# Terms of Reference

## Technical Expertise in Energy Efficiency in the Construction and Renovation Sector in the Western Balkan region

### 1. Background of the assignment

In partnership with the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida), HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation is leading a regional inclusive and green economic development program, RECONOMY, in 11 countries of the Eastern Partnership (Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Ukraine, Moldova), and the Western Balkans (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, North Macedonia, Kosovo, and Serbia).

RECONOMY is running 10 projects in the two regions, led by both Program Facilitation Unit (PFU) and Implementing Partners, strategically addressing key areas such as twin green and digital transformation of the sectors with high growth potential; ICT skills; energy efficiency and renewable energy in construction and renovation of built environment; circular economy and resource efficiency in textile & apparel production and trade; fostering entrepreneurial ecosystems; and support of regional cooperation and access to circular business models for MSMEs.

One of the key green and inclusive initiatives implemented by the RECONOMY program is - Better Income and Employability in Energy Efficient Construction and Renovation (https://www.reconomyprogram.com/interventions/better-income-and-employability-in-energy-efficient-construction-and-renovation/). Managed by the program facilitation unit of RECONOMY, this project aims to improve the performance of the market system in the Eastern Partnership countries by addressing key challenges and driving the green transition in the energy efficiency / renewable energy (EE/RE) sector in construction. The project focuses on three main interventions: Building Skills and Knowledge on Energy-Efficient Construction, Advocacy and Awareness Raising on the Benefits of EE/RE Products and the career opportunities in the sector and Building Linkages and Facilitating Alliances in the EE/RE Market.

The competencies intervention seeks to enhance the capacity of the construction sector by providing green-enhanced skills training and updating curricula. The services intervention addresses the challenge of youth unemployment while meeting the growing demand for skilled workers by establishing connections between skilled young people and potential employers in the EE/RE market. The influences intervention seeks to create a better policy enabling environment both for the business and the inclusive and stereotype-free participation of women and youth in the sector.

The EECR project is making considerable progress in advancing green building practices, improving regional green competencies and access to finance, across the Western Balkans. By establishing four new Green Building Councils (GBCs) in North Macedonia, Montenegro, Albania, and Kosovo, alongside strengthening existing GBCs in Bosnia and Herzegovina and Serbia, the project is promoting the adoption of green building practices. In the upcoming period, these councils are preparing to introduce globally recognized certifications like LEED, BREEAM, and DGNB into national markets, driving green investments and creating new opportunities in the construction industry. A regional e-platform is also under development, designed

to support advocacy, provide green financing tools, and host a registry of skilled workers to improve workforce accessibility for companies.

Partnerships with three organizations: KNAUF, SOLAR MK, and the Chamber of Licensed Architects and Engineers of North Macedonia have also been established to address the green skills gaps. These initiatives include the development of energy efficiency training curricula, RETScreen software training, and the launch of an e-learning platform for architects and engineers.

Finally, the project also focuses on providing expanded financial access services for individuals and SMEs in the construction sector, primarily with the expansion of the LORES+ fintech platform in Albania, Kosovo, and Serbia, through the partnership with Creative Business Solutions. Currently connected to Albania's leading financial institutions, LORES+ presents applicants with a comprehensive list of available financial products, ranked based on various criteria for identifying the most suitable options. The platform aims to provide businesses, women, youth, and disadvantaged groups, with tailored financial products for energy-efficient construction.

Collaboration with four banking associations in North Macedonia, Serbia, Kosovo, and Albania will equip financial institution officials with the skills needed to design financial products tailored for construction companies and target groups, aligned with ESG requirements. Additionally, NGOs will be identified and engaged in capacity-building initiatives to support disadvantaged groups, enabling them to benefit from innovative financial products.

In line with this, **RECONOMY seeks to engage an international expert** to support RECONOMY staff in Energy Efficiency in the Construction and Renovation Sector in the Western Balkan region.

## 2. Objective, Scope of Work, and Deliverables

### 2.1 Objective

The main objective of this assignment is to provide on-demand technical expertise, mentoring, and backstopping to the RECONOMY staff leading the "Better Income and Employability in Energy Efficient Construction and Renovation" project in the Western Balkan region.

### 2.2 Scope of Work

The international expert will perform the following tasks:

- **Provision of technical advice**, guidance, and mentoring to the program officers and RECONOMY PFU via remote communication per need (such as online calls, emails, etc.). Tailor-made assistance to review existing project concepts and identify opportunities for improvement and enhanced impact, particularly regionally across Western Balkans.
- **Review and quality assurance** of the Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy in Construction project related technical documentations, such as Terms of References, Concept Notes for engaging market actors, Intervention Guide, results chain, etc.
- **Technical backstopping and support** to the program officers (as needed) in meetings with market actors and other partners to enhance discussions, especially on challenges related to green

building and energy efficiency, ensuring practical solutions and opportunities are advised, discussed, and considered.

- **Assist in capturing early signs of change** and impact in the market due to the ongoing projects. Advise on assessing market changes and developments, and propose methodologies or tools for tracking the impact of interventions/projects market growth in the EE/RE sector.
- **Support in building linkages and valuable connections** for program staff and market actors with relevant stakeholders in the country, region, and beyond to enhance quality, results, and impact of existing interventions.

### 2.3 Deliverables

The international expert will submit quarterly reports detailing the tasks completed, results achieved during the assignment, lessons learned, and recommendations.

## 3. Timeline, level of effort, and other arrangements

The timeframe for completion of this assignment shall take place from the day of signing the contract to December 31, 2025.

Total number of working days for this assignment is up to 10.
All the work related to this assignment will be conducted remotely. All logistical costs (if applicable) will be covered by the program in accordance with the approved activity plan.

The payments will be made in 4 installments upon submission of quarterly reports. The international expert will submit a quarterly invoice reflecting the time spent on the assignment during the preceding quarter. Timesheets will be validated by the RECONOMY staff.

## 4. Experience/Qualification required

The international expert should have:

- Extensive experience and expertise in Energy Efficiency in the Construction and Renovation Sector, including certifications, standards, and emerging green technologies.
- Professional experience in Western Balkan countries in the sector with a strong knowledge of regional dynamics.
- Sound knowledge of EU acquis on energy efficiency and renewable energy.
- Sound advisory and mentoring skills with a track record of providing technical backstopping and mentoring to similar program teams or organizations.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills, including effectively reviewing and refining technical documents.
- Familiarity with the socio-economic challenges of youth, women, and disadvantaged groups in the Western Balkan countries. Sensitivity to the cultural and political context in the region, ensuring that advice is relevant and tailored to the local context is desirable.
- Experience with the Market System Development projects and programs is desirable.
- Established network of contacts with key stakeholders, including government bodies, industry actors, and academic institutions in the WB region is desirable.

- Experience in working with Green Building Councils (GBCs) and/or knowledge of GBC activities or similar entities, with the ability to apply this expertise to strengthen the capacity and functionality of newly established GBCs in the Western Balkan region is desirable.
- Working experience with SIDA-funded development projects is desirable.

## 5. Reporting

The expert reports on the assignment progress to the relevant Program Officer and the Environment and Climate Change Adviser.