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## Request for Proposals

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**For the pilot project in Eastern Partnership Countries (Moldova, Ukraine, Armenia) within**

**RECONOMY**

**a Program of Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) and implemented by HELVETAS Swiss Intercooperation.**



The Request for Proposal (RFP) at hand is developed to identify and select an Implementing Partner for one of the pilot projects of the RECONOMY program, a regional inclusive and green economic development programme in Eastern Partnership Countries and the Western Balkans.

## PILOT PROJECT:

***Economic opportunities through improving the competitiveness and sustainability in the apparel sector in Eastern Partnership Countries (EaP) countries: Moldova, Ukraine, Armenia***

### 1. Introduction to the RECONOMY program

The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida) has a long-standing commitment to Eastern Partnership Countries and Western Balkans: the agency's strategic objective is to facilitate the creation of accessible and relevant economic opportunities as a fundamental requirement for long-term **inclusive economic development**.

While some of the countries in the region are making inroads to economic growth – for example, improvement in their gross domestic product (GDP) growth – this is not translating into inclusive economic development to all. Worsening economic performance, including the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change and vulnerabilities, exacerbate the inequalities, leaving a large chunk of the population under the poverty line.

The overarching objective of the RECONOMY programme in Eastern Partnership Countries and Western Balkans is to **enable women and the youth, as well as other excluded and disadvantaged groups to benefit from economic opportunities and contribute to local economic development** by increasing their income and taking up decent employment/self-employment. The programme has a 30-month inception phase which started in **July 2020 and will end in December 2022**, which will prepare the ground for a 5-year main phase with a total timeline up until end -2027.

The RECONOMY programme focuses on three broad workstreams (type of interventions):

- **Workstream 1:** The RECONOMY programme aims to address widespread skills mismatches - the gap between an individual's job skills and the demands of the job market - in the region. The focus will be on improving formal and non-training offers as well as strengthening labour market information and intermediation services.
- **Workstream 2:** The RECONOMY programme aims to support private sector development through promoting new and improved business and financial services and public-private coordination, stimulating enterprise investment, growth, invest and ultimately the creation of more employment and income-earning opportunities.
- **Workstream 3:** The RECONOMY programme supports advocacy (policy / regulatory/ legislative/ administrative improvements) so that target groups and private enterprises increase their participation and voice, and hence access better economic opportunities.

**One of the economic sectors selected by RECONOMY in Moldova, Ukraine and Armenia is the textile and apparel sector.** Textile and apparel manufacturing is a critical generator of formalised jobs, and an enabler of value chain relationships that modernise economies. The geographical distribution of economic opportunities in the textile and apparel sector has shifted toward Asia and Eastern Europe with countries like Moldova, Ukraine and Armenia emerging as important producing power in the industry.

The sector in the three countries has been integrating new technologies, embracing workplace innovations, adopting sustainable efficiencies, and inventing products and processes to meet the changing demands of regional and global consumers and markets. This has led to its expansion for the

past decade. Yet the countries have made little progress in enabling the sector to establish and leverage an industrial knowledge base to systematically modernise and grow their economies to benefit women, young people, and other disadvantaged groups in an inclusive and environmentally sustainable manner.

## 2. The objectives of the Request for Proposal

Based on the above mentioned, RECONOMY program launches the RfP at hand for a pilot project in textile and apparel sector in Moldova, Ukraine and Armenia and is seeking out organisations interested in acting as Implementing Partner/Co-facilitator in this process and implement one of the pilots of RECONOMY from May 2022 until December 2022 on **Economic Opportunities through improving the competitiveness and sustainability of the textile and apparel sector in EaP countries** where the Implementing Partner's activities will be focused on the three countries of the Eastern Partnership Countries (EaP) – Moldova, Ukraine and Armenia.

The role of the Implementing Partner, some selected deliverables/activities and expected results during the pilot implementation are as follows:

- Conduct the needs assessment of selected market actors from textile and apparel sector in all three countries, to identify the constraints (skills, technology, finance, sustainable production and waste management, compliance with environmental and social standards, export promotion etc.) which should be addressed to make the sector more accessible for women and young job seekers
- Identify and assess the capacity and incentives of the selected market actors
- Establish linkage with 2 existing partners in textile and apparel sector ZIP House Fashion Hub (RECONOMY's Pilot project implementer in Moldova) and Fashion and Design Chamber (RECONOMY's Pilot project implementer in Armenia) for developing joined activities
- Develop pilot interventions based on needs assessment
- Engage identified/ selected market actors in the pilot implementation
- Discuss, develop, and agree on business models and roles with market actors
- Facilitate linkages between engaged market actors in accordance with the developed business models
- Promote shared understanding, knowledge and learning among key market players about sustainable business models in textile and apparel sector.
- Continuously document and share experiences of the pilot interventions through regular exchanges and learning processes with other pilots and initiatives of the RECONOMY Program

## 3. Submission procedure and deadline

### Eligibility criteria:

In the context of RECONOMY, Implementing Partner collaboration aims to build multiple partnerships throughout Program implementation, to leverage organizational capacities across the region for broad-based and sustainable inclusive economic development. With Implementing Partners, the Program has a common objective to jointly implement a project.

In order to be eligible, the partner must be a non-for-profit organisation (national or international). If interested, your organisation is kindly asked to submit the following two separate documents according to the instructions below:

- **Technical Proposal, maximum 10 pages**
- **Capability Statement, maximum 2 pages**

The selection of the Implementing Partners will be based on the assessment of the quality of their proposals meeting the objective of this RfP.

### Technical Proposal

The technical proposal should be focused on **Economic opportunities through improving the competitiveness and sustainability of the textile and apparel sector in EaP countries** and structured around the following guiding questions linked with the RECONOMY program's workstreams. For each workstream please propose not more than two intervention ideas (in all three countries: Moldova, Ukraine, Armenia):

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#### Workstream 1 (skills development):

- What are the key shortages or deficiencies in the skills development system (both formal and informal) in the textile sector?
- What are the current capacities of skills development providers (both public and private, formal, and non-formal) that could improve/ provide the skills to the staff of SMEs involved textile and apparel sector to respond to the changing skill demands of the sector?
- What are the key mismatches in labour supply and demand in the textile sector?
- What should the RECONOMY program do to stimulate closer coordination between skills providers and employers for the development of market demanded in textile sector skills of young people and women?

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#### Workstream 2 (business services and sustainable production and waste management):

- What prevents businesses in textile sector to benefit from the different regional and bilateral Free Trade Agreements, as well as agreements with the EU (e.g., DCFTA in Moldova, Ukraine, CEPA in Armenia)?
- What is the current position of the textile & apparel sector in the region in terms of benefiting from the potential opportunities related to the implementation of the European Green Deal and building the resilience towards potential transition risks (e.g., stricter environmental standards in EU with impact on international trade)?
- To what extent do the SMEs in textile sector use business support services: in the field of certification, marketing, interaction with customers in the global market? What is the level of development of these services in all three countries?
- Why the SMEs not responding to export opportunities?
- What are the obstacles that prevent the SMEs from textile and apparel sector to produce sustainable textile/garments and engage into sustainable waste management practices (including recycling)?
- How should the RECONOMY programme go about tackling these constraints – fill the gap between relevant market actors?

**Workstream 3 (policy and regulations):**

- Are there any sectoral industrial policies with a social dialogue in place? Do these policies encourage green economic transition in the sector?
- What is the level of cooperation between the various actors (trade unions, industry/employer associations, governments and public authorities, local and global brands)?

**Capability Statement**

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

- Experience relevant to the objective of the assignment
- List and a short description of similar activities conducted, or projects implemented
- Experience of working in the Eastern Europe
- Number of the staff to be involved in the pilot project and their relevant experience
- Familiarity with the Market Systems Development (MSD) approach
- Capacity to identify and manage environmental risks and opportunities within the project cycle
- Monitoring capacities and experience
- Experience managing and accounting for funding

**4. Timeframe and financial proposal**

The estimated budget for the planned pilot is **CHF 110,000** and the duration for the implementation is 8 months. By considering these, as well as proposed interventions, the applicant is kindly asked to provide the targets/ expected results, as a potential impact of the project implementation by providing/ filling-in the following indicators (where relevant):

*Goal - Women and young people, in particular, disadvantaged and excluded ones, benefit from improved economic opportunities (better income and decent jobs) inclusively and sustainably*

- Number of people with additional income and decent job opportunities	<b>xxx</b>
- % of people with additional income and decent job opportunities who express satisfaction with their situation	<b>xxx%</b>
- Number of people who improve their skills and knowledge, and increase their employability as well as start their own economic/income-generating initiatives	<b>xxx</b>
- % of people who express satisfaction with the relevance of skills, knowledge, and information services	<b>xxx%</b>
- % of private sector enterprises that report higher turnover and/or profit as a result of changes stimulated by the program	<b>xxx%</b>
- Number of relevant and improved skills and knowledge initiatives designed and delivered	<b>xxx</b>
- Number of private and public skills, knowledge, and information providers that adopt new/improved practices/models	<b>xxx</b>
- Number of relevant and new/improved business and financial services offered	<b>xxx</b>
- Percentage of business and financial service providers that report increased performance due to adoption of new/improved practices/models	<b>xxx%</b>



By considering these targets, as well as proposed interventions, the applicant is kindly asked to provide the financial proposal (as a separate document) for the pilot project, in the following structure:

<b>Part 1: Personnel</b>	<b>CHF</b>
Total part 1	
<b>Part 2: Operation costs</b>	
Total part 2	
<b>Part 3: Activities/Interventions</b>	
Total part 3	
<b>Grand total</b>	

The following timeframe is expected:

<b>RFP submission date</b>	January 28, 2022
<b>Application submission deadline</b>	February 28, 2022
<b>Submission</b>	Application must be elaborated in English language and is to be submitted to HELVETAS Eastern Europe at the email: <a href="mailto:easterneurope@helvetas.org">easterneurope@helvetas.org</a>
<b>Q/A</b>	Questions regarding this RfP can be submitted to the email mentioned above until <b>07 February 2022</b> .
<b>Online session</b>	An online session on programme presentation as well as a live session of Q/A will be organised on <b>February 08, 2022, at 14:00 CET</b> time. The interested organisations are welcomed to send a request to the above-mentioned email until latest <b>February 08, 2022, 13:00 CET</b> and we will send you a ZOOM link.
<b>Evaluation of the applications</b>	Applications will be evaluated by the RECONOMY's procurement committee, and the applicant can expect to receive a decision on their proposal by <b>March 25, 2022</b> . RECONOMY reserves the right to include an exchange or test of capabilities as part of the evaluation if needed to conclude this RfP.