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D3.2 – TOOLBOX, INCL. TEAM STRUCTURE, AND CHECKLIST FOR VIABILITY ASSESSMENT

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

lr	ntroduc	ction	6
1	Su	oporting the Organisational Capacity	8
	1.1	Preparing the Team	9
	1.2	Preparing the Data	13
	1.3	Preparing the Schedule	15
2	Ass	sessing the Viability of the Project Ideas	17
	2.1	Self-Assessment	17
	2.2	Tutorials and Guidelines	20
	2.3	IF Viability Questionnaire	20
	2.4	Cost Assessment Guideline	21
3	Ga	p Analysis with Anonymised Examples	24
4	Co	nclusions	24
5	Lis	t of References	24
6	Acl	knowledgement	24
7	Anı	nexes	26
	Anne	x 1: Overview of Tools presented	26
	Anne	x 2: List of the Video Tutorials	27



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Viability Check - Define the Go or No-Go decision for the next step of the IF Application. © PN	O
Consultants GmbH, 2024.	8
Figure 2: Organisational Capacity Check overview. © PNO Consultants GmbH, 2024	9
Figure 3: Required profile across business units and functions during the whole application process. © F	PNO
Consultants GmbH, 2024	10
Figure 4: Visualisation of the Milestones. © PNO Consultants GmbH, 2024	16
Figure 5: Viability Check overview. © PNO Consultants GmbH, 2024	17
Figure 6: Screenshot of the Innovation Fund Self-Assessment published online from PNO. © PNO	
Consultants GmbH, 2024.	19
Figure 7: Video tutorials to create basic knowledge and understanding of Innovation Fund scheme and	
criteria. © PNO Consultants GmbH, 2024	20
LIST OF TABLES	
Table 1: Required Understanding and expertise needed per application document. © PNO Consultants	
GmbH, 2024.	12
Table 2: Application package 2025 overview	13
Table 3: List of tools available to identify relevant documents and information	15



LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Description
CINEA	European Climate, Infrastructure and Environment Executive Agency
CSA	Coordination and support action
EC	European Commission
GHG	Greenhouse Gas
IF	ETS Innovation Fund
PNO	PNO Consultants GmbH
R&D	Research and Development
R&I	Research and Innovation
RWE	RWE Offshore Wind GmbH
WP	Work Package



INTRODUCTION

Project Summary and Objectives

DIAMONDS4IF project aims to support Horizon 2020 (H2020) beneficiary companies in further developing their projects and applying to the ETS Innovation Fund (IF), which helps them overcome barriers in turning R&D (Research and Development) into successful businesses.

One of the main outcomes of the DIAMONDS4IF project will be the production of at least five sound proposals, including detailed plans for scalability, commercialization, and financial models for submission to the IF.

Work Package 3 (WP3) focuses on the preparatory efforts for the organisational preparation of Innovation Fund projects, with the aim of creating effective team structures and tools to address key evaluation criteria, supporting both identified use cases and new project ideas for Innovation Fund applications.

Purpose of This Document

This deliverable aims to report on the support tools for the capacity and viability assessment, incl. gap analysis with anonymised examples.

In the first chapter, the focus is on organizational capacity to manage an Innovation Fund project (capacity check).

The second chapter presents a way how to assess a project's fit with eligibility and award criteria of the Innovation Fund, i.e. a viability check of the project. A structured approach is used, incl. tools for breaking down preliminary data and evaluating existing information, as well as to identify missing information (gap analysis).

Finally, in the third chapter, we illustrate how these tools have been applied and lead to evaluation results, that show viability of projects, improvement potential and gaps.

At the DIAMONDS4IF project website, the toolbox is online available. This document provides insight into the purpose and content of the tools.

D3.2 – Toolbox, incl. team structure, and checklist for viability assessment



All tools were also mentioned and presented during the webinar organized together with REALIZE Project¹ on "Funding Opportunities for Renewable Energy Projects". The webinar can be viewed on the DIAMONDS4IF YouTube Channel: Innovation Fund DIAMONDS.²

² https://youtu.be/TSE_Ywt7nYA?si=YEeiBjcW1zsbrwFV



¹ Front page - Realize project



1 SUPPORTING THE ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY

Potential applicants for Innovation Fund are faced with several challenges during the preparation of an Innovation Fund project and the application documents. Among other issues, for example, the preparation of the comprehensive application documents requires collaboration across company departments and across legal entities at a level of detail that is not common practice, and under high time pressure.

Thus, the organizational management needs to cope with timelines, various interrelationships, and capacity issues.

To this end, the project management during an Innovation Fund application phase must define a dedicated project team, set a clear timeline, define a work plan and support the preparation of the mandatory documents, to cover all topics and contents. A good defined project development is a crucial and decisive step for a successful application.

Apart from the assessment and the evaluation of the project's objectives and figures, one of the objectives of the Step 1 "IF Viability and Capacity check & gaps analysis" is to assess the applicant's organizational capacity as well as financial resources, and to identify weaknesses and gaps, to provide suggestions and to achieve the best preparedness possible.



Figure 1: Viability Check - Define the Go or No-Go decision for the next step of the IF Application. © PNO Consultants GmbH, 2024.



In particular, there are two key aspects that need to be assessed for the "organisational readiness":

- The organisational capacity (see section 1), and
- The viability of the project idea. (see section 2).

Figure 2 gives an overview of the different steps of checking the organizational capacity. These steps are followed to finally set up a clear "compass" and head to the next step.

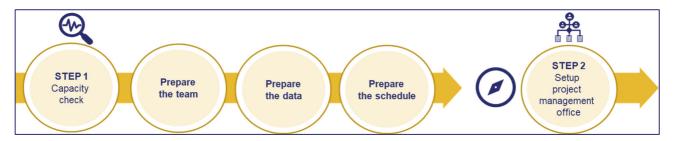


Figure 2: Organisational Capacity Check overview. © PNO Consultants GmbH, 2024

1.1 Preparing the Team

One of the first steps is to define the project team and the internal organizational structure.

The organization involved must establish an internal structure and assign responsibilities, following the guidance developed within this project, and designate a responsible consortium lead, allocating internal resources for the application phase. Additionally, a clear decision-making structure must be developed to ensure well-defined responsibilities in the application-writing process.

Figure 3 illustrates all required profiles across business units and functions needed for Innovation Fund. The support team comprises several cross-cutting functions and responsibilities, that are needed at least for some data as part of the whole information package.



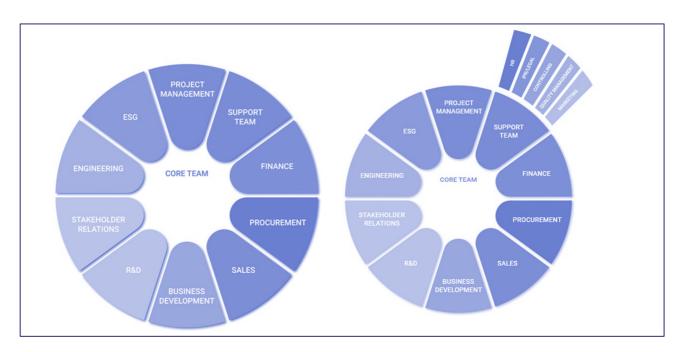


Figure 3: Required profile *across business units and functions* during the whole application process. © PNO Consultants GmbH. 2024

The skills and responsibilities needed to prepare the Innovation Fund documents are typically spread across core departments in larger companies. In smaller companies, however, these roles are often handled by one person or a small team. To create an internal organizational structure capable of preparing an Innovation Fund application alongside ongoing operations, each type of organization must be identified:

- Hierarchical structures with a clearly defined functional roles,
- More functionally organized teams, often with horizontal structures, and
- Departments organized by market segments and products, or across projects.

For example, the use cases yet represented in the DIAMONDS4IF consortium reflect various types of organisations: a global organisation, with dedicated functional structures and a high fragmentation of tasks as well a small company with a management team that is highly integrating functions in personal unions. Each organisational type will fit with another type of interaction to cope with the cross-functional and cross hierarchical approach that is needed for developing the project and proposal documents.

Independently of organizational size, an IF application comprises data and knowledge from various disciplines and fields of expertise as well as of different operational management departments,

D3.2 – Toolbox, incl. team structure, and checklist for viability assessment



including: Finance/controlling, business development and sales, ESG/Sustainability, Project management, HSE (Health, Security, Environment), Marketing, Supplier management.

For each part of the **application documents**, specific expertise and data are needed. Table 1 provides an overview of the understanding and expertise required to develop each necessary document during the application process. This guides the applicants to identify departments and personnel to be engaged in the viability check and later in the proposal preparation process, and to estimate the resources needed per role/responsibility.



Table 1: Required Understanding and expertise needed per application document. © PNO Consultants GmbH, 2024.

Application documents	Document content	Required profile
Part A +C	Administrative data of the applicants, project indicators (extracted from the other documents)	Project Manager
Feasibility Study		
Business Plan	Business Plan Description of the relevant market, the project's value position, the business model, justification of the CAPEX and OPEX calculation, justification of the revenues, financing plan, terms of main contracts and agreements, financial risks	
Knowledge Sharing Plan		
Relevant Cost calculation	Calculation of cost, revenues, and balance sheet for the 10-year operation period in standard Excel template (Financial information file)	Finance expert, supported
GHG (Greenhouse Gas) calculation	GHG avoidance calculation according to absolute and relative GHG emission savings, other savings beyond project scope, assumptions, and verifications, incl. monitoring plan	GHG calculation expert
Financial Model	Financial Model Calculation of cost, revenues, and balance sheet for the 10-year operation period in company template	
Part B	Overall project storyline, summary of the other documents (to be compiled by PNO, review by client) and project management structure and procedures, and presentation of the detailed planning of the project activities	Project Manager



Application documents	Document content	Required profile
Lois	Letters of Intent or Support to be provided by key project stakeholders such as suppliers, off-takers, policy makers, industry organisation, NGOs etc.	Sales, Supplier management
Participant information	Description of the project partners, project specific experience, project team, previous experience	Project Manager, HR, diverse

Overall, the team should consist of at least:

- Financial experts (controlling and business development depts.),
- Technical experts (engineers, plant managers, quality control),
- Regulatory experts and the dedicated project management team incl. Grant management.

Any gaps may be addressed by involving external support, such as for the assessment of Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission savings. In order to produce a high-quality IF application, PNO has estimated an effort of about 1,000 man-hours to be allocated on average by applicants.

1.2 Preparing the Data

Each of the application documents reflects a specific subtopic and evaluation criterion. The list of documents is displayed in Table 2.

Table 2: Application package 2025 overview

DOCUMENT	FORMAT	M/O	Page limits, Templates
Administrative Form	Online	Mandatory	Defined template
Main document	Pdf	Mandatory	70, defined template
Form C - gathering indicators	Online	Mandatory	Defined template
GHG emission avoidance calculator	XIs	Mandatory	Defined template
Feasibility Study	Pdf	Mandatory	60p., non-mandatory template
Business plan	Pdf	Mandatory	60p., non-mandatory template





DOCUMENT	FORMAT	M/O	Page limits, Templates
Extended Part C form	XIs	Mandatory	Defined template
Timetable/Gantt Chart	Pdf	Mandatory	Defined template
Cost calculator (Financial information file)	XIs	Mandatory	Defined template
Applicant's detailed financial model	XIs	Mandatory	N/A
Shareholder financial resources	Pdf	Optional	N/A
Participant information	Pdf	Mandatory	Defined template
Due diligence reports	Pdf	Optional	N/A
Support to project	Pdf	Optional	N/A
Main terms of supply	Pdf	Optional	N/A

The documents should be based on existing information but must be further developed during the application phase. At this preparatory stage, the applicant needs to gather an overview of any existing documents that may be useful for the further proceeding.

Among these topics, where information is requested, there are:

- Actual scope of project/presentation: What are the main characteristics of the planned project
- Former funding applications on the project and Evaluation Reports, if available
- Summary of preparatory work
- List of partners to be involved in a consortium/needed for realization of the project (value chain)
- Technical and an economic feasibility study
- Business plan figures
- · Competitive analysis, innovative aspects
- Due diligence analysis, if available
- An estimate of the ghg emission savings according to current information?

There are several tools to organize the data appropriately, that have been developed by DIAMONDS4IF summarized in Table 3.

The full list of tools incl. Links is provided in Annex 1.





Table 3: List of tools available to identify relevant documents and information

Topic	Informational content	Tool available?	Tool description
Project presentation	Main facts and objectives, timeline, milestones, and resources needed	Yes	Guideline / proposed structure for the project outline
Value chain	Sector specification, position of the project in the sector specific value chain	Yes, for: PV, Wind, Geothermal energy, Waterpower/Ocean energy	Value chain designed for DIAMONDS4IF
Financials	Funding gap/funding needed, relevant cost estimation	Yes: cost assessment	Cost assessment guideline
GHG	Estimation of potential GHG emission savings	Yes: video	Video on GHG calculation + guideline
Competitive analysis/ innovation	Positioning of the technology, innovative aspects	Yes: video	Video on Degree of innovation + guideline

1.3 Preparing the Schedule

After collecting all **necessary key information** and analysing the commitment of internal resources, a dedicated schedule should be developed until the application deadline, including meeting planning, task allocation, and key milestones.

assessment





Figure 4: Visualisation of the Milestones. © PNO Consultants GmbH, 2024.

Important milestones are, as in Figure 4:

- M1: Organizational set-up completed, incl. project registration on the EU portal
- M2: Supporting documents draft version
- M4: Supporting documents final draft version. The traffic lights show the readiness level of the supporting documents preparation, and indicate success chances to file a competitive proposal
- M5: Application form "Part B" draft version
- M6: Additional annexes and documents prepared, LOIs received
- M7: Application form "Part B" ready
- M8: Application documents completed and uploaded
- M9: Submission complete.



2 ASSESSING THE VIABILITY OF THE PROJECT IDEAS

Starting an IF application process, verifying the main eligibility criteria and alignment with the call's themes is a crucial step. Beyond organizational matters like the definition of the team, the collection of the key documents and the drafting of a schedule, this chapter will examine **tools to evaluate the viability of project ideas**.

The second and main objective of Step 1, "IF Viability and Capacity Check & Gaps Analysis," is to evaluate the project's eligibility and credibility, identify any weaknesses, and close the gaps to achieve the best possible fit of the project idea with the applications requests. The results of this phase will be key information to guide decision-making.

Figure 5 illustrates the various steps to be taken, incl. self-assessment, overall project information exchange, and potential deep dives into cost assessment, innovation benchmarking, and GHG emission avoidance estimates.

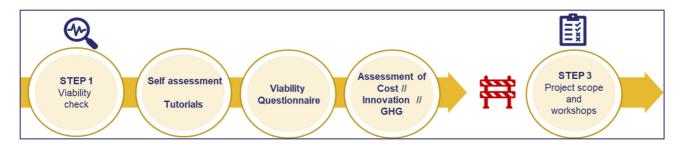


Figure 5: Viability Check overview. © PNO Consultants GmbH, 2024

In the following chapters, the self-assessment, the tutorials, the purpose of the questionnaire, and the cost assessment are introduced more in detail.

2.1 Self-Assessment

Already introduced in D5.1, the DIAMONDS4IF project partners have developed a **Free Initial Online Self-Assessment Tool** for candidates to conduct a preliminary evaluation of their project ideas independently. This tool, created using a Typeform template, includes 10 questions guiding users to determine if the IF grant might be a suitable funding option for their project's idea.

By answering questions 1 through 10, potential candidates can evaluate their project. Questions 1 and 2 represent important eligibility criteria and are therefore essential prerequisites to be fulfilled for

D3.2 – Toolbox, incl. team structure, and checklist for viability assessment



the Innovation Fund. If the answers to these questions are negative, the project in question is unlikely to be eligible for Innovation Fund grants. Subsequently, users, who have answered positive at least 6 questions are invited to contact PNO Experts to perform a free Viability Check as a next step.

The link to the online self-assessment has been published on the DIAMONDS4IF website.3

³ Innovation Fund Self-Assessment Tool









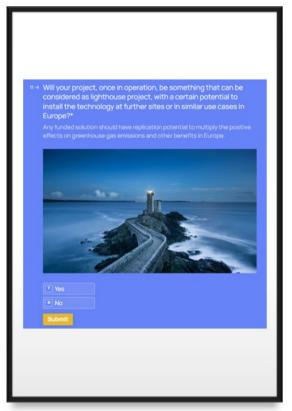


Figure 6: Screenshot of the Innovation Fund Self-Assessment published online from PNO. © PNO Consultants GmbH, 2024.





2.2 Tutorials and Guidelines

To become familiar with the Innovation Fund grant scheme, as reported in in D5.1, a series of **7 video tutorials** has been created by PNO experts and published on a dedicated YouTube channel 'Innovation Fund DIAMONDS'. ⁴ The aim of these short tutorials is to convey practical and fundamental knowledge about the Innovation Fund and to provide a basic understanding of the comprehensive information required throughout the application process.

To further enhance the understanding of the topics of the Innovation Fund and add clarity to the video tutorials, DIAMONDS4IF experts also developed the **Innovation Fund Guidelines**. These documents faithfully reflect the topics covered in the video tutorials. Each PDF document includes detailed video scripts available on the DIAMONDS4IF YouTube channel, together with graphical representations of the most relevant topics.

All the guidelines are accessible in the 'Toolbox' section of the DIAMONDS4IF website.5



Figure 7: Video tutorials to create basic knowledge and understanding of Innovation Fund scheme and criteria. © PNO Consultants GmbH, 2024

2.3 IF Viability Questionnaire

Before initiating the application process, it is essential to evaluate whether the eligibility criteria can be met. Additionally, it is important to determine the best alignment between the project and the

⁵ DIAMONDS4IF Website, <u>Homepage - Diamonds4if</u>



⁴ DIAMONDS4IF YouTube Channel, "Innovation Fund DIAMONDS", www.youtube.com/@DIAMONDS4IF



available funding. In this context, conducting a viability check is a critical step in developing any Innovation Fund project application.

For companies supported through DIAMONDS4IF, a **Viability Check Questionnaire** is used. The questionnaire, designed by PNO, is an essential tool for the capacity and viability assessment. It helps to collect data and forms the basis for discussing the project idea during the Kick-off meeting. Moreover, it outlines the eligibility and award criteria related to the project's idea and helps to assess the readiness of the applicants and to highlight any areas that may require further development or clarification: Degree of Innovation, GHG Emission Avoidance Potential, Project Maturity, Scalability, Cost Efficiency, and Bonus Points.

The questionnaire and its inputs/answers are discussed then extensively during a "viability check workshop", that is dedicated to creating understanding, to evaluate the data, to determine potential gaps, and to align on further details that are needed e.g. on cost assessment, GHG calculations, innovation benchmarking, etc.

2.4 Cost Assessment Guideline

A **cost assessment guideline** has been developed based on the observation that most applicants need to first understand the specific formulas utilized within the Innovation Fund grant scheme before estimating the potential grant amount. The Innovation Fund is not a grant scheme where the funding amount can be calculated as a percentage of CAPEX or as an "additional cost" derived from the difference between two technological options.

To develop a comprehensive understanding, we recommend beginning with our video tutorial on grant amount and relevant cost calculation. Additionally, during a separate cost assessment workshop (as part of the Viability check), potential applicants or project owners will receive a brief introduction to the relevant cost concept. This will primarily focus on activities eligible for funding, main payment rules, scope of funding, timing requirements, and key success factors.

The cost assessment basically follows the steps:

- 1. Funding Gap Calculation
- 2. Estimate of Relevant Cost and Maximum Grant Amount





3. Calculation of Cost Efficiency Score

Thus, relevant information/the business case of the project must be provided, incl. CAPEX, expected OPEX, benefits, and revenues. However, the pre-assessment calculations/business cases of project owners are usually those used to present the project for stakeholders and internal as well as external shareholders. These calculations are mostly characterized by one or more of the following specific conditions:

- Underlying assumptions arise from industry standards or internal "standards" instead of project specific estimations (for example: timing of CAPEX, WACC, market prices, financing structure/cost)
- Financial model or some of the main drivers of the model are not elaborated sufficiently
- Financial model/NPV calculation is based on depreciated cost (NPV of CAPEX, OPEX and revenues)
- Business case is optimized for a "best case" scenario

Thus, a funding gap or a **relevant cost estimate** cannot be derived directly from such preliminary information. For an IF-ready relevant cost estimation, the given information and assumptions must be reflected in the framework of EU Innovation Fund regulations, and deviations need to be disclosed and discussed. Finally, for a reliable assessment of the project cost and potential grants, usually, a significant progress must be made in terms of updating the existing calculations.

To cope with the requirements of a first rough estimation, a general equation for the relevant cost is used. The approach is explained in a dedicated meeting with the financial experts of the project team. The most important information for the project owners is that the calculation uses a **net present value approach**, calculated for the **first 10 years** of a future operation of the investments.

Applying this, the result will show the general eligibility, i.e. if Relevant Costs are **greater than zero Euro** and a funding gap exists.

- If the costs exceeding the revenues and benefits a project would be eligible for funding
- If the cost is "negative", the project would not be eligible for funding



Another learning should be as well, that **there is no minimum funding amount** and **no fixed maximum funding** amount. The **maximum funding** amount that an applicant can apply for is 60% of the calculated Relevant Costs.

To perform the calculation correctly, the project owner is requested to align the data related to its business case according to the main definitions in Innovation Fund (incl. Date of entry into operation, Project lifetime, Production volumes).

Moreover, each applicant needs to choose an **individual funding amount**. This can be the maximum funding, but there may be a reason to reduce the requested Innovation Fund grant. For example, the requested Innovation Fund grant is e.g. evaluated against the avoidance of Green House Gas emissions. To this end, the cost efficiency formula is used.

As the Innovation Fund is a competitive funding programme in which the avoidance of greenhouse gas emissions is central, a project must also avoid a certain minimum amount of greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions for every Euro of funding. The cost efficiency ratio will determine the score of the "Cost efficiency" Award criterion. Since cost efficiency is one of the five key criteria for evaluating Innovation Fund applications, accurately calculating relevant costs and adhering to funding limits are critical factors for the success of projects.



3 GAP ANALYSIS WITH ANONYMISED EXAMPLES

To demonstrate the use of these tools and the Viability check procedure, two case studies have been reported in the sensitive version of this report. The case studies shall illustrate how the application of the tools can provide the necessary knowledge and information to determine whether to pursue a promising application. Both use cases are from Q3/2024.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The document describes the evaluation and recommendation process to be followed by potential candidates and to be supported by consultants to make an informed Go/No-Go Decision on an Innovation Fund proposal.

It presents a **list of tools** to be employed during the evaluation, referencing the availability of these tools on the DIAMONDS4IF YouTube channel, website, and a Self-Assessment Link. The tools have been developed by PNO Consultants to inform interested candidates and project owners and to generate basic knowledge on Innovation Fund and to increase understanding of specific conditions and requirements.

5 LIST OF REFERENCES

- DIAMONDS4IF Website, Homepage Diamonds4if
- DIAMONDS4IF YouTube Channel, "Innovation Fund DIAMONDS", www.youtube.com/@DIAMONDS4IF
- REALIZE Project: <u>Front page Realize project</u>
- Typeform: Link to the Self-Assessment, <u>Innovation Fund Self-Assessment</u> (typeform.com)
- Webinar on Funding Opportunities for RE Projects:
 https://youtu.be/TSE_Ywt7nYA?si=YEeiBjcW1zsbrwFV

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7 ANNEXES

Annex 1: Overview of Tools presented

Name	Chapter		Content	Where to find
Eligibility criteria	2.2	Introduction to the eligibility criteria	Sectors, type of projects, company requirements	LINK (video on youtube) LINK (guideline, pdf)
Project presentation guideline	1.2	Introduction to the proposed Innovation Fund project	Template/structure to be used for project information	Provided to DIAMONDS4IF consortium
Value Chain	1.2	Value chain positioning	Value Chain details per renewable energy sector	Provided to DIAMONDS4IF consortium
Project planning	1.3	Timeline to application	XIs sheet with team and Gantt	Provided to DIAMONDS4IF consortium
Self-assessment	2.1	Preliminary online self- assessment	Project and project owner information in line with IF eligibility and award criteria	LINK (online questionnaire)
Viability Questionnaire	2.2	Detailed assessment template	Project and project owner information in line with IF eligibility and award criteria	Provided to DIAMONDS4IF consortium
Grant amount and relevant cost calculation	1.2, 2.2	Introduction of the "relevant cost" concept	Video tutorial explaining relevant cost concept and role in an IF application + guideline	LINK (video on youtube) LINK (guideline, pdf)
Cost assessment	2.3	Estimate of relevant cost and funding limit	Guideline explaining how to estimate relevant cost and potential funding	Provided to DIAMONDS4IF consortium



Name	Chapter		Content	Where to find
GHG emission avoidance	1.2, 2.2	Introduction to the IF-specific GHG emission avoidance calculation methodology	Video tutorial explaining benchmarks comparators and absolute vs. relative avoidance calculations	LINK (video on youtube) LINK (guideline, pdf)

Annex 2: List of the Video Tutorials

#	IF application document	DIAMONDS4IF video topic	PNO Expert Consultant
1	Eligibility	Eligibility criteria for accessing the Innovation Fund	Barbara Bendaoud, M.Sc. Psychology Senior Consultant EU Grants
2	Budget table /relevant cost calculator	Grant amount and relevant cost calculation	DiplVolksw./DiplKfm. Robert Fischer Senior Consultant Financial Expert
3	Feasibility Study	Understanding the feasibility study of an Innovation Fund application	Dr. Susann Pohlers, M.Sc. Senior Consultant Biotechnology
4	Part B (degree of innovation)	The degree of innovation in Innovation Fund	DiplPol. Ariane Kroker Senior Consultant EU Grants
5	GHG emission avoidance calculator	GHG Emission Avoidance: Key Calculations and Methodologies	DiplIng. Toufic Ismail Senior Consultant Maritime Industry

D3.2 – Toolbox, incl. team structure, and checklist for viability assessment



6	Timetable / Part B (work plan)	Timeline: How to plan an Innovation Fund project	DiplPol. Ariane Kroker Senior Consultant EU Grants
7	Business Plan	Business Plan	Barbara Bendaoud, M.Sc. Psychology Senior Consultant EU Grants