

Request for Proposal (RfP)

The current Request for Proposal (RfP) is developed for the identification and selection of the Implementing Partner to support the implementation of the “**Digitalization of sector with growth potential for better economic opportunities project**” of the RECONOMY program (hereinafter RECONOMY) – an inclusive and green economic development program in the Eastern Partnership (EaP) and the Western Balkan (WB) countries.

1. About the RECONOMY Program

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) has a long-standing commitment to the growth and prosperity of the EaP and the WB regions. As part of this commitment, Sida has partnered with HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation for implementing RECONOMY program.

The overarching objective of the RECONOMY program is to enable women and youth, including the most disadvantaged and excluded groups, to benefit from economic opportunities by increasing their income and taking up decent/green employment/self-employment. The RECONOMY program has a four-year-long Main Phase, which for the Western Balkans started in April 2023 and will last till the end of December 2026.

The impact hypothesis of the RECONOMY program is the **generation of better income and decent/green jobs for women and youth, including the most disadvantaged and excluded groups, inclusively and sustainably** as a result of:

- **Improved competencies of the workforce**, either to join private sector enterprises (employment) or start their economic initiatives (self-employment);
- **Relevant and quality business and technology services** for increased investment and growth of private sector enterprises; and
- **Enhanced industry or a firm-specific enabling environment for private sector enterprises**, to do business in a better way and increase their efficiency by utilizing the opportunities of green and digital transformation.

The market systems development (MSD) approach guides the implementation of the RECONOMY program. Central to the application of the MSD approach will be working through a variety of market actors (both public and private) and supporting behavioral changes which will lead to long-term improvements in their performance, ultimately benefitting the target groups. The program plays a facilitative role in this process, acting as an agent stimulating improvements in the way in which market actors within the system perform their functions.

2. The objective of the assignment

The RECONOMY program is seeking out organizations interested in acting as an Implementing Partner in this process and supporting the implementation of one of the regional projects of the program during the Main Phase: mid-June 2023 – December 2026. For this RfP, the focus is on **digitalization of sector with growth potential for better economic opportunities** in which the Implementing Partner’s activities will be carried out in the following Western Balkans countries: Albania, Bosnia & Hercegovina, Kosovo, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Serbia.

The role of the Implementing Partner, and some selected activities and expected results during the project implementation:

- Conduct demand-driven analysis of prevalent practices of technology utilization by ICT, BPO, and additional sectors (such as tourism, agriculture, manufacturing), to identify the demand for digitalization of their activities/products/services that should be addressed to make the sectors more accessible to women and young job seekers in an inclusive and environmentally sustainable manner.

- Conduct demand-driven analysis of prevalent constraints of SMEs in WB that hinder access and expansion of their operations in new markets and ways to overcome these barriers and facilitate their expansion.
- Conduct supply-side analysis within the Western Balkans countries matching needs with supply.
- Conduct relevant sectors' baseline studies, and stakeholder mapping/market actors' analyses.
- Discuss, develop, and agree on interventions and business models, and roles with market actors based on the synthesis of the assessments.
- Map and support the development of digital solutions promoting a circular approach to resource management and targeting interventions including but not limited to energy and resource efficiency, innovations, education for SMEs as well as training in green jobs.
- Ensure gender mainstreaming in the design of the interventions.
- Support advocacy of regulations and standards to address the needs of target groups and SMEs.
- Develop interventions and business models based on the assessments conducted, with a regional perspective.
- Promote shared understanding, knowledge, and learning among key market players about sustainable business models at the local and regional levels.
- Continuously document and share experiences through regular exchanges and learning processes with other initiatives of the RECONOMY program and beyond.
- Facilitate linkages between engaged market actors in accordance with the developed business models with local, regional, and international actors to support exchange and learning.

3. Application Procedure

The selection of the Implementing Partners will be based on an assessment of the quality of their proposals meeting the objective of this RfP. Interested organizations (only not-for-profit/non-governmental organizations are eligible to apply) are kindly asked to submit a proposal in the following structure.

3.1. Technical Proposal (max. 15 pages)

The technical proposal should be focused on **digitalization of sector with growth potential for better economic opportunities** and structured around the above-stated impact hypothesis which will be the focus of the Implementing Partner's role. Since the RECONOMY program has a strong regional value addition, it is a must that the proposal focuses on ideas that have regional added values (benefitting more than one country) to inclusive, digital, and green economic development to enable women and young men, including disadvantaged and excluded groups, to benefit from economic opportunities by increasing their income and taking up decent/green employment/self-employment.

The following questions should act as a guide for the proposal development:

- What are the common constraints in WB countries that hinder an ICT/BPO sector's regional and international competitiveness?
- What prevents SMEs in various sectors (ICT/BPO, tourism, agriculture, manufacturing) from using digital solutions to increase their competitiveness and facilitate inclusive and green growth of the sectors in order to create decent/green jobs for the target group?
- What are the shared problems and possible shared solutions in the WB countries both, on the demand (ICT/BPO, tourism, agriculture, manufacturing) and supply (digital solutions providers) side?
- What are the key shortages or deficiencies in demand-side skills in the pre-selected sectors to use digital solutions to increase their competitiveness and facilitate the growth of the sectors in order to create jobs for the target group?
- What type of digital solutions can be applied across multiple sectors to help them grow and create more decent/green jobs?

- What are the sector-specific digital solutions that can help to increase environmental sustainability/resource efficiency while also contributing to growth and competitiveness?
- How can the proposed solutions benefit each country's National Plans for European Integration or other relevant policies (such as green economy strategies)?
- What are the industry-specific digital solutions that are becoming increasingly valuable as businesses transform, grow, and become more competitive?
- What are the cleantech opportunities for SMEs in tourism, agriculture, and manufacturing sectors?
- Who are potential partners for project implementation on both the demand and supply sides?
- What are some entry points related to the regional value addition this intervention can contribute to?
- How would the Implementing Partner tackle these constraints – fill the gap between relevant market actors by considering the MSD approach? **(Please propose not more than six intervention ideas and draft business models).**

3.2. Capability Statement (max. 3 pages)

This should include details of the previous project(s) experience demonstrating the following capabilities:

- Experience in managing MSD projects (more than one project of a similar or larger scale)
- Experience in implementing projects in ICT/BPO Sector, preferably experience in additional sectors such as Agriculture, Tourism, and Manufacturing;
- Capacity to implement multi-country/regional projects (in at least two countries of WB);
- Experience in working with professional and/or sectoral associations;
- Professional linkages and nexus with other organizations in WB countries;
- Experience in leveraging similar projects/interventions;
- Capacity to assign/dedicate highly experienced in MSD and with good knowledge of English full-time (100%) Project Manager (international work experience is an asset). (Please attach the CV)
- Capacity to assign/dedicate at least three full-time (100%) MSD experienced staff for the implementation with good knowledge of English (please attach CVs) For example:
 - Monitoring and Results Measurement and Knowledge Management, Learning and Communication Officer MRM/KMLC Officer (100%)
 - Program Officer (100%), preferably with knowledge of digitalization, or any of the above-mentioned sectors
- Capacity to identify and manage climate-related and other environmental risks and opportunities related to green transition as the socio-economic and political context in the respective countries of operations and at the regional level and clear ability to integrate these aspects in the design and implementation of the project; clear staff capacity in this area and/or proposal on building this capacity; reference to any existing or planned internal environmental strategies/policy of the organization applicable to the implementation of the project;
- Monitoring capacities and experience, (knowledge & application of DCED standard preferred);
- Experience managing and accounting for funding;
- Ability of assigned/dedicated staff to travel frequently;
- List and a short description of similar activities conducted or projects implemented.

4. Financial proposal

The estimated budget for the project implementation is CHF 1,900.000 and the duration for the implementation is from mid-June 2023 to December 2026. By considering these, the proposed interventions have to relate, contribute and report to the indicators below, however, the specific targets for each of the indicators will be defined together with the RECONOMY Program Facilitation Unit and the selected applicant.

Goal - Women and youth, including the most disadvantaged and excluded, benefit from improved economic opportunities (better income and green and decent jobs) inclusively and sustainably.

Impact indicators
Number of women and youth with additional income and decent and green job opportunities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Women ▪ Most disadvantaged and excluded groups ▪ Green jobs
Percentage of women and youth with additional income and decent job opportunities who express satisfaction with their situation
Outcome indicators
Amount of additional investment made by private sector enterprises because of changes stimulated by the program
Percentage of private sector enterprises that report higher turnover and/or profit as a result of changes stimulated by the program
Number of women and youth with improved skills relevant to market needs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Women ▪ Most disadvantaged and excluded groups ▪ Green skills
Percentage of women and youth who express satisfaction with the relevance of skills
Number of women and youth that access and use intermediation services <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Women ▪ Most disadvantaged and excluded groups
Percentage of women and youth who express satisfaction with the relevance of intermediation services
Number of private sector enterprises report better performance as a result of clear and implemented policies/regulations/administrative requirements as a result of the program's facilitation
Percentage of private sector enterprises that report increased economic opportunities and business environment

By considering these targets and proposed interventions, the applicant is kindly asked to provide (as a separate document) the financial proposal for the implementation.

Structure of the financial proposal:

Part 1: Personnel	CHF
- List of positions	
Total part 1	xxx
Part 2: Operation costs	CHF
- Travel & reimbursable costs	
- Equipment	
- Operational costs	
Total part 2	xxx
Part 3: Activities/Interventions	CHF
- List of activities/interventions	
Total part 3	xxx
Overhead (10%)	xxx
Grand total	xxx

5. Timeline

- RfP publishing date: **20-Apr-23**
- Application submission deadline: **26-May-23**
- Submission: Application should be submitted to Helvetas Eastern Europe easterneurope@helvetas.org
- Specific questions will be answered in writing and distributed among all parties as soon as possible.
- Applications will be evaluated by the RECONOMY's procurement committee, and the applicant can expect to receive a decision on their proposal by **09-Jun-23**. RECONOMY reserves the right to include an exchange or test of capabilities as part of the evaluation if needed to conclude this RfP.