**WINROCK INTERNATIONAL**

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS (RFA)**

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| **Project Name:** | Safe Migration in Central Asia |
| **Request for Application (RFA) No:** | 22-01-KG |
| **Date RFA Issued:** | February 01, 2022 |
| **Date of online meeting with interested applicants:** | February 11, 2022 (10:00-12:00 AM) |
| **Due Date and Time for Questions:** | February 15, 2022  |
| **Due Date and Time for Response to Questions:** | February 21, 2022 |
| **RFA Closing Date and Time:** | February 28, 2022 |
| **Estimated Award Date:** | May, 2022 |

# SECTION 1: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

* 1. **PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND**

Winrock International has 25 years of global experience implementing counter-trafficking-in-persons, child labor, women’s empowerment and civic engagement programs. Since 1992, Winrock’s programs in Central Asia promoted agricultural development, helped improve natural resource management, and addressed the issues of gender-based violence and human trafficking.

The Safe Migration in Central Asia (SMICA) is a five-year project implemented by Winrock International in Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. SMICA uses evidence-based practices and cross-border connections to strengthen the mutual accountability and effectiveness of governments, NGOs, and the private sector to prevent trafficking-in-persons (TIP), protect survivors, and promote safe migration. Building on previous USAID programs in the region, SMICA raises awareness and promotes behavior changes among migrants to safeguard their rights, while connecting them to support and services and highlighting their contributions to host communities. The project also promotes policy reform and government capacity strengthening to assist at-risk groups and trafficking survivors.

SMICA works with local and international organizations, governments, and civil society to connect country approaches with regional strategies strengthening bilateral and multi-country efforts to promote rights-based migration and counter TIP; reduce the vulnerability of at-risk populations to all forms of trafficking-in-persons; and expand and improve identification and assistance to trafficked persons.

The four main objectives of SMICA include:

1. Strengthened bilateral and multi-country actions to promote rights-based migration and counter trafficking in persons
2. Reduced vulnerability of at-risk populations to all forms of trafficking-in-persons
3. Expanded and improved identification and assistance to trafficked persons
4. Increased prosecution of TIP cases

SMICA’s approach to combating TIP is through empowering survivors, working with local groups, community leaders, and governments to improve data and policies, promoting social norms that decrease trafficking risks and establishing systems and services that protect at-risk groups. The project also focuses on cross-cutting themes that ensure sustainability through collaborative implementation with governments, civil society, and the private sector and their ownership of activities, focus on promoting gender equality and engaging youth. Our approach will adapt to changing environments and evolving priorities, leverage other programs to achieve the greatest impact, and use robust monitoring, evaluation, and learning processes and tools to continuously gauge progress and results.

**Context**

Over the past 20 years, labor migration has become one of the important economic and social factors in the Kyrgyz Republic. According to the Kyrgyz State Migration Service (SMS) 2020 data, over 738,000 Kyrgyz citizens were living and working abroad. According to unofficial estimates, this number exceeded one million. The main destination countries for Kyrgyz migrants are Russia, Kazakhstan, Turkey, the UAE, the United States and the countries of Eastern Europe.

Labor remittances from abroad to the Kyrgyz Republic are some of the highest in the world and constitute a significant portion of the country’s GDP making it one of the top three remittance dependent countries in the world. While remittances are beneficial to families and the local economy, the push factors that lead to migration, including unemployment and poverty, lead to increased vulnerability to forced labor and sexual exploitation.

According to various research, there is a lack of access to clear, credible, and reliable information regarding the rights of migrant workers and risks of human trafficking, which may lead to their greater vulnerability. Many migrants decide to look for a job abroad based on information they receive from relatives and friends. Most of them lack language skills and necessary information about labor laws, health insurance, education for their children, or access to justice in the countries of transit and destination.

This gap needs to be addressed by delivering information on safe and legitimate migration through effective channels, such as local champions, famous influencers and bloggers, social media, and other available sources popular among the target audience. Also, targeted awareness-raising activities for different at-risk groups and strategic campaigns with proven communication methods that reach the most vulnerable and at-risk populations such as orphans and youth – are necessary to ensure the provision of complete information on safe migration.

The 2021 US DOS TIP report upgraded the Kyrgyz Republic to Tier 2 as the government demonstrated overall increasing efforts in countering TIP compared to the previous reporting period and considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on its anti-trafficking capacity.

The Kyrgyz Republic adopted the National Referral Mechanism (NRM), becoming the first country to do so in Central Asia. The NRM evidences the government’s commitment to address TIP and provides an excellent opportunity to engage with the government, the private sector, and civil society organizations (CSOs) to build a coordinated and effective system of victim identification and referral for quality assistance. However, this requires state institutions to bring internal regulations in line with NRM requirements and to strengthen victim identification and referral. SMICA, in partnership with UNODC, supported the development of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for all NRM actors. SMICA experts worked on SOPs for CSOs, the Ombudsman’s Office, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Labor and Social Development, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, while UNODC experts focused on SOPs for law enforcement agencies.

To date, the working group under MoI has developed SOPs for 12 service providers defined in the Government Decree on NRM of September 19, 2019, as well as SOPs for the Ombudsman Office, the Labor Inspectorate and the Social Department of the MHSD. Other state institutions are in the process of adopting their SOPs. Currently, there is a need to strengthen the knowledge on SOPs of all NRM actors. In particular, regional level state agencies have very limited knowledge of victim identification and referral. SMICA intends to help build the capacity of all NRM actors to enable them to effectively identify victims, assess their needs and refer them to appropriate services applying the gender-sensitive and victim-centered approaches.

The Kyrgyz Government was going through an extensive restructuring process in 2021, with the change of the Cabinet in February and October 2021. The State Migration Service (SMS) was abolished in February 2021 and its functions on coordinating migration were transferred to the newly established Department for External Migration under MFA. CTIP coordination was transferred to the newly established Ministry of Health and Social Development. However, the formal status of the CTIP coordinating body was unclear until the new Ministry of Labor, Social Security and Migration (MLSSM), which was established in October 2021, became responsible for coordination of CTIP activities. Such a situation necessitated the adoption of new regulations on migration and CTIP, as well as the update of the existing regulations in accordance with new relevant roles of responsible agencies. It is important to ensure that new regulations are in line not only with national legislation but also international standards, to promote safe migration and counter TIP.

In particular, considering ongoing developments, changing orders and requirements related to the employment of Kyrgyz citizens broad - it is important to adopt new regulations to improve the pertinent regulatory framework, to ensure: safe and legitimate channels of migration, protection of migrants and their families, prevention of TIP and irregular migration, creation of sustained services for migrants and at-risk population.

* 1. **GRANT OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF WORK**

Under this RFA, SMICA in the Kyrgyz Republic is seeking interested applicants that can support one or more of the objectives outlined below.

**Objective 1**

Raise awareness of at-risk populations on safe migration, with a focus on specific target audiences (youth, women, migrants’ children, rural residents, orphans etc.). Proven modern and innovative channels of communications will help develop behavior change and reduce the number of people exposed to illegal labor migration and human trafficking.

**Expected results for Objective 1:**

* At-risk populations are better informed about safe migration channels and existing risks of falling victim to human trafficking.
* Based on increased knowledge, at-risk populations change their behavior to protect themselves from the dangers of unsafe migration and TIP.

**Objective 2**

Provide capacity building of civilian state institutions, including central and regional offices and civil society organizations which are involved in implementing the National Referral Mechanism (in accordance with Decree of the Government of the Kyrgyz Republic #493 dated September 19, 2019), on the newly adopted SOPs and guidelines on victim identification and referrals. Interactive techniques and cost-effective methods will be used in such activities.

*Note: Civilian state institutions include: the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Labor and Social Security and Migration, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Ombudsman’s Office, local state administrations.*

**Expected results for Objective 2:**

* Increased capacity of NRM actors: the state institutions and CSOs, to properly identify, provide services and refer victims of trafficking to authorized service providers.

**Objective 3**

Advocate for and assist in the improvement of a regulatory framework and policies to promote safe migration and counter trafficking in persons, as well as in the development of sustained services for migrants and at-risk population.

**Expected results for Objective 3**

* Regulatory framework and policies forpromoting legal and safe migration and counter trafficking in persons, as well as for sustained services for migrants, are introduced.

# SECTION 2: AWARD INFORMATION

**2.1 ESTIMATED AMOUNT OF AWARD**

The total amount awarded will depend on the activities proposed, number of districts covered, the proposed timeframe and the estimated cost for the implementation of the grant. Applicants are encouraged to propose realistic budgets based on actual costs of salaries, fringe and/or benefit structure, travel, procurement, and other operating expenses. A budget template is included as Annex B to be used for this purpose. The final amount awarded per objective will depend on the agreed activities but will not exceed $50,000 USD.

**2.2 ANTICIPATED START DATE AND DURATION OF GRANTS**

Contingent on USAID approval, the anticipated period of performance for subgrants is up to 24 months. The performance period may be less than 24 months but should not exceed it.

**2.3 TYPE OF AWARDS TO BE ISSUED**

Winrock will determine the appropriate award mechanism, in consultation with the applicant during the negotiation process. The type of award will be based on the pre-award assessment of the applicant, the nature of the award activity, and the estimated total cost of the award.

# SECTION 3: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. **ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

This solicitation is open to non-profit non-US organizations. To be minimally eligible for funding, applicants must comply with the following conditions:

* Be legally registered or otherwise authorized to operate in the Kyrgyz Republic.
* Agree to be subject to a pre-award capacity assessment carried out by the Winrock’s staff to determine that the applicant has sound financial and administrative management, and necessary policies and procedures in place.
* Be able to demonstrate successful past performance in safe migration and TIP program development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation-preferably at the sub-national level. Past performance should be in at least one of the following areas: awareness raising; promoting gender equality; building the capacity of the government or local stakeholders, including training on program design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
* Demonstrate the capacity and willingness to enter a contractual arrangement with Winrock International to work together towards fulfilling the objectives of the

SMICA project.

# SECTION 4: INSTRUCTION TO APPLICANTS AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

**4.1 TECHNICAL APPLICATION**

Applicants will develop their applications based on their understanding of the project’s needs, their prior institutional experience, and their proposed technical approach which should be realistic and demonstrate the ability to achieve impact. In all cases, applicants shall clearly explain the rationale for the proposed activities.

Submissions must clearly state the objectives and the expected results of the activity within the life of the funding period and define an implementation plan with a proposed time frame and budget. Ongoing monitoring and reporting of the funded activities will be the responsibility of the applicant. An Application Form template is provided as Annex A to this RFA.

**4.2 COST APPLICATION**

Cost applications shall be submitted separately from the technical application. Applicants shall submit a summary and detailed budget in Microsoft Excel with budget notes identifying how the applicant would allocate any funds received during the term of the potential agreement or contract. The budget narrative should explain and justify the costs proposed in the budget. The narrative should help the reviewer understand why the proposed costs are necessary and how they will be used to support the activity for which it will be incurred. The budget narrative should demonstrate a relationship between the proposed activities and the budget. Just as the technical application should reflect the applicant’s understanding of the objectives and the proposed approach to achieve those objectives, the budget and the accompanying narrative should be realistic and show a similar understanding of the financial requirements of the proposed activities.

**4.3 SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

All questions and other communications regarding this RFA should be submitted in writing to SMICAGrants@winrock.org.Written responses to questions will be made available to all applicants.

Applications must be submitted in English, Kyrgyz or Russian using Times New Roman, font size 11, single-spaced.

Applications (including a technical description, estimated budget and supporting documentation) must be submitted electronically only via email to SMICAGrants@winrock.org and should reference (RFA 22-01-KG). The applicants will receive confirmation upon successful submission of the application.

Applications must be submitted no later than the time and date indicated on the cover page. Receipt time for electronic submissions is when the application is received by the Winrock’s Internet Server. Hand delivery and hardcopy paper submissions of the application will not be accepted. Please do not send files in ZIP format.

A complete application, at a minimum, will include the following:

* A copy of the applicant’s valid legal registration
* A completed and signed technical application (attached) as well as e-version of this document in Word format
* CVs for project personnel
* A completed and signed budget application (attached) as well as e-version of this document in Excel format
* Budget supporting documents, including the budget narrative.

Applicants may provide any budget supporting documents to prove the cost and price reasonableness and support the application.

Incomplete or late applications will be marked as such and will be ineligible for review or award; however, Winrock reserves the right to accept and include incomplete or late applications in the review and award process when it is considered within the best interest of Winrock to do so. Applications that are submitted late or incomplete run the risk of **not** being considered for review.

Applications may be withdrawn by written notice via email received at any time before an award is made. Applications may be withdrawn in person by an organization or its authorized representative if the representative’s identity is made known and the representative signs a receipt for the application before an award is made.

# SECTION 5: APPLICATION EVALUATION AND REVIEW PROCESS

**5.1 MERIT REVIEW**

The criteria presented below have been tailored to the requirements of this RFA. A total of 100 points are possible for all components of the application. The relative importance of each criterion is indicated by approximate weight by points.

In evaluating the applications, Winrock will examine an overall merit and feasibility, as well as specific criteria relevant to each component as elaborated below. Up to 5 awards will be made to the overall highest scores to the responsible applicant(s). Applicants should note that these criteria: (1) serve as the standard against which all applications will be evaluated, and (2) serve to identify the significant matters which applicants should address in their applications.

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| **Merit Review Criteria** | **Points** |
| 1. **Technical Approach**

The technical approach incorporates multiple strategic methodologies (citizen engagement, use of media, interaction with the government, policy change, etc.). Objectives are specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timebound (i.e. SMART). The proposed activities are reasonable, meet the stated objectives, and sustainable.  | 50  |
| 1. **Organizational Capacity**

Previous or on-going experience implementing similar activities and staff capacity. | 35 |
| 1. **Budgeting**

The proposed budget is complete and clear, has sufficient details, and corresponds to project activities, amounts are reasonable and appropriate, budget notes clearly justify the needs for costs. | 15 |
| **Overall Rating (out of 100 points)** | 100 |

**5.2 REVIEW PROCESS**

Grant applications will be reviewed and evaluated by an evaluation panel using the merit review criteria indicated above.

It is anticipated that awards will be made within 8-10 weeks after the submission deadline, as stated on the cover page of this RFA. Final negotiations and award will be managed by Winrock.

All grants are subject to USAID’s approval.

# SECTION 6: OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS

**6.1 DISCLAIMERS**

* The issuance of this solicitation does not commit Winrock to make an award to any prospective grantee responding to this solicitation. Prospective grantees will not be reimbursed for costs incurred in the preparation and submission of an application. Winrock reserves the right to reject any and all applications, or to make an award without further discussion or negotiation.
* All costs funded under the grant must be allowable, allocable and reasonable.

**6.2 CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

Applicants must provide disclosure of any past, present or future relationships with any parties associated with the issuance, review or management of this RFA and the anticipated grant. Failure to provide full and open disclosure may result in Winrock having to re-evaluate the selection of a potential applicant.

**6.3 OTHER CONDITIONS**

* Applicants must agree and be willing to sign and submit required certifications before a grant is issued.
* For those selected for a grant award, Winrock will conduct a pre-award risk assessment.
* The issuance of grant agreements will be subject to applicable prior written approval by Winrock’s funder, as needed.
* Applicants may only submit one application per a prime organization under this RFA.
* Individuals are not eligible to receive funding under this solicitation.
* Applications must remain valid for at least 180 days.
* Application forms should be signed by an authorized agent of the applicant’s organization.
* The applicants that submit applications that meet or exceed the evaluation criteria will be notified of next steps in the application process.

Additionally, the following items cannot be purchased under the potential resultant grants:

* Any purchases or activities deemed unnecessary to accomplish grant purposes as determined by Winrock, including any grantee headquarters expenses that are not directly linked to the implementation of the proposed activities.
* Private ceremonies, parties, celebrations or "representation" expenses.
* Previous obligations and/or bad debts.
* Expenses related to overtly religious purposes.
* Expenses intended to influence the outcome of elections or other political processes.
* Expenses related to individual and/or group study tours/travels abroad.
* Fines and/or penalties.
* Creation of endowments.
* Alcoholic beverages.
* Real property (land, including land improvements, and structures thereto).

The following items are also ineligible or restricted under USAID-funded grants:

* Prohibited goods under the USAID eligibility rules, including military equipment, surveillance equipment, commodities and services for support of police or other law enforcement activities, abortion equipment and services, luxury goods, and gambling equipment, and weather modification equipment.
* Restricted goods under the USAID eligibility rules, such as agricultural commodities, motor vehicles, including motorcycles, pharmaceuticals, pesticides, used equipment, contraceptive products, USG-owned excess property or fertilizers.
* Goods and services whose source and nationality are other than Geographic Code 937 and 110.
* Construction or infrastructure activities of any kind.

# SECTION 7: ANNEXES

* Annex A – Application Form
* Annex B – Detail Budget Template