**WINROCK INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT**

**(WINROCK)**

**REQUEST FOR APPLICATION (RFA)**

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| **Project Name:** | Safe Migration in Central Asia |
| **Request for Application (RFA) No:** | 22-01-KZ |
| **Date RFA Issued:** | January 28, 2022 |
| **Due Date and Time for Questions:** | February 7, 2022 |
| **Due Date and Time for Response to Questions:** | February 11, 2022 |
| **RFA Closing Date and Time:** | February 28, 2022 |
| **Estimated Award Date:** | April 30, 2022 |

# SECTION 1: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

* 1. **PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND**

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 three 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

SMICA’s approach to combating TIP is through empowering survivors, working with local groups, community leaders, and governments to improve data and policies, influencing social norms that increase trafficking risks, and establishing systems and services that protect at-risk groups. The project will also focus on cross-cutting themes that ensure sustainability through collaborative implementation with government, 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.

SMICA implements innovative approaches for addressing migration and TIP through private sector engagement working with critical sectors such as travel and transportation, but also engaging with employment agencies and others who can promote successful practices to combat TIP. This unique type of programming will promote sustainability and enhance safe migration channels.

The recent development of the Covid-19 situation has created new challenges and risks for migrants which has only increased the need for assistance and access to services. These needs are both immediate and longer-term and SMICA plans to respond with support that protects the rights of vulnerable migrants, raises awareness of TIP risks and the potential for exploitation, and provides alternative employment skills and job referrals for migrants who have lost their livelihood.

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, improved natural resource management, and addressed issues of gender-based violence and human trafficking. Winrock’s approach to CTIP empowers survivors; works with local groups, community leaders, governments, and the private sector to improve data and policies, combat social norms that increase trafficking risks, and establish systems and services that protect at-risk groups and assist survivors.

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

Activities should support reducing vulnerability of at-risk populations and migrants to all forms of trafficking in persons (TIP), enhancing identification and referral of trafficked persons, providing direct and humanitarian assistance and advice on employment opportunities to vulnerable migrants and foreign trafficking victims.

**Priority regions of Kazakhstan:**  Non-prioritized, the application can include activities in the following regions of Kazakhstan: city of Nur-Sultan and Akmola oblast, North Kazakhstan, Pavlodar, Karaganda, East Kazakhstan, West Kazakhstan, Atyrau, Zhambyl and Kyzylorda oblasts. One NGO can submit only one application, that will cover one or more regions of Kazakhstan, however, the number of regions covered do not affect evaluation process.

Under this RFA, the SMICA project in Kazakhstan is seeking interested applicants who can support the following objectives:

**Objective 1**

Reducing vulnerability of at-risk populations and migrants, including youth and women, to all forms of trafficking in persons (TIP) through timely provision of accurate information on emerging risks of TIP (including recruitment through Internet), fraudulent acts towards migrants, safe migration opportunities, and COVID-19 related restrictions and protection measures.

**Programmatic activities for Objective 1:**

1. Conduct awareness raising campaigns and consultations about protection measures against all forms of exploitation, legal rights of migrants, safe migration opportunities, free state employment, medical and educational services, and COVID-19 restrictions for at-risk populations and migrants. These activities can take place in collaboration with local executive bodies and using ICT communication channels (social media, messengers, YouTube, and others), diaspora groups, at public places, workplaces and residence areas of migrants, state border-cross points, airports, train and bus stations and others.
2. Perform consultations for local at-risk businesses such as hotels, cafes, transportation companies, farmers, bazaars etc., in order to highlight their role in CTIP, increase their knowledge on ethical recruitment, TIP signs, and how to identify and where to report suspected cases.
3. Provide community mentoring involving volunteers, religious organizations, civil society within districts and villages of at least one oblast to reach out to more at-risk populations.
4. Promote production of high-quality and ethical media content, aimed at increasing public awareness about the risks of TIP, safe migration opportunities, rights and obligations of labor migrants, through training journalists and bloggers.
5. Create opportunities for survivors to share their lessons learned and become champions for increasing awareness on TIP risks and support services, and therefore, promote establishment of survivors’ network.

**Expected results for Objective 1**

* Based on their knowledge, at-risk persons are able to protect themselves from the dangers of unsafe migration and TIP.
* Businesses are better informed about their role in CTIP and undertake measures to solve migration and TIP issues.
* Communities are reached more broadly through mentoring volunteers, religious organizations, civil society, and others.
* Survivors are empowered to share their stories and build their network.

**Objective 2.**

Enhancement of identification and referral of trafficked persons. Strengthening the knowledge of local executive bodies on referral mechanisms. Introduction of a victim-centered approach to state lawyers/advocates who provide free legal assistance to trafficking victims and vulnerable migrants.

**Proposed activities for Objective 2**

1. Conduct meetings with local executive bodies to promote victim identification and referral mechanism on a regular basis.
2. Facilitate learning and exchange workshops. The learning and exchange workshops should be directed to improve coordination between service-providers and referral mechanism, support implementation of action plans of local CTIP Commissions, promote migrant friendly administrative procedures, and promote the need to collect comprehensive data and evidence around CTIP.
3. Introduce victim-centered approach for state lawyers/advocates in providing legal assistance to trafficking victims.

**Expected results for Objective 2**

* Improved identification, referral and support to trafficked persons, vulnerable migrants and others.
* State lawyers have an understanding how to employ a victim-centered approach in their work with TIP survivors.

**Objective 3**

Reducing vulnerability of youth to all forms of trafficking in persons (TIP) to protect themselves and stay safe. Strengthening the knowledge of vulnerable youth about CTIP and safe migration.

**Proposed activities for Objective 3:**

1. Engage with bloggers, community leaders, social media leaders and influencers in reaching out to youth to increase their awareness on TIP and safe migration.
2. Implement youth-oriented sustainable TIP and safe migration awareness raising and training activities, including peer-to-peer learning models, regular TIP-sessions and safe migration courses in schools, colleges, volunteer organizations, orphanages and other activities.

**Expected results for Objective 3**

* Youth are better informed about the risks related to TIP.
* Youth leaders are actively engaged in promoting safe migration

**Objective 4**

Provision of assistance to vulnerable migrants and foreign trafficking victims and ensure their referral to state and non-state organizations on employment opportunities.

**Proposed activities for Objective 4:**

1. Provide psychological and legal advice to trafficking victims and vulnerable migrants, represent their interests at government bodies and assist in obtaining social services.
2. Provide humanitarian support to TIP victims, as well as migrants and their families who are in difficult life situations.
3. Advise survivors and vulnerable migrants on employment opportunities and refer them to state and non-state organizations that can provide such consultations. Also, increase their access to vocational training, income generation, and employment opportunities through private sector partnership and entrepreneurship development.
4. Seek opportunities for migrant women to obtain skills and knowledge to become economically empowered.

**Expected results for Objective 4**

* Vulnerable migrants and foreign trafficking victims in need receive humanitarian assistance.
* Migrants and trafficking survivors are better informed about income generation opportunities and vocational trainings.
* Migrant women are guided on entrepreneurship opportunities and demonstrate positive results

# SECTION 2: AWARD INFORMATION

* 1. **ESTIMATED AMOUNT OF AWARD**

The total amount awarded will depend on the activities proposed, number of districts covered, time frame proposed and estimated actual cost of 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. Grant period and amount per application can be one of the following:

* For the period from 12 months to 24 months, between 25,000 and 40,000 USD;
* For the period from 18 to 24 months, between 40,000 and 60,000 USD.

The final amount awarded per application will depend on agreed partner activities and capacity of applicant organization. Upon decision of the Winrock evaluation panel, Winrock can contact applicant organizations with a request to reduce or enhance suggested activities and budget.

* 1. **ANTICIPATED START DATE AND DURATION OF GRANTS**

Contingent on USAID approval, the anticipated start date of performance for these subgrants is April 30, 2022.

**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, nature of the award activity, and estimated total cost of the award.

# SECTION 3: ELIGIBILITY INFORMATION

1. **ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

This solicitation is open to all 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 conduct business in the applicant’s country or countries of operation.
* Agree to be subject to a pre-award capacity assessment carried out by Winrock staff to determine that the applicant has sound management in the form of financial, administrative, and technical policies and procedures.
* Be able to demonstrate successful past performance in TIP program development, implementation, and monitoring and evaluation-preferably at sub-national level. Past performance should be in at least one of the following areas: raising awareness of TIP; promoting gender equity; building the capacity of government or local stakeholders, including training on program design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.
* Demonstrate capacity and be willing to enter a contractual arrangement with Winrock International to work together towards fulfilling the objectives of the SMICA project.
* Provide documentation of registration with the Government to legally operate in country

# SECTION 4: INSTRUCTION TO APPLICANTS AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

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 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. On-going monitoring and reporting of the funded activities will be the responsibility of the applicant including entering data on an ongoing basis to the SMICA Management Information System (MIS). An Application Form template is provided as an attachment to this RFA.

1. **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 need for the costs proposed in the budget. The narrative should help the reviewer understand why an item of cost is necessary and how it will be used to support the activity for which it will be incurred. The budget narrative should demonstrate the 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.

Applicants should include into the project budget bank transaction fees and other service fees, required for utilization of international grant, in line with national legislation. Production of a project roll-up or banner for project branding purposes should also be included into the budget.

1. **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 or Russian using Times New Roman, font size 11, single-spaced. The page limit does not include Annexes and CVs of proposed staff included as part of the application.

Applications (including a technical description, estimated budget and supporting documentation) must be submitted electronically via email to SMICAGrants@winrock.org and should reference **(22-01-Kazakhstan)**. Applications must be submitted no later than the time and date indicated on the cover page. Your email with attachments should not exceed 20 MB limit.

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 award is made.

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

* A copy of the applicant’s valid legal registration.
* A completed and signed technical application.
* CVs for project personnel (expected to be involved in the suggested project).
* A completed and signed budget application.

Receipt time for electronic submissions is when the application is received by Winrock’s Internet Server. Hand delivery and hardcopy paper submissions of the application will not be accepted after the stated time on the cover page. Please do not send files in ZIP format.

# SECTION 5: APPLICATION EVALUATION AND REVIEW PROCESS

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 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: relevance of the action**
 | **Total: 30 points**   |
| 1. How relevant is the proposal to the objectives and priorities of current Request for Applications?
 | 10  |
| 1. How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (final beneficiaries, target groups)? Have their needs been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately?
 | 10  |
| 1. Does the proposal contain specific added-value elements, for example, innovative approaches, engagement with private sector, usage of ICT tools, engagement of bloggers?
 | 10  |
| 1. **Technical Approach: design of the action**
 | **Total: 30 points**  |
| 1. How coherent is the overall design of the action? In particular, does it reflect the analysis of the problems involved, take into account external factors and relevant stakeholders?
 | 10  |
| 1. Is the action feasible and consistent in relation to the objectives and expected results? Are the objectives specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and timebound (i.e. SMART)?
 | 10  |
| 1. Does the approach incorporate multiple strategic methodologies (citizen engagement, use of media, interaction with government, etc.)?
 | 10  |
| 1. **Organizational Capacity**
 | **Total: 20 points**   |
| 1. Does the applicant have previous or on-going experience in implementing similar activities?
 | 10  |
| 1. What results have been achieved in previous activities of the applicant, what were the quantitative, qualitative and impact-level results?
 | 5  |
| 1. Is the staff capacity of the applicant appropriate for implementation of the suggested activities?
 | 5  |
| 1. **Budgeting**
 | **Total: 20 points**  |
| 1. Is the budget complete and clear, has sufficient details, and corresponds to project activities, amounts are reasonable and appropriate, budget notes clearly justify the needs for costs.
 | 20  |
| **Overall Rating**  | **100**  |

1. **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 approval.

# SECTION 6: OTHER TERMS AND CONDITIONS

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.
1. **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 anticipated grant. Failure to provide full and open disclosure may result in Winrock having to re-evaluate selection of a potential applicant.

1. **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.
* Issuance of grant agreements will be subject to applicable prior written approval by Winrock funder, as needed.
* Applicants may only submit one application per 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.
* 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
* 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 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 USAID eligibility rules, such as agricultural commodities, motor vehicles, including motorcycles, pharmaceuticals, pesticides, used equipment, contraceptive products, USG-owned excess property or fertilizer
* 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