



DIAMONDS4IF

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

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D10.3 – PUBLIC WORKSHOPS AT SECTOR ORGANISATIONS 2

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Description
AI	Artificial Intelligence
C&D	Communication and Dissemination
CAPEX	Capital Expenditure
CCU	Carbon Capture and Utilisation
CCUS	Carbon Capture, Utilisation and Storage
CINEA	European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency
CORDIS	Community Research and Development Information Service
CSA	Coordination and Support Action
DEVEX	Development Expenditure
DG	Directorate General
DG CLIMA	Directorate-General for Climate Action
DG RTD	Directorate General for Research and Innovation
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
MEYER BURGER	MEYER BURGER (Industries) GmbH
OEMs	Original Equipment Manufacturers
OPEX	Operational Expenditure
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
RWE	RWE Offshore Wind GmbH
SMEs	Small and medium-sized enterprises
TRL	Technology Readiness Level
WP	Work Package

INTRODUCTION

PROJECT SUMMARY AND OBJECTIVES

DIAMONDS4IF supports Horizon 2020 (H2020) beneficiary companies in further developing their project results and preparing for applications to the ETS Innovation Fund (IF). The project addresses the challenges of transforming research and innovation outcomes into viable investment cases by supporting project promoters in assessing scalability, commercial readiness, and financial robustness. A key objective of DIAMONDS4IF is therefore to facilitate the development of sound Innovation Fund proposals and to strengthen the link between European R&I funding and large-scale deployment.

In line with Article 17 of the Grant Agreement, DIAMONDS4IF also implements a strategic dissemination and communication approach to promote its objectives, activities, and results. These actions aim to raise awareness of the project, support outreach towards potential Innovation Fund applicants and relevant stakeholders and create synergies with other Coordination and Support Actions (CSAs) funded under the same call, HORIZON-CL5-2023-D2-01-07. Through this approach, the project contributes to ensuring that its tools, methodologies, and lessons learned are shared effectively across the wider Innovation Fund ecosystem.

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, other CSA projects and relevant stakeholders in order to maximise the visibility and impact of DIAMONDS4IF results. Within this framework, different tasks address complementary dimensions of outreach and collaboration. Deliverable D10.2 focuses on activities carried out with sector and industry associations, while the present deliverable addresses collaboration with the other CSA projects funded under the same call. Together, these actions support knowledge exchange, coordinated communication, and the wider dissemination of project results to applicants, policymakers, and sectoral stakeholders.

PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

Although the formal title of this deliverable remains *D10.3 – Public workshops at sector organisations 2*, the present report specifically highlights the activities carried out under Task 10.4 in cooperation with the other projects funded under the same call, with a particular focus on actions targeting sector and industry associations. While Task 10.4 refers to networking with sector and industry associations, this deliverable emphasises the collaborative dimension of those activities, namely the joint workshops, meetings, webinars, and dissemination actions implemented together with the sister CSA projects in order to reach relevant sectoral stakeholders in a coordinated manner.

Chapter 1 introduces the objectives and target groups of DIAMONDS4IF and provides an overview of the other CSA projects involved in the collaboration framework.

Chapter 2 presents the main events, workshops, meetings, and complementary actions implemented in cooperation with the partner CSAs, highlighting their context, objectives, and main outcomes.

Chapter 3 summarises the main conclusions and lessons learned, including key outputs achieved through the collaboration and considerations for future joint actions until the end of the project period.

1 OBJECTIVES, TARGET GROUPS AND COLLABORATION FRAMEWORK

According to the Grant Agreement (GA) and as described previously in the Dissemination Plan, there are three different types of workshops that must be organised 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 organised by **CINEA** (participation on demand).

In this document we will focus on the activities and workshops related to Type 1 and Type 3.

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, 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.

1.2 Workshops with other funded CSA projects under this call

Collaboration with the other CSAs is an essential element of DIAMONDS4IF. By working together, the projects combine complementary expertise to strengthen the overall support to Innovation Fund applicants, enhance knowledge exchange, and ensure a coherent approach towards policy feedback and stakeholder engagement. Joint activities enable the CSAs to align methodologies, share best practices, and maximise the collective impact of their results across the renewable energy and climate innovation landscape.

Figure 1 shows the five sister projects and coordinating organisations as a joint Innovation Fund support initiative.



Figure 1: The five CSA European “sister-projects” funded under the Call HORIZON-CL5-2023-D2-01-07

- REALIZE – **Renewable energy** actions leveraging innovation towards zero emissions in Europe, (coordinated by Euro-Funding),¹
- 2DPLOY – Low-carbon technologies in **energy-intensive industries**, (coordinated by SINTEF),²

¹ www.realize-project.eu/

² www.aspire2050.eu/2dploy

- LEADS – Carbon capture, use and storage (**CCUS**), (coordinated by PNO Innovation)³
- H2IF – **Energy storage & hydrogen**, (coordinated by CLERENS).⁴

These projects are funded for the same purpose as DIAMONDS4IF but focus on further technologies and sectors (except for REALIZE), including CCU (carbon capture and utilisation), hydrogen, and low-carbon technologies for energy-intensive industries. This cluster of projects, in close cooperation with CINEA, will facilitate the deployment of technologies and Innovation Fund proposals across the European technology landscape.

In order to encourage the exchange of knowledge and synergies between these projects, the grant agreement of DIAMONDS4IF, as described above, provides for the organisation of two workshops in cooperation with other CSA projects over the three project years. Overall, workshops should be initiated to create fruitful collaboration and cooperation between the projects and the CINEA.

³ www.aspire2050.eu/leads

⁴ www.h2if.eu

2 WORKSHOPS WITH OTHER FUNDED PROJECTS

As mentioned above, workshops and events with other CSA projects are only one part of the communication and dissemination activities of the DIAMONDS4IF project. The following list provides a brief overview of the events, regular meetings, workshops, and activities that DIAMONDS4IF has organised and participated in, together with the other CSAs projects.

To this end, the table below gives an overview of the completed and planned workshops, meetings and activities organised and attended by DIAMONDS4IF and the group of the mentioned CSA projects.

Table 1: Summary of Completed and Planned Workshops, meetings, and activities together with the other CSA projects

#	Date	Event name	Nr. Participants
	04.2024	First “Cluster event” organized by CINEA. Target audiences: CSAs’ coordinators, C&D managers. From Horizon 2020 to Innovation Fund support; Brussels, Belgium (RP1)	40
	Bi-monthly	Online CINEA - CSA regular coordinator meetings	8
	Regular	Online CSAs-Marketing regular meetings	10
	21.05.2024	Online Bilateral Knowledge sharing meetings: REALIZE + PNO internal online meetings for the preparation of a webinar in December 2024 (RP1)	5
1	23.10.2024	Second Process Industry Conference: Shaping the Transformation, Brussels, Belgium (Invitation from LEADS/A.SPIRE)	30
	08.11.2024	Online Bilateral Knowledge sharing meetings: DIAMONDS4IF / LEADS. Online meeting and exchange on best practices and information on the creation of video tutorials as a tool for dissemination activities.	5
2	2.12.2024	2DPLOY: First Cooperation Meeting with other CSAs, online	12
3	12.12.2024	Webinar on funding opportunities for RE projects: Presentation of Innovation Fund and European Hydrogen Bank, (REALIZE+PNO)	300
	21.05.2025	Second “Cluster event” organized by CINEA. Target audiences: CSAs’ coordinators, C&D managers, Brussels, Belgium	40
4	09.12.2025	2DPLOY Project: Online second Cooperation Meeting with other CSAs	14
5	11.12.2025	Online Info Day: Unlocking EU Innovation Fund Opportunities – The IF25 Call Explained. (DIAMONDS4IF+LEADS)	150
6	12.05.2026	CSA Final Public Conference/ Public Workshop with sector organisations: Accelerating clean industrial deployment – insights, challenges, and opportunities, Brussels, Belgium	60

In the following, more detailed descriptions are presented of the events that have taken place to date in cooperation with the other CSA projects.

2.1 First CINEA/CSA Cluster Meeting in Brussels, 2024

Since the beginning of 2024, DIAMONDS4IF and its European “sister projects”, have started their activities, in close cooperation with CINEA. On 22nd and 23rd of April 2024, all 5 CSA project partners had the opportunity to meet for the first time in person in Brussels, share best practices, ideas, and experiences.



Figure 2: DIAMONDS4IF Consortium at the Cluster Meeting in Brussels

Context

Establishing synergies between relevant EU funding programmes was highlighted as a key element in accelerating R&D results along the EU innovation pipeline towards deployment. This included developing a supply chain of R&D projects, from Horizon 2020 to successful Innovation Fund applications in specific thematic sectors, fostering communication and dissemination activities, and leveraging other funding opportunities.

Target Group

The meeting brought together the beneficiaries of the five CSA projects. It also included colleagues from Directorates-General (DG) CLIMA, DG RTD, the CINEA Horizon and Innovation Fund units involved in H2020 projects covered by the CSAs, as well as representatives from the Fuel Cells and Hydrogen Joint Undertaking and the Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking.

The five CSAs, with different durations of 30 to 36 months, commenced their work in January 2024.

Objectives

- Our common objectives were to share best practices and lessons learned from H2020 project beneficiaries who succeeded in obtaining Innovation Fund support.
- Evaluate tools and approaches used by the CSAs to facilitate successful Innovation Fund applications.
- Promote collaboration, knowledge sharing, and joint communication and dissemination plans, including public events to engage broader sector stakeholders.
- Identify additional funding opportunities from the European Investment Bank.

Organisation of the Workshop

The workshop spanned two half days. The first half-day focused on lessons learned from Innovation Fund applications, methodologies for identifying technology owners in Horizon 2020 projects, and tools for supporting Innovation Fund applications. The second half-day featured a world café covering knowledge sharing, sector engagement, and communication activities, alongside a session on alternative funding sources.

Output

In this context, DIAMONDS4IF presented its objectives, project partners and selection tool based on the Wheesbee® intelligence platform. This experience also provided valuable insights into the European Commission's expectations and perspectives on the future development of the Innovation Fund programme. Additionally, the project gained important input on alternative funding opportunities offered by the European Investment Bank (EIB).

PNO also collected lessons learned and recommendations from the five CSAs and shared them with CINEA and the relevant DGs for the Innovation Fund. These recommendations, consolidated by PNO, reflect the expertise and insights of professionals actively involved in the five CSAs.

2.2 Coordinator Regular meetings

CINEA organised regular (bi-monthly) online meetings with the coordinators of the various CSA projects. These meetings served to review progress, facilitate the exchange of good practices, and provide guidance to ensure effective coordination and alignment across the projects.

In addition to the CINEA-led sessions, bilateral knowledge-sharing meetings were frequently organised among coordinators to exchange experiences and lessons learned. These interactions proved fundamental for the coordinated implementation of feedback to CINEA and for the continuous exchange of experiences and best practices among the CSAs.

2.3 CSA marketing regular meetings

These coordinator sessions were complemented by regular online meetings among the communication leads of the five CSA projects. These focused specifically on dissemination and communication issues and became the backbone for planning and implementing joint communication actions and events.

In line with the Grant Agreement, these coordinated exchanges contributed to strengthening synergies among projects funded under the same Horizon Europe call, ensuring coherent messaging and more impactful joint outreach activities.

2.4 Second Process Industry Conference: Shaping the Transformation

On 23rd and 24th October 2024, A.SPIRE hosted the second Process Industry Conference in Brussels. A.SPIRE is a partner of the EU-funded CSA sister project: **LEADS**.

DIAMONDS4IF partners participated in the event and at the afternoon poster session, presented an overview of the DIAMONDS4IF strategies for selecting and supporting successful project ideas for Innovation Fund applications.

The conference was a unique opportunity to engage with industry leaders as well as representatives of European institutions and key stakeholders engaged in the green transition and industrial decarbonisation. It was also a platform to present the activities and objectives of DIAMONDS4IF and to get in touch with the other CSA system project.



Figure 3: PNO expert with other CSA colleagues in Brussels.

2.5 Bilateral Knowledge Sharing: DIAMONDS4IF / LEADS Online Meeting

In addition to the CINEA/CSA meetings as described above, **bilateral collaborations** also play a key role between the CSAs. On 8th of November 2024, the partners of the DIAMONDS4IF and LEADS projects held for example an online meeting to exchange information and experiences regarding the production of video tutorials, which PNO has already published on its YouTube page. The meeting was valuable for sharing technical, logistical, and organisational knowledge for the creation of video tutorials.

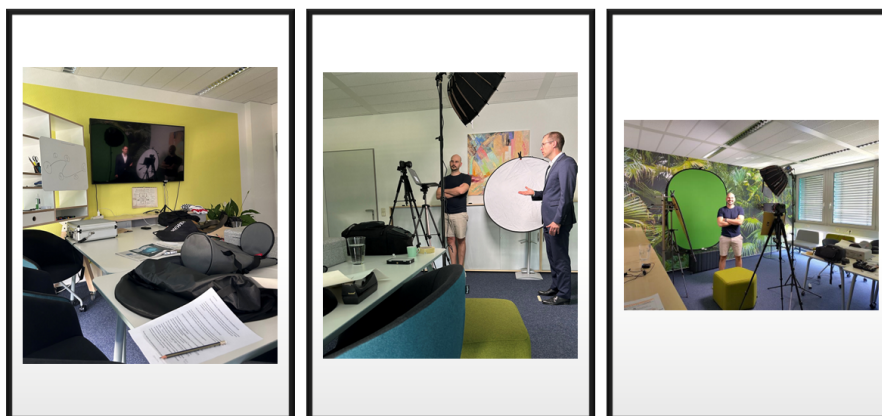


Figure 4: Technical background during the shooting of video tutorials. © PNO Consultants GmbH, 2024

2.6 2DPLOY: First and second Cooperation Meeting with other CSAs

2DPLOY organised two online Cooperation Meetings with the other CSAs, held in December 2024 and December 2025. Both meetings brought together project coordinators and work package leaders from 2DPLOY, LEADS, REALIZE, DIAMONDS4IF and H2IF.

Objective

The objectives of these meetings were to:

- bring together all CSA coordinators and work package leaders.
- share lessons learned and align approaches across projects.
- identify and exploit synergies between the Innovation Pipelines
- present and discuss the upcoming cross-CSA Masterclasses.

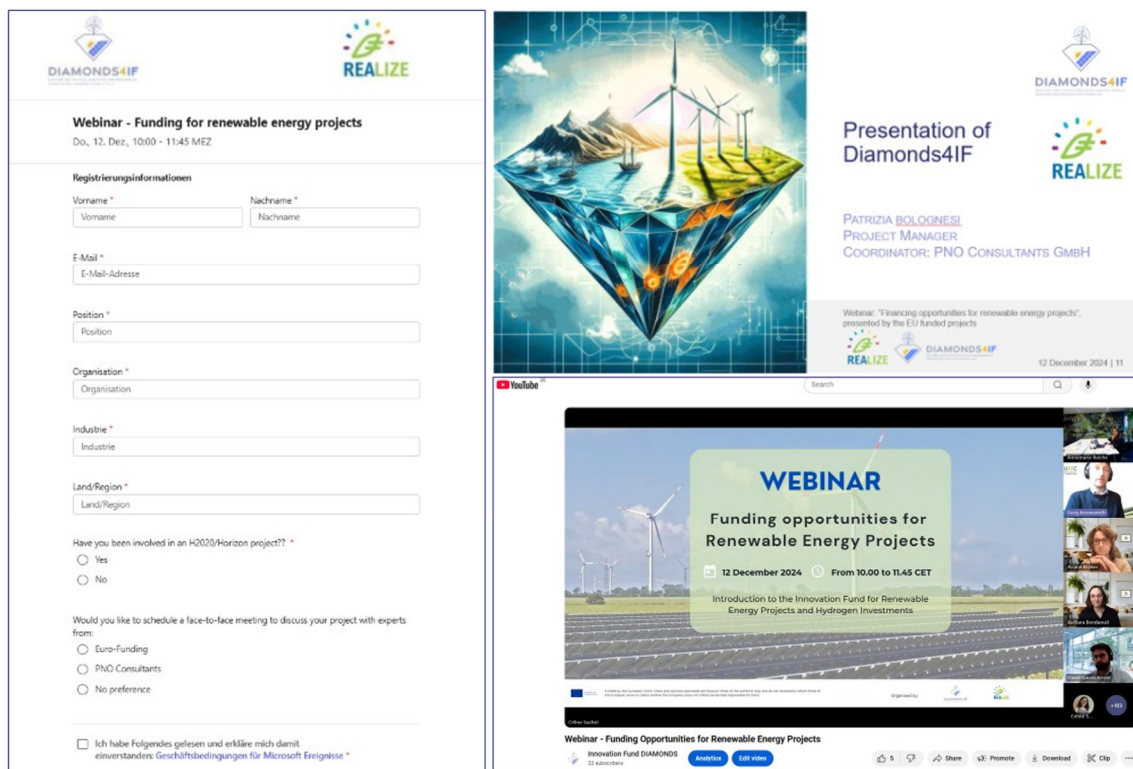
During the sessions, participants discussed shared challenges, explored opportunities for collaboration on future joint events and Masterclasses, and exchanged valuable feedback. These collaborative meetings helped strengthen coordination, improve mutual understanding, and enhance overall outcomes across the CSAs.

First Cooperation Meeting with other CSAs Online – 2 December 2024 14:00 – 16:00 Participants: Project Coordinators and WP leaders of projects - 2DPLOY, LEADS, REALIZE, DIAMONDS4IF, H2IF Welcome and Introductions (15 min) ◦ Brief welcome and participant introductions ◦ Outline meeting objectives Overview of the 2DPLOY project and Innovation Pipeline Methodology (35 minutes) ◦ Presentation of the 2DPLOY innovation pipeline approach (15 minutes) ◦ Feedback on the pipeline's design and effectiveness, sharing approaches (20 minutes) LEADS, REALIZE, DIAMONDS4IF, H2IF Masterclass Development: Content and Collaboration (35 minutes) ◦ Draft structure and approach of upcoming 2DPLOY masterclasses (15 minutes) ◦ Feedback and exploring opportunities for collaboration (20 minutes) LEADS, REALIZE, DIAMONDS4IF, H2IF ◦ Participation in Masterclasses for CSA Stakeholders Exploring Alternative Funding Schemes (10 minutes) ◦ CSAs are invited to share insights and findings on alternative funding schemes that could support mutual goals. 2DPLOY, LEADS, REALIZE, DIAMONDS4IF, H2IF Opportunities for Joint Events (10 minutes) ◦ Discussion on potential joint events, potential dates and key objectives. 2DPLOY, LEADS, REALIZE, DIAMONDS4IF, H2IF Closing Remarks and Next Steps (5 minutes)

Figure 5: Agenda of the First Cooperation Meeting with other CSAs.

2.7 Webinar on Funding Opportunities for Renewable Energy Projects

Since May 2024, representatives of the REALIZE and DIAMONDS4IF projects have been meeting regularly to organise the online workshop immediately following the publication of the IF24 call, scheduled for 3rd of December 2024.



Webinar - Funding for renewable energy projects
Do, 12. Dez, 10:00 - 11:45 MEZ

Registrierungsinformationen

Vorname *
Nachname *

E-Mail *
E-Mail-Adresse

Position *

Organisation *

Industrie *

Land/Region *

Have you been involved in an H2020/Horizon project? *

Would you like to schedule a face-to-face meeting to discuss your project with experts from:

☐ Euro-Funding
☐ PNO Consultants
☐ No preference

☐ Ich habe Folgendes gelesen und erkläre mich damit einverstanden: Geschäftsbedingungen für Microsoft Ereignisse *

Presentation of Diamonds4IF

PATRIZIA BOLOGNESI
PROJECT MANAGER
COORDINATOR: PNO CONSULTANTS GMBH

Webinar: "Financing opportunities for renewable energy projects", presented by the EU funded projects

12 December 2024 | 11

WEBINAR
Funding opportunities for Renewable Energy Projects
12 December 2024 | From 10.00 to 11.45 CET
Introduction to the Innovation Fund for Renewable Energy Projects and Hydrogen Investments

Webinar - Funding Opportunities for Renewable Energy Projects
Innovation Fund DIAMONDS
20 subscribers

Figure 6: Screenshot of the landing page for the registration to the Webinar and some moments of the presentations.

Context

The DIAMONDS4IF and REALIZE projects jointly supported the development of Innovation Fund-ready **renewable energy** projects by improving project feasibility, providing practical tools for applicants, and promoting collaboration among stakeholders, investors, and actors across the value chain. These activities contributed to accelerating Europe's decarbonisation and the transition towards a low-carbon economy.

Target Group

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 picture below, promotion activities relied on **several communication channels**, including a dedicated registration link, social media banners, website articles, LinkedIn posts, targeted email invitations, and visibility through the European Commission's Horizon Results Platform Newsletter.



Figure 7: Overview of different promotional activities and channels.

This approach allowed us to reach a wide audience of potential participants. Within a couple of days of the announcement, the registration site reached 1,500 participants, prompting us to close registration and address critical technical details to ensure the success of the event. We therefore decided to create a **waiting list** and offer those who registered the opportunity **to receive a recording of the meeting**.⁵ In this context, the online Self-Assessment, created by DIAMONDS4IF, proved to be a valuable tool, allowing interested participants to conduct an initial assessment to determine whether their project idea is in line with the IF call or not.

Output

During the webinar, interested applicants have been guided through the Innovation Fund application process, the Hydrogen Auction Program and the Eligibility Criteria for the Battery call, providing essential information and support, and helping them seize future funding opportunities to maximise the number of high-quality applications for the IF24 call, with deadlines in 2025.

Initially, the idea was to offer participants the opportunity to discuss their project ideas in a separate virtual meeting room with experts from PNO or Euro-Funding. Given the high number of registered

⁵ https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TSE_Ywt7nYA

participants, this option was removed to follow up with interested stakeholders at a later stage and allow additional time for the Q&A session.

AGENDA	
10.00 - 10.15	Introduction and presentation of REALIZE and DIAMONDS4IF - EUREC
10.15 - 10.30	Introduction to the Innovation Fund programme and call novelties - Euro-Funding
10.30 - 10.45	Insights into the Innovation Fund award criteria - PNO
10.45 - 11.00	Tools and guidelines to prepare an IF application - PNO
11.00 - 11.15	Hydrogen Auction programme - Euro-Funding
11.15 - 11.30	Eligibility criteria for the Battery call - PNO
11.30 - 12.00	Q&A

Figure 8: Agenda of the Webinar

Table 2: Main Outputs: Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Nr.
Nr. of registrations	1500
Nr. of participants	~ 300
Number of interested emails requesting a Viability Check	~ 10

2.8 Second CINEA/CSA Cluster Meeting in Brussels, 2025

The five CSAs met at CINEA's premises in Brussels for a second cluster meeting on 21.05.2025 to exchange progress, align strategies, and strengthen collaboration within the cluster. The meeting brought together coordinators, communication managers, along with officials from DG CLIMA, DG RTD, and CINEA.

Discussions focused on both the Innovation Fund updates and upcoming novelties, the Innovation Pipelines as well as the main challenges faced by IF projects, strategies, and mitigation activities.

A key session was dedicated to the Innovation Pipeline, where each CSA presented its analytical approach and mapping results to identify high-potential projects for future Innovation Fund applications. The group also reviewed progress in project implementation and planned next steps for joint dissemination and communication activities.

Main outcomes included strengthened coordination among the five CSAs, a clearer common framework for the Innovation Pipeline, and renewed commitment to joint dissemination initiatives supporting the link between R&I and deployment funding.

Communication activities were managed collaboratively through the 5 CSAs and CINEA, including internal updates, shared dissemination materials, and preparation of future public-facing events to ensure visibility of the CSAs' joint work.



Figure 9: DIAMONDS4IF representatives (RAAMS, PNO) at the second CINEA/CSA Cluster Meeting in Brussels, 05.2025

2.9 Online Info Day: Unlocking EU Innovation Fund Opportunities – The IF25 Call Explained



Figure 10: Info Day: Unlocking EU Innovation Fund Opportunities – The IF25 Call Explained. 11.12.2025

On 11.12.2025, DIAMONDS4IF and LEADS jointly hosted the online event “Unlocking EU Innovation Fund Opportunities – The IF25 Call Explained”. 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.

Target Group

The event targeted companies and project developers in the renewable and CCUS sector, as well as coordinators and partners of Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe projects preparing Innovation Fund proposals.

The communication and dissemination campaign was jointly managed by the DIAMONDS4IF and LEADS teams in coordination with PNO Innovation Europe. Activities included joint announcements on project websites, LinkedIn posts, newsletter releases, and visibility in renewable energy magazines. Targeted e-mail invitations were also sent to pre-identified stakeholders and networks. By combining resources and expertise, both projects helped to promote the visibility of the event.

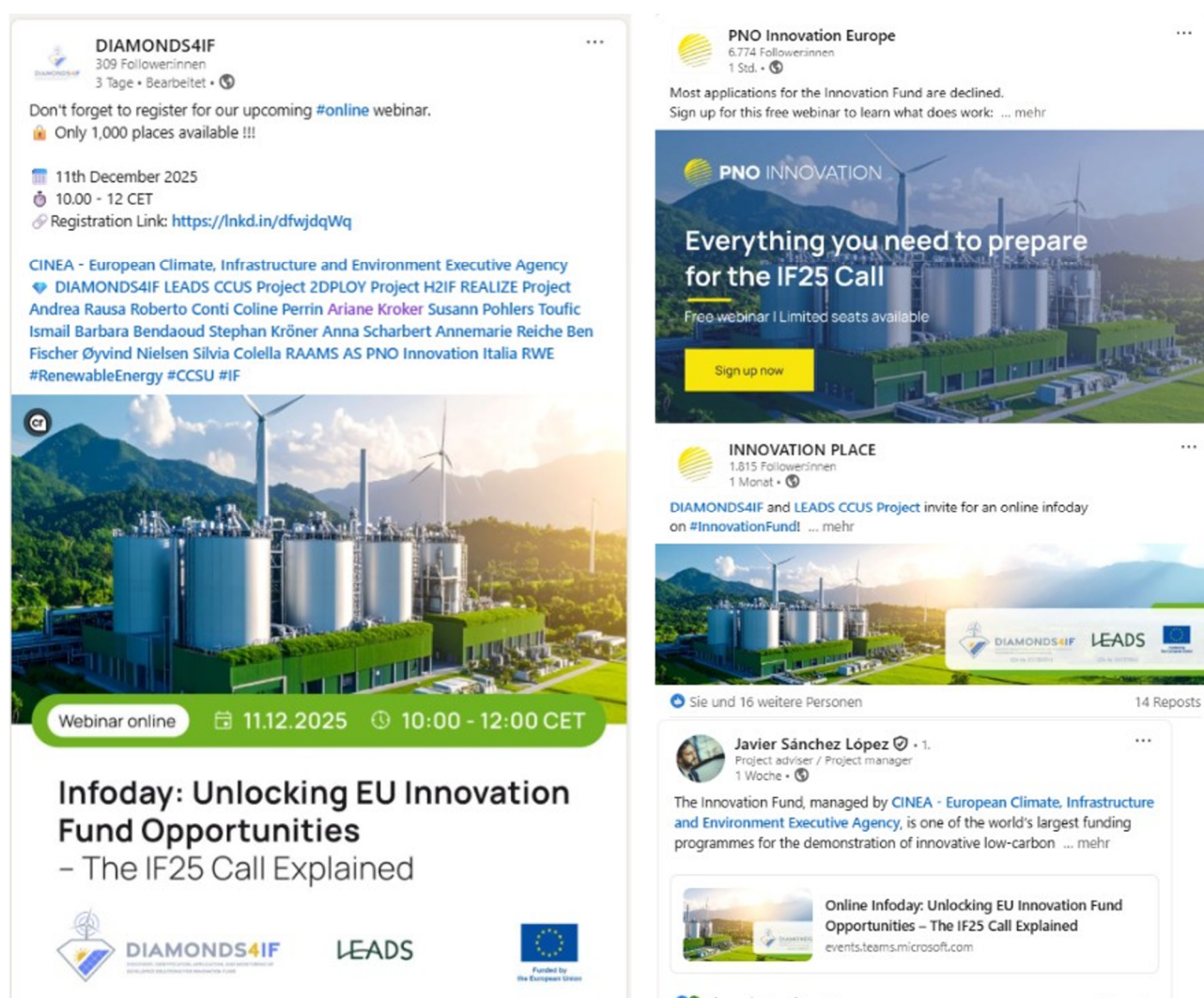


Figure 11: Communication activities on LinkedIn.

Output

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.

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

Key Performance Indicator (KPI)	Nr.
Nr. of registrations	350
Nr. of participants	~150
Number of interested emails requesting a Viability Check	~ 5

2.10 Final Public Conference/Public Workshop with sector organisations: Accelerating clean industrial deployment - insights, challenges, and opportunities, Brussels, Belgium

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 Bolognesi (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.

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 shared 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 relied on **several communication channels**, including a dedicated registration link, social media banners, website articles, LinkedIn posts, targeted email 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 modelling), and needs simplification. In particular, competitive criteria around direct CO₂ savings exclude innovative and critical enabling technologies whose indirect CO₂ benefits are not recognised.
- 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 apply a more outcome-oriented focus in the Innovation Fund, rewarding real-world impact on the renewables industry rather than relying primarily on highly polished application documents.
- Also recognise indirect, future-enabling technologies that support sector-wide innovation and decarbonisation.
- Reduce complexity and support SMEs through guidance, tools, and streamlined processes.



Figure 12: Breakout session: Public Workshop in Renewable Energy Sector Patricia Bolognesi (PNO) and Benjamin Fischer (RWE Offshore Wind), Brussels 12.05.2026.



Figure 13: Speakers cards campaign.

The final CSA public conference presented the consolidated results of the five CSA projects; highlighted lessons learned 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 sixty 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.



Figure 14: DIAMONDS4IF representatives at the CSA final public event: Accelerating clean industrial deployment – insights, challenges, and opportunities. 12.05.2026

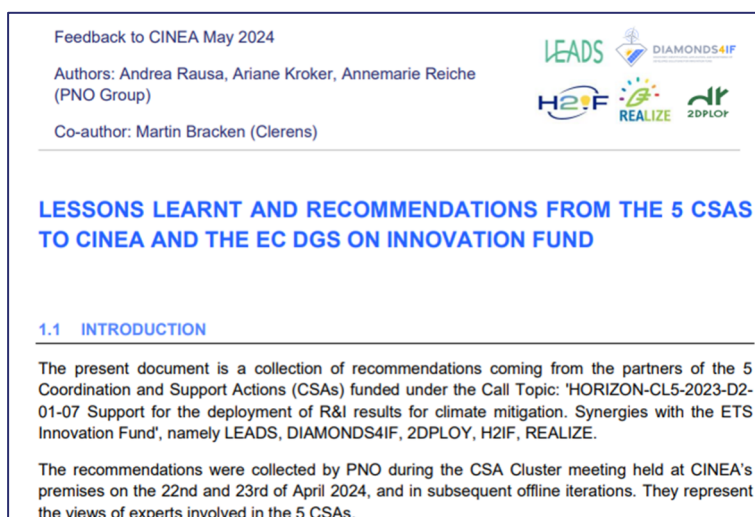
Table 4: Main Outputs: Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

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

2.11 Complementary outputs

All these activities were complemented by the drafting of:

- **Joint documents**
 - May 2024: *Lessons Learnt and Recommendations from the 5 CSAs on the Innovation Fund*. The document has been sent to CINEA and as well as to DG CLIMA and DG RTD and it is also possible to view it on the DIAMONDS4IF web page⁶.



- **Joint press releases:**
 - April 2024: *From Horizon 2020 to market: New projects support mature European technological innovation for a clean and sustainable energy transition through the Innovation Fund programme.*
 - December 2024: *€2.4 billion available to fund innovative net-zero technologies.*
- **Joint newsletters:**
 - December 2024. A first newsletter in December 2024, presenting all sister projects and their activities, was published by the REALIZE project and shared by the other CSA projects.
- **Joint invitation emails, LinkedIn outreach and coordinated communication campaigns** for shared visibility and stronger impact across the CSA cluster.
 - For shared events such as the *Final Public Conference*, the communication activities were coordinated by DIAMONDS4IF and implemented in a coordinated way by all five CSA projects. This included the preparation and dissemination of invitation e-mails, LinkedIn posts, and speaker-card campaigns.

⁶ <https://www.diamonds4if.eu/mediaroom/>

- More broadly, the communication and dissemination activities related to previous joint initiatives were also coordinated and mutually supported by the five CSAs, as demonstrated by the promotion of the Masterclasses, the joint invitations to the Info days, and the republication of newsletters and updates issued by sister projects⁷.

This collaborative approach helped to ensure coherent messaging, wider outreach, and stronger cross-project visibility.

⁷ <https://www.diamonds4if.eu/sister-projects/>

3 CONCLUSIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

This report has presented the activities foreseen in the *Dissemination and Communication Plan* that specifically concerned events, workshops and collaborative actions carried out together with the other CSA projects funded under the same call. In line with Task 10.4 and the objectives set out in the Grant Agreement, these activities aimed not only to strengthen synergies among the projects, but also to establish regular contact with the other funded CSAs, exchange experiences, and gather practical insights on the challenges typically faced by potential Innovation Fund applicants.

Through workshops, cluster meetings, bilateral exchanges, and joint communication activities, DIAMONDS4IF and the sister projects were able to share expertise, compare approaches, and discuss both successful practices and common bottlenecks in supporting Innovation Fund applications. Workshop materials, masterclasses, tools, and methodologies were exchanged and further adapted across the projects, while lessons learned from ongoing and completed activities contributed to better focusing future support actions and dissemination efforts.

These coordinated efforts have laid a solid foundation for continued collaboration and will continue to support the Innovation Fund ecosystem by fostering high-quality applications and increasing the overall impact of the CSA cluster. More broadly, the workshops and dissemination activities strengthened links among the CSA projects, promoted the sharing of best practices, knowledge, and strategies, and provided participants and stakeholders with practical resources to improve their Innovation Fund readiness.

To date, the following key collaborative **activities** have been organised and implemented:

- Six workshops and joint events with other CSA projects
- Two in-person CINEA/CSA Cluster Meetings in Brussels
- Regular online coordination meetings between CINEA and the CSA projects
- Regular *communication* and *dissemination* meetings among the CSA projects
- Two targeted bilateral knowledge-sharing meetings with sister CSA projects

Key Outputs

- Two **online webinars** were organised together with **REALIZE** and **LEADS** on key Innovation Fund topics following the publication of the IF24 and IF25 calls, including lessons learned and Q&A sessions with potential applicants.
- The recordings of both webinars, together with the videos produced during the Final Public Conference in May 2026, were uploaded to the **DIAMONDS4IF YouTube channel**, which currently has almost sixty subscribers, to extend outreach beyond the live events.
- The webinar slides were shared with subscribers, and all presentations from the Final Public Conference, including both the plenary sessions and the breakout sessions, were published on the **DIAMONDS4IF website**.
- Recommendations and lessons learned were shared with CINEA and the sister CSAs, thereby strengthening alignment in the support provided to Innovation Fund applicants.

- Two **joint press releases** were published to disseminate updates and insights to stakeholders across the CSA networks.
- A joint social media approach was implemented to coordinate messages, timing, and visibility across the CSA cluster.
- The **DIAMONDS4IF Innovation Pipeline** process was further refined through dissemination and communication activities aimed at identifying and engaging new projects interested in the Innovation Fund scheme.
- The **DIAMONDS4IF LinkedIn** channel grew to around 360 followers, contributing to increased awareness of the Innovation Fund scheme and of the support services offered by the CSA projects.

Looking Ahead

- **Newsletters, press releases and regular coordination meetings:** Collaboration among the CSA projects will continue until the end of 2026 through regular meetings, bilateral exchanges, newsletters, and coordinated dissemination activities. Although the REALIZE project has already concluded, it also contributed to the promotion of the Final Public Conference. This coordinated approach will continue until the end of the year, with a focus on key topics relevant to the upcoming Innovation Fund deadlines.

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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