

**WINROCK INTERNATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
(WINROCK)**

REQUEST FOR APPLICATION (RFA)

Project Name:	Safe Migration in Central Asia
Request for Application (RFA) No:	24-01-TKM
Date RFA Issued:	October 25, 2024
Due Date and Time for Questions:	November 5, 2024
Pre-application Conference: Time TBD	November 7, 2024
Due Date and Time for Response to Questions:	November 11, 2024
RFA Closing Date and Time:	November 15, 2024, 11:59pm (Almaty time)
Estimated Award Date:	December 5, 2024

SECTION 1: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1.1 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The Safe Migration in Central Asia (SMICA) is a seven-year project implemented by Winrock International in Kazakhstan, the Kyrgyz Republic, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. The overarching goal of SMICA is to strengthen the mutual accountability of all stakeholders, including governments, non-government organizations (NGOs), and the private sector to become more self-reliant in efforts to prevent trafficking in persons, protect survivors of human trafficking, and promote safe migration. With support for governmental, nongovernmental, and business stakeholders, the project addresses both push and pull factors for Trafficking in Persons (TIP) and protection for vulnerable migrants, recognizing that these factors and the political and economic climate of each country are unique.

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. Vulnerability of at-risk populations to all forms of TIP reduced
3. Identification and assistance to trafficked persons expanded and improved

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 also focuses on cross-cutting themes that ensure sustainability through collaborative implementation with government, civil society, and the private sector and their ownership of activities, and focuses 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.

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, combats social norms that increase trafficking risks, and establishes systems and services that protect at-risk groups and assist survivors.

1.2 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 Turkmenistan:

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

Objective 1. Increased awareness of vulnerable populations about the risks of TIP through outreach activities.

Illustrative activities for Objective 1:

1. Conduct regular awareness raising outreach events among the risk groups, including engagement of private sector, at the significant dates (WDATEIP, International GBV prevention month, other) to support Counter-Trafficking in Persons (CTIP) efforts, revise available information materials.

in Ashgabat, Mary, Ahal and Lebap, on TIP risks and National Referral Mechanism.

Expected results for Objective 1

- Number of at-risk individuals, trafficked persons, or existing migrants reached through targeted public awareness, outreach materials, or training related to safe and responsible migration.
- Number of engaged private sector organizations who take steps to address safe migration and/or TIP.

Objective 2. Reduced risk of TIP through strengthening government supported services to vulnerable populations

Illustrative activities for Objective 2

1. With the aim to reduce the vulnerability of the risk groups such as unemployed young men and women, returned migrants and persons with disabilities, support the Social Service Support Centers to identify the vulnerable groups, and provide them skills training in high-demand areas like sewing, baking, barbering, welding, and beekeeping in Ahal, Mary and Lebap regions.
2. Partner with state agencies to support organization of mini-job fairs, inviting private employers and recruitment agencies to promote employment in the demanded sectors of the economy and provide jobs to trained risk-groups in the framework of the grant.
2. Conduct training on the implementation of Standard Operating Procedures for trauma-informed care for relevant state servants, such as family doctors, social workers, consular officers, and other frontline officers, as well as on identification, referral and provision of services to victims of trafficking

Expected results for Objective 2

- Number of stakeholders who improve safe employment and labor migration processes and/or strengthen repatriation and reintegration procedures for trafficked persons.
- Vulnerability of risk groups to TIP reduced via gaining new skills and employment opportunities allowing income generation for sustaining life in country.
- Enhanced and improved support services for the survivors.
- Increased number of service providers that receive training, technical assistance, or capacity building in victim-centered and trauma-informed services.

Objective 3. Improved and diverse support for vulnerable migrants and trafficking survivors

Illustrative activities for Objective 3

1. Deliver critical services to vulnerable migrants and trafficking survivors, such as shelter support, rehabilitative services, and psycho-social assistance.

2. Provide CTIP-specific hotline services.
3. Provide skills development training, like sewing, bakery, IT skills, business skills, for vulnerable groups like returned and unemployed migrants, victims of trafficking, persons with disabilities, victims of domestic violence who were pushed to migration due to these factors.
4. Conduct regular training sessions on CTIP and policy developments to service providers and NGO partners and risk groups, involving survivor leaders.

Expected results for Objective 3

- Increased number of victims receiving services (medical, repatriation, legal, transportation, etc.)
- Increased number of trafficked persons identified through formal and informal mechanisms.
- Increased number of at-risk individuals, trafficked persons, or existing migrants reached through targeted public awareness, outreach materials, or training related to safe and responsible migration.

SECTION 2: AWARD INFORMATION

2.1 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 18 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.

2.2 ANTICIPATED START DATE AND DURATION OF GRANTS

Contingent on USAID approval, the anticipated start date of performance for these subgrants is December 5, 2024.

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

3.1 ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS

This solicitation is open to all non-US organizations registered in Turkmenistan. To be 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.
- Provide a Unique Entity ID (UEI) at the time of the award. If the applicant already has a UEI number, it should be included in their application. Otherwise, applicants will be expected to get a UEI number before an award is issued. UEI numbers can be obtained online at <https://sam.gov/content/duns-uei>. Please note that this only applies when the prime funder is a US Government (USG) entity.

SECTION 4: INSTRUCTION TO APPLICANTS AND SUBMISSION INFORMATION

4.1. PRE-APPLICATION CONFERENCE

A pre-application conference will be held as detailed below. All applicants are encouraged to attend.

Date:	November 7, 2024, Time TBD
Location:	Online (MS Teams platform) Link: TBD
Confirmation:	An e-mail confirming attendance must be sent to SMICAGrants@winrock.org
Language Conference to be Held In:	Russian

A pre-application conference will not be held.

4.2. 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.

4.3. 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 achieving 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 in 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 in the budget.

4.4. 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 **(RFA #2024-01-TKM)**. 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 the 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 RAR format.

SECTION 5: APPLICATION EVALUATION AND REVIEW PROCESS

5.1. MERIT REVIEW

The criteria presented below have been tailored to meet 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.

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 the current Request for Applications?	15
2. How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (final beneficiaries, target groups)? Have their needs	10

been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately?	
3. Does the proposal contain specific added-value elements, for example, innovative approaches, engagement with private sector, usage of ICT tools, engagement of bloggers?	5
2. 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
2. 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
3. Does the approach incorporate multiple strategic methodologies (citizen engagement, use of media, interaction with government, etc.)?	10
3. Organizational Capacity	Total: 20 points
1. Does the applicant have previous or on-going experience in implementing similar activities?	10
2. What results have been achieved in previous activities of the applicant, what were the quantitative, qualitative and impact-level results?	5
3. Is the staff capacity of the applicant appropriate for implementation of the suggested activities?	5
4. 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

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 the awards will be made within 10-13 weeks after the submission deadline, as stated on the cover page of this RFA. Final negotiations and the award will be managed by Winrock.

All grants are subject to USAID 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 anticipated grant. Failure to provide full and open disclosure may result in Winrock having to re-evaluate 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.
- 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 the 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