



## Terms of Reference (ToRs)

**Name of the Project:** “EJA: Environmental Justice in Albania”

**Reference number:** IPA III/2023/452-010

**Title:** Development of EJA Online Platform

**Application deadline:** 15.01.2025

### 1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

#### 1.1. Contracting Authority

The Resource Environmental Center in Albania is a non-for-profit legal entity established in the Republic of Albania, pursuant to the Law No. 8788, dated 07/05/2001, "On Non-for-profit Organizations". REC Albania is the legal successor of the Regional Environmental Center's (REC) office in Albania, and has been operating since 1994, when the former REC first began working in the country.

In this 30-year span, REC Albania boasts of a multitude of experiences pertaining to project development and implementation of activities regarding environmental education and services; climate change mitigation and adaptation; biodiversity conservation; environmental strategy and policy development; advocacy, etc. REC Albania's work is supported by numerous donors, including UNDP, US Department of State, European Commission, GIZ, SIDA, WFD, UNWOMEN, etc. The organization boasts of a strong track record of supporting environmental CSOs, green SMEs and enterprises with grants and capacity building. REC Albania is a member of the Climate Action Network (CAN) Europe, a pan-European association of organizations focused on addressing environmental and climate-related challenges, and also a member of REI (Regional Environmental Institute) established by EPLO (European Public Law Organization).

#### 1.2. Background of the Project

The Project “Environmental Justice in Albania, EJA” was launched on 01 January 2024 and has a duration of 30 months, until June 2026, supported by the European Union (EU). The project is implemented by the Resource Environmental Center, REC Albania, in partnership with Blue Link Bulgaria, Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN Albania), and OSCE Presence in Albania. During the overall implementation, the project aims to achieve the following goal: “Promotion of access to environmental justice (EJ) in Albania, by assisting and advocating for quality justice”.

The proposed action within this project will be implemented through a top-down branching structure with three major pillars: (i) Data Collection and Diagnostic Analyses; (ii) Capacity Development; and (iii) Communication, Mobilization, and Outreach. The first pillar focuses on gathering and interpreting data from various sources, including the Directorate of Police, Prosecution, Courts, and media, to be summarized in a “Cap and Gap” Report. The second pillar aims to enhance the enforcement of environmental legislation through tailored training sessions for prosecutors and police officers/media and





CSOs, using in-person training, case studies, and international knowledge exchange with partners like BlueLink and European justice actors. The third pillar emphasizes visibility and communication to ensure the project's reach and impact.

## 2. PROJECT OBJECTIVES, PURPOSE & EXPECTED RESULTS

The overarching objective of the project is to enhance access to environmental justice in Albania by improving legal and judicial capacities, and increasing public participation.

**Outcome 1:** Strengthened and More Effective Media-CSOs Coalition in Bracing Environmental Justice in Albania - focusing on creating an alliance between media organizations and civil society organizations (CSOs) to advocate for environmental justice.

**Outcome 2:** Communities Enabled to Refer Environmental Abuses and Follow Formalized Structures of reporting and Denouncing - aiming to empower local communities by providing them with the knowledge and tools to identify and report environmental violations.

**Outcome 3:** Accurate and Approximated Work for Policing, Prosecuting, and Punishing Environmental Violations in Albania - focusing on improving the efficiency and effectiveness of law enforcement agencies and judicial systems in dealing with environmental crimes.

**Outcome 4:** Built Capacities of the Relevant Law Enforcement and Justice Institutions, as well as Networking with European Action against Environmental Crime - emphasizing capacity building within Albanian law enforcement and judicial institutions.

**Outcome 5:** Strengthened Media, CSOs, and Communities' Role to Counter Environmental Damage at the Edge of Climate Change - focusing on awareness, advocacy for stronger environmental policies, and community-driven initiatives in the climate change context.

## 3. SCOPE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

### 3.1 Platform Development

#### 3.1.1 Core Features

- Develop an open-source platform using a popular programming language
- Implement a responsive design for optimal viewing on various devices
- Ensure the main page achieves grade A in GTmetrix performance testing
- Create a public-facing website with 15-20 pages plus dynamic sections for news and updates
- Develop two searchable databases:
  - a) Independent experts by sub-sector (water, waste, etc.)
  - b) Institutions responsible for inspecting environmental violations
- Develop a stand-alone database for publishing environmental laws and reference cases with the following functionalities:





- a) With the option to publish the full text of the law, or just a reference link to the official publication
- b) Accessible only to users specifically selected by the administrator
- c) With a categorization for national laws and international conventions
- d) With a categorization of laws based on Chapter 27: Environment and Climate Change, of the “Albania Report” in the framework of the EU enlargement
- e) Option to publish decisions by the constitutional court, decisions by the high court, as well as decisions by the European court, to be used as reference environmental cases
- Implement a multi-level user hierarchy with specific access permissions:
  - a) Public (no login required)
  - b) Expert users (access to edit own profile)
  - c) Legal institution users (approved access to expert database)
  - d) Law database users (access to view the environmental law database)
  - e) Editors (content management and user approval)
  - f) Administrators (full system access, with the option to edit permissions for each user type)
- Develop a ticketing system for users to contact administrators/editors

### *3.1.2 User Management*

- Develop a user registration system for legal institution users and law database users with manual approval process, while only allowing registration of expert users and editors manually from the administrator
- Implement secure login and authentication mechanisms
- Create user profile management interfaces for each user type

### *3.1.3 Content Management*

Develop an intuitive and simple to use GUI-based admin panel for content management, including:

- a) Page creation and editing
- b) News and updates posting
- c) User management
- d) Database management for experts and institutions
- e) Implement a specialized interface for managing the environmental law database, allowing administrators and editors to publish fully compiled laws, either as full text or link to the official publication

### *3.1.4 Integration and Data Management*

- Implement integration to fetch data from the REC website (calls for experts, tenders, job postings)
- Develop data import/export functionality for the expert and institution databases
- Implement robust search and filter functions for the databases
- Develop a version control system for the environmental law database to track changes



## 3.2 Technical Requirements

### 3.2.1 Security and Performance

- Implement industry-standard security measures, including data encryption and secure communication protocols
- Optimize database queries and implement caching mechanisms for improved performance
- Ensure compliance with GDPR and relevant data protection regulations
- Ensure anti-spam measures

### 3.2.2 Scalability and Maintainability

- Design the platform architecture to allow for future expansion and feature additions
- Implement modular code structure for easier maintenance and updates
- Provide detailed code documentation and follow best practices for code readability

### 3.2.3 Compatibility and Standards

- Ensure cross-browser compatibility (Chrome, Firefox, Safari, Edge)
- Adhere to W3C web standards and accessibility guidelines (WCAG 2.1)
- Implement SEO best practices for improved visibility

### 3.2.4 Environmental Law Database

- Implement a user-friendly interface for viewing laws
- Develop a robust search and filter functionality specific to the law database
- Ensure proper version control and change tracking
- Implement a system for cross-referencing between related laws and amendments

### 3.2.4 Ticketing system

- Allow signed-in users to open tickets
- Automatically notify administrator through email, including full ticket content
- Allow for ticket to be updated by replying to the ticket email
- Notify user (through email) when the administrator updates the ticket



### 3.3 Documentation and Support

#### 3.3.1 Documentation

- Develop a comprehensive user manual covering all platform features and functionalities
- Provide detailed technical documentation, including system architecture, database schema, and API documentation
- Develop a knowledge base for common issues and troubleshooting

#### 3.3.2 Support

- Provide ongoing technical support for 3 years post-launch
- Offer bug-fixing and security updates for 5 years

## 4. DELIVERABLES

#### 4.1 Software Deliverables

- Fully functional EJA online platform meeting all specified requirements
- Fully functional environmental law database with version control and user access management
- Source code

#### 4.2 Documentation Deliverables

- Comprehensive user manual
- Administrative guide for content management and user administration
- Technical documentation including system architecture and database schema
- Security documentation outlining implemented measures and best practices

#### 4.3 Training and Support

- Training materials for REC Albania staff
- Support plan detailing procedures for ongoing assistance and bug fixes





## 5. ASSIGNMENT TIMELINE

- Expected project commencement: January 20, 2025

The developer should provide a detailed project plan within their proposal, breaking down major milestones into smaller, actionable tasks. This plan should include design phases, development sprints, testing periods, and time for revisions based on feedback. Regular progress updates and check-ins with REC Albania should be scheduled throughout the project duration to ensure alignment with project goals and timely delivery of all required features and functionalities.

## 6. ELIGIBILITY

REC Albania is committed to equal opportunity and non-discrimination in the tender process. This tender is open to a wide range of applicants, including freelancers registered with the Tax office, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), and large businesses. All applicants will be evaluated solely on the merit of their proposals and their ability to meet the project requirements, regardless of their size, legal form, or country of origin (within eligible countries as per EU regulations). We encourage applications from diverse entities, including those owned by underrepresented groups. All applicants must comply with applicable legal and fiscal regulations and demonstrate their capacity to fulfill the contract requirements.

## 7. QUALIFICATIONS AND EXPERIENCE

The ideal developer or development team should possess:

- Minimum 5 years of experience in web application development
- Strong portfolio demonstrating experience with similar platforms or content management systems
- Experience with database design and optimization (MySQL, PostgreSQL, or similar)
- Familiarity with environmental or non-profit sector projects (preferred)
- Excellent problem-solving skills and attention to detail
- Strong communication skills in Albanian





## 8. EVALUATION CRITERIA

The evaluation will be carried out in accordance with the Contract Procedures for European Union External Action.

**Note: The evaluation committee reserves the right to request clarifications or additional information from tenderers regarding their technical or financial offers during the evaluation process.**

## 9. SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

Interested developers should submit a proposal package including:

### *9.1 Technical Proposal*

- Detailed description of the proposed solution and methodology
- Project timeline with key milestones

### *9.2 Financial Proposal*

- Detailed budget breakdown by project phase and deliverable
- Pricing for ongoing support and maintenance

### *9.3 Company Profile and Experience*

- Overview of the company/team
- Portfolio of relevant projects

### *9.4 Legal and Financial Documents*

- Proof of legal registration
- Statement confirming not being in bankruptcy proceedings

### *9.5 Declaration on Honor (Annex A.1)*

## 10. CONTRACTUAL TERMS

- The contract will be awarded for the duration of the platform development plus 3 years of support
- Payments will be made after the acceptance of deliverables
- Intellectual property rights for the developed platform will be transferred to REC Albania upon completion





## 11. SUBMISSION PROCESS

Complete proposal packages must be submitted electronically to [projects@recshqiperi.org](mailto:projects@recshqiperi.org) and [manager@recshqiperi.org](mailto:manager@recshqiperi.org) with the subject line "Proposal: EJA Online Platform Development" by COB January 15<sup>th</sup>, Central European Time.

## 12. CONTACT INFORMATION

All questions or requests for clarification must be submitted in writing to REC Albania by December 29<sup>th</sup>, 2024:

### **The Resource Environmental Center, Albania (REC Albania)**

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## 13. DISCLAIMER

REC Albania reserves the right to accept or reject any proposal and to annul the selection process at any time, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected applicants. REC Albania will not be responsible for any costs incurred by applicants in preparing and submitting proposals.

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