cottbus (Germany) & digital.

PNO senior experts Ariane Kroker and Annemarie Reiche joined the event. The conference discussed financing pathways for decarbonisation projects and highlighted that private capital will mainly support projects that are viable without long-term subsidies. Speakers and participants stressed that public funding could act as a trigger but cannot replace sustainable business cases. A key takeaway was that the biggest barrier for investment and innovation is uncertainty about political and regulatory frameworks, including delayed legislation and lengthy decision-making. PNO used the event to exchange with stakeholders on the EU IF, and to capture practical concerns from project promoters. PNO also held valuable discussions with Kathrin Wolf (National Contact Point coordinator) and Remo Tiedemann (think tank/KEI), strengthening links to regional and national innovation actors. Overall, the conference supported DIAMONDS4IF networking and improved PNO's understanding of current market and policy hurdles for climate-neutral industry projects.



Figure 11: Ariane Kroker & Annemarie Reiche (PNO) at the Lausitzer Fachkonferenz 2025 – Climate-Neutral Industry; 6.11.2025

2.12 BusinessTreff – Finance & Funding (BioEconomy e.V.)

11 November 2025; TGZ Weinberg Campus, Halle (Saale); Annemarie Reiche (PNO) held a workshop on *“Funding opportunities for the bioeconomy: chances and risks for companies.”*

The event explored financing strategies and support instruments for start-ups, SMEs, and innovation projects in the bioeconomy. Reiche opened the session with practical insights and examples drawn from PNO’s extensive experience with European funding.



Figure 12: DIAMONDS4IF at the BusinessTreff: Finance & Funding by BioEconomy e.V. Workshop from Annemarie Reiche (PNO); 11.11.2025

2.13 Second BMW Energy Research Conference – Energy Innovations for Competitiveness and Resilience

11.11.2025, Futurium, Alexanderufer 2 10117 Berlin.

Ariane Kroker (PNO) joined the **networking breakfast**, the plenary sessions (keynotes, impulse talks, and a panel on market needs). This event was an inspiring and insightful occasion, offering the DIAMONDS4IF project the possibility to strengthen its network and lay the foundations for new potential future collaborations, events and workshops. Furthermore, it was exciting to learn more about and acquire new knowledge on the German energy research programme. A key outcome was a new contact within **VDMA (wind industry working group)** to discuss a potential joint activity and possible follow-up on an existing support letter. PNO also connected with the **Head of Energy Systems Research at DBFZ**, a relevant stakeholder for future exchanges on applied energy innovation and scaling pathways.

In addition, PNO met representatives from a **hydrogen-related project**, which may open cross-sector dialogue (even if not a direct DIAMONDS4IF target). Overall, the conference helped PNO gather fresh insights on the **German energy research programme** and current policy/technology priorities. These contacts and insights support DIAMONDS4IF networking goals and can feed into future dissemination and stakeholder engagement actions.



Figure 13: Second BMW Energy Research Conference – Energy Innovations for Competitiveness and Resilience, 11.11.2025. Image Source: © Projektträger Jülich

2.14 Innovation Fund reality check (CINEA / ESMC)

12 November 2025, Close event, DG Climate Action - 1040 Brussels.

PNO Senior Expert Ariane Kroker participated in the Innovation Fund “Reality Check” stakeholder workshop on 12 November 2025, organised by DG CLIMA as part of the interim evaluation of the Innovation Fund. The event convened a selected group of practitioners from the public consultation in a closed-door setting to validate evaluation findings and provide operational feedback. From a DIAMONDS4IF perspective, the participation provided a highly relevant opportunity to bring evidence-based insights from CSA activities into a policy evaluation dialogue. PNO contributed structured feedback derived from DIAMONDS4IF and related CSA workstreams, particularly on:

- Application effort and complexity (validated estimates of ~1000 hours and high administrative burden)
- Quality drivers of successful applications (maturity, scalability, financial robustness)
- Methodological gaps, including the strong weighting of GHG metrics and limited consideration of broader industrial value
- Barriers for SMEs and smaller-scale projects, especially regarding proportionality of effort vs. expected benefit

These points are consistent with the empirical evidence gathered across CSA deliverables and workshop inputs. The “reality check” format enabled a direct comparison between Commission-level evaluation findings and practitioner experience, confirming several structural challenges already identified by DIAMONDS4IF, including:

- Limited predictability due to missing benchmarks and unclear scoring thresholds
- Duplication and inconsistencies across application documents
- Constraints in addressing manufacturing and CRMA-relevant projects within the current evaluation framework
- Rigid implementation conditions (e.g. milestones, financial close requirements)

Table 2 provides a mapping of evaluation findings and DIAMONDS4IF evidence, illustrating alignment or gaps between both approaches.

Commission / Ramboll findings	DIAMONDS4IF evidence	Convergence / gap
Strong policy alignment & impact	Confirmed project relevance across sectors	✓ aligned
High competition, strong selection	Confirmed quality drivers (maturity, scalability)	✓ aligned
Complexity acknowledged	Evidence of ~1000h effort, duplication	✓ aligned
GHG-focused evaluation	Evidence of missing industrial/value-chain criteria	△ gap
SME accessibility concerns	Evidence of disproportionate burden for SSPs	△ gap
Simplification proposed	CSA proposals: two-stage, harmonisation	✓ aligned

Table 2: Innovation Fund Reality Check: Alignment between Policy Evaluation and DIAMONDS4IF Evidence

At the same time, the workshop provided strategic insights into ongoing policy thinking, including potential simplifications (e.g. two-stage application approaches, streamlined methodologies) and stronger alignment with industrial policy instruments. Beyond content, the participation also supported network consolidation and stakeholder alignment, notably with representatives from industry (e.g. ESMC) and other key actors involved in Innovation Fund applications. This creates a basis for coordinated follow-up actions and joint positioning, particularly regarding scoring criteria, manufacturing relevance, and policy recommendations.

Overall, the event functioned as a validation and amplification channel for DIAMONDS4IF evidence, confirming that the programme’s analytical outputs are directly relevant to current policy discussions and can meaningfully contribute to shaping future Innovation Fund design and implementation.

2.15 Workshop: Online Infoday: Unlocking EU Innovation Fund Opportunities – The IF25 Call Explained

On 11.12.2025, the two CSA projects DIAMONDS4IF and LEADS jointly hosted this online event, organised shortly after the publication of the IF25 call; the webinar aimed **to guide potential applicants through the IF application process** and to clarify the main novelties of the 2025 call.

The event targeted companies and project developers in the renewable and CCSU sector, as well as coordinators and partners of Horizon2020 and Horizon Europe projects preparing IF proposals. During the webinar, **interested applicants** were guided through the novelties of the IF25 call, including the Hydrogen Auction and the new Heat Auction schemes, the award criteria (with concrete examples of GHG avoidance and relevant cost calculations), and key lessons learned jointly collected and presented by the LEADS and DIAMONDS4IF.

Building on the practical experience of both projects, the session aimed to inform potential applicants about the main changes introduced with the IF25 call published on 3rd of December 2025 and to support them in overcoming typical bottlenecks in the preparation of IF proposals, thereby maximising the number of high-quality applications expected for the IF25 call deadlines in 2026.



Figure 14: Infoday: Unlocking EU Innovation Fund Opportunities – The IF25 Call Explained. 11.12.2025

2.16 DIAMONDS4IF Webinar: Innovation Fund opportunities for the Bio-based industry

On 18 December 2025, PNO experts guided participants through the Innovation Fund programme objectives, the application process and the actual IF25 call, with a specific focus on how bio-based companies can benefit from this EU funding programme, scale up breakthrough technologies and bring low-carbon products, to market. The webinar has also highlighted the long-standing expertise of the DIAMONDS4IF partner PNO Innovation, leading consultancy with extensive experience in supporting successful IF applications. During the webinar, PNO experts explored examples of eligible projects, key evaluation criteria, and practical recommendations to maximise the chances of success.



Figure 15: Webinar: Innovation Fund opportunities for the Bio-based industry, 18.12.2025

2.17 Solar Power Europe (SPE), Workshops “Manufacturing Workstream Meeting”

Ariane Kroker & Patrizia Bolognesi (PNO).

As part of the Manufacturing Workstream Meeting dedicated to SolarPower Europe members, Ariane Kroker and Patrizia Bolognesi (PNO) delivered a targeted workshop presenting DIAMONDS4IF and the Innovation Fund Grant Scheme with a specific focus on the manufacturing topic. The session addressed a highly relevant and specialised audience from the photovoltaic manufacturing sector, allowing for direct exchange with companies and stakeholders with a concrete interest in Innovation Fund opportunities. This targeted setting made the workshop particularly valuable for raising awareness of DIAMONDS4IF and strengthening PNO's links with key actors in the European PV manufacturing community.



Figure 16: Webinar DIAMONDS4IF projects and Innovation Fund Challenges - 10.03.2026

2.18 Final Public Conference: Accelerating clean industrial deployment – insights, challenges, and opportunities.

The final CSA public conference took place on 12 May 2026 in Brussels.



Representatives of the DIAMONDS4IF consortium actively contributed in-person to the event program. Patrizia Bognesi (PNO), Benjamin Fischer (RWE), and Silvia Colella (PNO Digital) actively contributed at different moments of the conference and provided valuable input.

- In Panel 1, entitled “Support for R&I deployment: available tools to help you upscale your innovations”;
- in the panel 1 final discussion “Best practices and recommendations for R&I owners”;
- in the breakout discussions under Panel 3, “*Industrial voices – sectoral perspectives on deployment and lessons learned*”, with a specific focus on renewable energy generation;
- in the plenary presentation of the main outcomes emerging from the breakout sessions.



Figure 17: DIAMONDS4IF representatives at the CSA final public event: Accelerating clean industrial deployment – insights, challenges, and opportunities. 12.05.2026

Breakout Sessions - Sectoral Public Workshop on the Innovation Fund in Renewable Sectors

Target Group

This public workshop, co-organised with sector organization renewables (RWE Offshore Wind) and DIAMONDS4IF coordinator (PNO), aimed to facilitate exchange between ongoing IF projects and applicants, highlight common challenges, share practical lessons, and provide sector-driven recommendations for CINEA and EU policymakers. It brought together stakeholders from renewable energy industries, policy, research, and implementation.

The main target groups were **renewable energy companies** seeking funding or information on the IF, as well as coordinators and partners of Horizon 2020 projects in the renewable energy sector.

As visualised in the pictures below, promotion activities (advertising campaigns) relied on **several communication channels**, including a dedicated registration link, social media banners, website articles LinkedIn posts, targeted e-mail invitations, and visibility through the European Commission's Horizon Results Platform Newsletter.

Objectives:

- Gather experiences from IF projects in renewable energy
- Network with other sectoral associations for knowledge exchange
- Pinpoint typical issues faced by IF applicants and discuss ways to cope
- Collect lessons learned and recommendations for improved project outcomes under the Innovation Fund

Key Themes & Takeaways:

1. From R&I Success to Industrial Deployment - Where Innovators Struggle

- Many renewable energy innovations – especially wind energy - stall between successful R&D and actual deployment/investment readiness.
- Challenges span technical, financial, operational, and regulatory dimensions (auction design, political support in EU member states etc.). Especially current market conditions for renewables (weaker economy, higher interest rates, current supplier (OEMs, vessels etc.) situation in EU with higher inflation and less availability) became more challenging which also lowers the implementation of new technologies in renewables sector, especially offshore wind.

2. Innovation Fund Application: Practical Experiences from Offshore Wind Energy perspective

- The IF supports later-stage projects with milestone-based funding, covering DEVEX, CAPEX, & OPEX – which is positive and outstanding in existing funding landscape.
- The application process is very complex, resource-intensive, and especially challenging for SMEs (e.g. detailed documents, advanced financial and GHG modeling) and need simplification. Especially competitive criteria around direct CO₂-savings exclude innovative and critical enabling technologies (indirect CO₂ benefits not recognized).

- Redundant paperwork (system and forms) and rigid templates frustrate applicants and impede alignment with project realities. Internal coordination across innovation, engineering, management, legal, procurement, and communication is crucial within the IF application process.

3. Typical Challenges Identified

- Very ambitious CO₂-emission avoidance thresholds in IF make many important innovations as key enablers for wind energy sector uncompetitive for funding.
- Market realities (supply shortages, inflation) cause risk aversion among firms, further discouraging innovation.
- Resource demands for proposal preparation deter smaller companies and increase inequality of access.
- Only a small percentage of projects achieve successful deployment and measurable GHG reductions.

4. Lessons Learned & Recommendations

- Simplification, flexibility & additional upfront funding: A two-stage application process with initial simplified models/templates can reduce effort and increase access. By reaching the 2nd proposal preparation stage – an additional lump sum funding of 50k € (external services) may help applicants to seek for external consultancy services to support the preparation of high quality IF applications.
- Broader assessment: Consider future, **indirect** CO₂ impacts in evaluation criteria, not just immediate direct savings.
- New funding instruments: Address the gap for non-CO₂ enabling technologies in pre-commercialization phase TRL6-TRL9 (see planned EU Competitiveness Fund).
- Internal preparation: Multidisciplinary teams and early stakeholder involvement are key for successful applications.

5. Recommendations to CINEA/EU Commission

- Enhance flexibility and more outcome-oriented focus in the IF-reward real-world impact on renewables industry, instead of best visionary paperwork in applications.
- Also recognize indirect, future-enabling technologies that support sector-wide innovation and decarbonization of sector.
- Reduce complexity and support SMEs through guidance, tools, and streamlined processes.



Figure 18: Breakout session: Public Workshop in Renewable Energy Sector Patricia Bolognesi (PNO) and Benjamin Fischer (RWE Offshore Wind), Brussels 12.05.2026



Figure 19: Speakers cards campaign

The final CSA public conference presented the consolidated results of the five CSA projects; highlighted lessons learnt and explored the future of industrial decarbonisation and innovation deployment in Europe. Its objectives were to showcase the collective achievements of the CSA cluster, promote knowledge exchange between projects, industry representatives and policymakers, and identify practical pathways for scaling up clean technologies supported by the Innovation Fund.

The event brought together around 60 participants (online and in presence), including representatives from industry, project developers, EU project promoters, business associations, research and technology organisations, and policymakers from DG CLIMA, DG RTD, and CINEA.

The conference contributed to stronger cross-sectoral collaboration, increased the visibility of the CSA cluster's tools and methodologies, and generated actionable recommendations for improving the interface between R&D projects and the Innovation Fund. It also reinforced the Innovation Pipeline by supporting the identification of Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe projects with high potential to evolve into strong Innovation Fund applications. More broadly, the event strengthened synergies between European initiatives and provided useful input for future work programmes and funding mechanisms.

Table 3: Main Outputs: Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Nr.
Nr. of registrations	350
Nr. of participants	~ 60

2.19 Workshops and Events Planned (till the end of 2026)

In addition to the activities already completed, two further workshops and the participation at one further event, are planned before the end of 2026, which marks the end of the DIAMONDS4IF project. As indicated in Table 1, these events are:

- WindEnergy Hamburg,
- 2026 Annual Meeting of the Photovoltaic Production Equipment Department (VDMA-German Mechanical Engineering Industry Association)

and, following the strong success of previous editions,

- a new DIAMONDS4IF webinar to be organised shortly after the publication of the IF26 call, entitled *“IF2026 call novelties”*.

Thanks to the communication channels established over the past years, the DIAMONDS4IF consortium will be able to promote these events effectively and reach a high number of interested industrial partners.

2.19.1 WindEnergy Hamburg 2026 – A Leading Event for the Renewable Energy Sector

WindEnergy Hamburg 2026, taking place from 22 to 25 September 2026 at Hamburg Messe, will offer DIAMONDS4IF an important opportunity to engage with a highly relevant industrial audience from the onshore and offshore wind energy sector. RWE will be present at the fair with its own stand, while PNO will contribute with a dedicated presentation focused on the potential of the Innovation Fund for renewable energy and industrial decarbonisation projects. As one of the leading international events for wind energy, bringing together companies, innovators, policymakers and researchers, the fair will provide a valuable platform to raise awareness of DIAMONDS4IF, promote Innovation Fund opportunities, and strengthen links with potential applicants and industrial stakeholders active in the energy transition.



Figure 20: WindEnergy Hamburg 2026, 22–25 September 2026, Hamburg Messe (Germany)

2.19.2 Annual Meeting of the Photovoltaic Production Equipment Department (VDMA-German Mechanical Engineering Industry Association), 2026

The planned participation in the Photovoltaic Production Equipment Department Annual Meeting 2026 will provide an opportunity to present DIAMONDS4IF, engage with key industry stakeholders, and further strengthen networking within the photovoltaic manufacturing sector and representatives from the largest network organization for the machinery and equipment manufacturing industry in Europe and Germany.



Figure 21: VDMA (German Mechanical Engineering Industry Association), Annual Meeting 2026

2.19.3 DIAMONDS4IF Webinar: IF2026 call novelties

Work in progress

2.20 Complementary outputs:

2.20.1 Media/Press presence

In addition to its active presence at workshops and events, and to the continuous dissemination and communication activities carried out through the project's communication channels, representatives of the DIAMONDS4IF consortium also gave three important interviews to specialised media, focused on renewable energy. These interviews helped the project reach a broad range of potential Innovation Fund applicants and further increase the visibility of DIAMONDS4IF among relevant industrial stakeholders.

These interviews published in sector magazines were fundamental in increasing the visibility of the project and highlighting some issues related to the IF application process.

#	Year	Event Name	KPIs
	2024	First interview with DIAMONDS4IF and REALIZE Projects on Science Business; "Taking the leap from Horizon Europe to the Innovation Fund"	Newsletter with 29.000 subscribers
	2024	Article from the SolarPower Europe; "New innovation fund call for innovative net-zero technologies", DIAMONDS4IF and other CSAs mentioned.	
	2025	DIAMONDS4IF second interview on Science Business; "EU's clean tech Innovation Fund faces questions over design, strategy and impact"	Newsletter with 29.000 subscribers
	2024 - 2026	Several appearances in the Innovation Place newsletter	

Table 4: DIAMONDS4IF Media/Press presence



Figure 22: Interview on Science|Business; “EU’s clean tech Innovation Fund faces questions over design, strategy and impact”. 24.03.2026

3 CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

This report has presented the activities carried out under Task 10.4, in line with the Dissemination and Communication Plan, with a particular focus on workshops and networking activities organised in cooperation with sector and industry associations. Overall, the project successfully achieved the objective set out in the Grant Agreement regarding the organisation of public workshops at large sector events. By the time of drafting, 11 workshops had already been delivered, while 2 additional workshops were planned before the end of the project, ensuring that the original target would be reached and slightly exceeded.

These activities enabled DIAMONDS4IF to engage directly with a broad range of industrial stakeholders and potential Innovation Fund applicants. Through the workshops alone, the project reached around 2,000 interested stakeholders. In parallel, the consortium also participated in several additional large sector events without holding dedicated workshops, focusing on networking, direct discussions with companies, the establishment of new contacts and project ideas, and the distribution of DIAMONDS4IF communication materials.

A key success factor was also the continuous implementation and maintenance of all DIAMONDS4IF communication channels, including the website, LinkedIn, YouTube, newsletters and specialised media. These channels played an essential role in promoting events, disseminating lessons learned, tools and practical recommendations, and ensuring that useful information on the Innovation Fund reached as many interested applicants as possible.

In this way, DIAMONDS4IF contributed not only to raising awareness of Innovation Fund opportunities, but also to supporting a broader community of potential applicants in preparing stronger and more mature proposals.

Key Outputs

- Delivered **11 workshops** at large sector events and planned **2 additional workshops** for 2026.
- Participated in 7 large sector events focused on networking, stakeholder exchange, and outreach to potential Innovation Fund applicants, with 1 additional event planned for 2026.
- Published **three interviews** in specialised renewable-energy media, broadening the project's visibility among potential applicants and industrial stakeholders.
- Distributed DIAMONDS4IF communication materials, including the project leaflet, at major sector events and through online channels.
- Reached around 2,000 interested stakeholders through workshops, events, and related dissemination activities
- Maintained and continuously updated the DIAMONDS4IF communication channels, including the website, LinkedIn, YouTube, newsletters, and specialised media.

Looking Ahead

- 2 additional workshops planned for 2026
- 1 further large sector event planned for 2026

- Continued use of DIAMONDS4IF communication channels to promote the final activities of the project and maximise outreach to potential applicants
- Further dissemination of lessons learned, practical tools, and Innovation Fund updates to support applicants ahead of the IF26 call
- Continued engagement with industrial stakeholders and sector associations to ensure lasting visibility beyond the project's duration

Expected Impacts:

Increased awareness and competence among potential IF applicants, reduced reliance on external consultancy, and a growing community capable of developing high-quality, low-carbon investment proposals aligned with EU climate targets.

4 LIST OF REFERENCES

- DIAMONDS4IF LinkedIn Account, [DIAMONDS4IF: LinkedIn](#)
- DIAMONDS4IF Website, [Homepage - Diamonds4if](#)
- DIAMONDS4IF YouTube Channel, “Innovation Fund DIAMONDS”, www.youtube.com/@DIAMONDS4IF

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