

## REQUEST FOR APPLICATION (RFA)

Program Name:	<b>Kazakhstan Actions against Trafficking in Children (KATCH) Project</b>
Request for Application (RFA) No:	<b>KATCH-10019-RFA-06</b>
Date RFA Issued:	<b>February 24, 2026, Almaty Time</b>
Pre-application Conference Date, if applicable:	<b>March 4, 2026, 15:00, Almaty Time</b> <a href="#">Click here to join the meeting</a> <b>Meeting ID: 287 149 659 128 50</b> <b>Passcode: 79aw6Ba7</b>
Due Date for Questions:	<b>March 9, 2026, 11:59PM, Almaty Time</b>
Due Date for Responses to Questions:	<b>March 19, 2026, 11:59PM, Almaty Time</b>
RFA Closing Date and Time:	<b>April 2, 2026, 11:59pm, Almaty time</b>
Estimated Award Date:	<b>May, 2026</b>

## SECTION 1: PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

### 1.1 PURPOSE AND BACKGROUND

The purpose of this RFA is to solicit applications from prospective grantees to support Winrock International (Winrock) in the implementation of the **Kazakhstan Actions against Trafficking in Children (KATCH) Project**, funded by the **U.S. Department of State Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons** for the period of **April 1, 2023 - September 30, 2027**, Award No. **SSJTIP23GR0009**. *Under this solicitation, activities will be undertaken as part of KATCH's second phase (Phase II), which is authorized to continue through September 30, 2027.*

In recent years, as a transit and destination location for migrants from Russia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, and Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan has faced increased domestic and international migration due to the economic turmoil and Russia's war on Ukraine. According to the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Kazakhstan hosted over 550,000 migrant workers as of October 2025, which is nearly 21,000 more than in January 2025<sup>1</sup>. The composition of the migrant workforce in 2025 continued to be dominated by labor migrants from neighboring Central Asian states. Workers from Uzbekistan accounted for 86% of all international migrant workers in Kazakhstan, followed by the Russian Federation (7%), Tajikistan (2.5%), the Kyrgyz Republic (2%), and China (0.6%), with all other countries together comprising the remaining 2.5 per cent.

Migrant children who enter Kazakhstan through informal border crossings – primarily with Uzbekistan – often do so without registration or official documentation, which limits their ability to access services and significantly heightens their vulnerability. Thousands of undocumented

<sup>1</sup> <https://astanatimes.com/2025/10/iom-chief-shares-latest-data-on-mobility-in-kazakhstan/>

migrants cross these borders daily for seasonal labor, and their accompanying children are particularly at risk, consistent with findings from U.S. TIP reporting. Unified statistics on the number and characteristics of accompanying children of migrant laborers (ACML) remain unavailable, as Kazakhstani state agencies use inconsistent data collection practices or do not collect child specific data at all. This lack of harmonized, child disaggregated data continues to hinder evidence-based planning, including the design of services tailored to the age, gender, and protection needs of ACML and child trafficking survivors.

According to the Department of State (DOS) trafficking in persons (TIP) Report 2025: “Human traffickers exploit domestic and foreign victims in Kazakhstan, and traffickers exploit victims from Kazakhstan abroad. Traffickers force some children to beg and may also coerce adults and children into criminal behavior.” The most vulnerable groups at risk of trafficking include individuals from rural areas, undocumented migrants, persons without identity documents, unemployed individuals, individuals experiencing homelessness, and disabled persons.

Women and children from neighboring East Asian, Central Asian, and Eastern European countries, as well as from rural areas in Kazakhstan, are exploited in sex trafficking in Kazakhstan; in most cases, traffickers target young girls and women, luring them with promises of employment, including through social media, as waitresses, models, or nannies in large cities. Observers noted traffickers increasingly use online recruitment methods to lure victims for exploitation in sex trafficking. Experts noted individuals with substance use issues are at increased risk for trafficking. Children are increasingly targeted for forced criminality in drug trafficking<sup>2</sup>.

Recent reporting shows that child trafficking in Kazakhstan remains a serious and growing concern, with official data and media sources documenting rising cases of the sale, trafficking, and sexual exploitation of minors. These incidents included the sale of newborns, trafficking of infants and young girls, and activities of organized networks exploiting minors<sup>3</sup>.

According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs, nine cases of child trafficking were recorded in 2024, following 19 cases in 2023. These cases often involved staff of perinatal centers, children's homes, and parents attempting to sell infants. In 2025, the Ministry of Internal Affairs reported 19 child trafficking cases, all involving illegal adoption of newborns, with schemes identified across multiple regions of the country<sup>4</sup>.

The Government of Kazakhstan (GOK) has made notable efforts to combat TIP in recent years, including through public awareness campaigns; victim assistance hotlines; funding TIP victim shelters; expanding state services to TIP victims; registering children born in Kazakhstan to parents with irregular status to allow access to services; and coordination with international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to protect TIP victims. In 2024, Kazakhstan enacted its first comprehensive anti-trafficking law and passed amendments to the Criminal Code to expand the scope of crimes and increase penalties. These changes signify a major development

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<sup>2</sup> [Kazakhstan - United States Department of State](#)

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.inform.kz/ru/indeks-rabstva-torgovlya-detmi-i-zolotoy-treugolnik-kak-kazahstan-boretsya-s-torgovley-lyudmi-b70c5a>

<sup>4</sup> <https://en.orda.kz/officials-describe-child-trafficking-schemes-and-investigation-methods-in-kazakhstan-8428/>

while also requiring significant efforts to create/update standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the relevant agencies. Further, the currently developed “Children of Kazakhstan State Program 2026-2030” opens a window of opportunity to integrate considerations for child trafficking prevention measures.

However, as provided in the 2025 TIP Report, Kazakhstan still fell short of meeting minimum standards in several key areas. Only half of the identified victims were referred to services, and authorities continued to identify few foreign victims, while efforts to address forced labor remained inadequate<sup>5</sup>. Government-run shelters also faced insufficient funding, including for child specific services. Moreover, data from the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children shows a 1,240% increase in child sexual abuse material (CSAM) circulating in Kazakhstan between 2019 and 2023, the second fastest growth rate globally.

To address these challenges, Winrock International is implementing a five-year project – Kazakhstan Actions against Trafficking in Children (KATCH) – to support central and local government agencies, as well as NGOs network to improve identification and offer individualized, comprehensive assistance to child TIP survivors and ACML and to increase accountability within the child protection system.

## 1.2 OBJECTIVE AND PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

**PROJECT GOAL:** GOK agencies and NGOs proactively identify, refer, and assist child TIP victims and ACML in southern Kazakhstan using child-sensitive and trauma-informed approaches. Our approach will lead to systemic change (a) at individual levels by equipping service providers with trauma-specific skills and tools to identify, refer, and assist child TIP victims; and (b) at organizational levels by strengthening the capacity of local organizations to expand services to child TIP victims and ACML and by mobilizing government and civil society leaders to coordinate and improve accountability of child protection systems.

**PROJECT OBJECTIVES:** KATCH will protect child TIP victims and ACML through two objectives, described below in detail: (1) Service providers have the capacity and resources to identify and assist child TIP victims and ACML in a child-sensitive, trauma-informed manner; and (2) Child protection and victim identification systems are proactive, coordinated, and accountable to child TIP victims and ACML.

**PRIORITY REGIONS OF KAZAKHSTAN:** Under this RFA, KATCH will focus its interventions in five oblasts –Turkistan, Qyzylorda, Almaty, Zhambyl, and Jetysu – and the cities of Almaty and Shymkent in southern Kazakhstan, where economic opportunity and proximity to Uzbekistan and Kyrgyzstan borders attract high numbers of migrants.

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<sup>5</sup> <https://www.state.gov/reports/2025-trafficking-in-persons-report/kazakhstan/>

**TARGET POPULATION:**

The target population for project impact are child TIP survivors, accompanying children of migrant laborers and their families in targeted regions.

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

**Objective 1:**

SERVICE PROVIDERS HAVE THE CAPACITY AND RESOURCES TO IDENTIFY AND ASSIST CHILD TIP VICTIMS AND ACML IN A CHILD-SENSITIVE, TRAUMA-INFORMED MANNER

**Activity 1.2.** Award micro-grants to expand availability of education and other support services for child TIP survivors and ACML

***Selected KATCH NGO partners will be required to conduct prevention activities – such as conducting child-sensitive outreach in their communities to increase understanding and awareness of TIP and address emerging threats like cyber-trafficking, enhance safe reporting pathways via helplines and digital tools, implement targeted public-awareness efforts to reduce tolerance of child trafficking and forced begging, and increase community awareness of OCSEA. NGO partners may conduct prevention and outreach activities through various methods including through social media, strengthening and mobilizing Child CTIP Champion networks, and other non-conventional means (e.g., in-person outreach in high-traffic locations, such as bazaars or train stations, radio broadcasts, flash mobs, etc.)***

***Selected NGO partners are also expected to conduct protection initiatives that expand identification of child TIP survivors, ACMLs, and their families in Southern Kazakhstan. Upon identification of child TIP survivors or ACMLs, NGO partners should provide referrals to services (or directly provide services) through individualized case management.***

***Selected KATCH NGO partners will provide child-sensitive, trauma-informed protective services tailored to each child's distinct needs while also contributing to improved skills among frontline officials and ensuring that children and families receive appropriate services or referrals through structured case-management practices.***

**The prevention and protection services may include:**

- Outreach to potential child TIP survivors and ACML
- Family tracing and risk assessment, reunification with families when safe
- Appointment of a guardian to accompany the child throughout the entire process
- Legal assistance, restoring identification documents
- Providing an interpreter or translator

- Safe, age- and gender-appropriate accommodation, meals, and clothing
- Medical care
- Psychological support/counselling
- Educational support, life skills, job placement (if age-appropriate)
- Peer-support or mentoring programs for adolescent TIP survivors
- Digital safety and cyber-trafficking prevention support (safe-use training, awareness of online grooming/OCSEA)
- Support for stateless, migrant, internal migrant and ethnic minorities children prone to TIP, with registration and access to services.

**Case management involves:**

- Interviewing and identifying victims
- Needs assessment, risk assessment for re-trafficking, and family-reunification assessment
- Developing a care plan
- Making referrals to other agencies for additional services
- Record-keeping and maintaining a comprehensive case management file
- Integration
- Post-integration monitoring and follow-up support
- Periodic multi-disciplinary case consultations

**Expected results:**

- Expanded identification of child TIP survivors, ACMLs, and their families in Southern Kazakhstan, with individualized service provision or referral through case management.
- Improved skills of frontline officials.
- Mobilized and strengthened Child CTIP Champion network.
- Increased community awareness and use of safe reporting channels for child TIP cases – such as national helplines and digital reporting tools – through micro-grantee outreach and information-sharing efforts.
- Implemented targeted campaigns to reduce public tolerance of child trafficking and forced begging.
- Improved awareness of OCSEA.

## **SECTION 2: GRANT INFORMATION**

### **2.1 ANTICIPATED NUMBER OF GRANTS TO BE ISSUED**

The **KATCH Project** expects to award up to 4-5 grants under this RFA but reserves the right to award fewer or none based on the quality of applications received and availability of funding.

### **2.2 ESTIMATED AMOUNT OF GRANTS**

The anticipated value of each individual grant is expected to range from **USD 12,000 to USD 15,000**. The equivalent amounts in local currency are **KZT 5,971,812** and **KZT 7,464,765**,

respectively, based on the OANDA exchange rate as of February 23, 2026. The final amount awarded will depend on award activities, availability of funds, and final negotiations. Applicants are encouraged to propose realistic budgets based on actual costs of operating expenses. Applicants are required to use the budget and budget narrative templates, included as **Annex B** and **Annex C** to this solicitation, to support the proposed costs. Upon decision of the Winrock evaluation committee, Winrock can contact applicant organizations with a request to reduce or enhance suggested activities and budget.

### **2.3 ANTICIPATED START DATE AND DURATION OF GRANTS**

The anticipated period of performance is May 2026 – June 2027, depending on the negotiated award activities.

### **2.4 TYPE OF GRANTS TO BE ISSUED**

Winrock will determine the appropriate grant mechanism, in consultation with the applicant during the negotiation process, 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-profit non-US organizations. To be minimally eligible for funding, applicants must comply with the following conditions:

- Be legally registered in the Republic of Kazakhstan.
- Physical presence of the office in one of the following cities/regions: Turkistan, Qyzylorda, Almaty, Zhambyl, and Jetysu—and the cities of Almaty and Shymkent in southern Kazakhstan.
- Agree to be subject to a pre-award assessment carried out by Winrock staff to examine 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 implementation of relevant programs and approaches.
- The proposed project should not duplicate the NGO's current projects funded by other donors, but could complement them.
- Provide a Unique Entity Identifier (UEI) number at the time of 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>.

### **3.2 INELIGIBLE APPLICANTS**

- Any entity that has been found to have misused US government funds in the past (unless specifically approved by the U.S. Department of State Grants Officer).
- Political parties, groupings, or institutions or their subsidiaries and affiliates.
- Organizations led directly or indirectly by Government Officials, including when they are office bearers of private companies.

- Organizations that advocate, promote, or espouse anti-democratic policies or illegal activities.
- Faith-based organizations whose objectives are for discriminatory and religious purposes, and whose main objective for the grant is of a religious nature.
- Any entity whose name appears on the List of Parties Excluded from Federal Procurement and Non-Procurement Programs (<https://sam.gov>)
- Any entity with a member that appears on the U.S. Department of Treasury Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) Specially Designated Nationals (SDN) and Blocked Person list (<https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/SDN-List/Pages/default.aspx>).
- Consolidated United Nations Security Council Sanctions List <https://www.un.org/sc/suborg/en/sanctions/un-sc-consolidated-list>
- An organization refusing to comply with the required certifications.
- Partner government entities, without specific prior approval by the U.S. Department of State Agreement Officer.

## 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:	<b>March 4, 2026, 15:00, Almaty Time</b>
Location:	<b>Online (MS Teams platform)</b> <b>Link:</b> <a href="#">Click here to join the meeting</a> <b>Meeting ID: 287 149 659 128 50</b> <b>Passcode: 79aw6Ba7</b>
Confirmation:	<b>An e-mail confirming attendance must be sent to</b> <a href="mailto:KATCHgrants@winrock.org">KATCHgrants@winrock.org</a> <b>not later than 15:00 on March 3, 2026, Almaty Time</b>
Language Conference to be Held In:	<b>Russian language</b>

### 4.2 TECHNICAL APPLICATION

Applicants will develop their applications based on their understanding of the program’s needs, their prior institutional experience, and their determination of the approaches that would be feasible and successful. In all cases, applicants shall clearly explain the rationale for the proposed approaches chosen.

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. Applicants are required to use the **Application Form template, provided as Annex A 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 as detailed in **Annex B** with budget notes identifying how the applicant would allocate any grant funds received during the term of the potential agreement. Budget Narrative Template is provided as **Annex C** to this solicitation. 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.

**Applicants are required to use the budget and budget narrative templates, included as Annexes B and C to solicitation**

### 4.4 COST-SHARE

Cost-share is not required.

### 4.5 SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

All questions and other communications regarding this RFA should be submitted in writing to [KATCHgrants@winrock.org](mailto:KATCHgrants@winrock.org) . Written responses to questions will be made available to all applicants.

Applications must be submitted in **Russian or Kazakh, using Times New Roman, font size 12, single-spaced.**

Applications (including a technical description, estimated budget, and supporting documentation) **must be submitted electronically via email [KATCHgrants@winrock.org](mailto:KATCHgrants@winrock.org) and should reference KATCH-10019-RFA-06.** Applications must be submitted **no later than April 2, 2026, 11:59pm (Almaty time)**. Receipt time for electronic submissions is when the application is received by Winrock's Internet Server. 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, using Annex A
- A completed and signed cost application, using Annexes B and C
- Budget supporting documents, including the budget narrative, as applicable (please see Annex C for Budget Narrative Template)
- Letters of recommendation and support from local administration, other organizations (if any);
- CVs of the key project staff (i.e., Project Director or Coordinator, financial and operational staff), copies of diplomas and certificates confirming their qualifications.

## 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 overall merit and feasibility, as well as specific criteria relevant to each component as elaborated below. Up to 4-5 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
<b>1. Technical Approach</b>	<b>50</b>
1. How relevant is the proposal to the goal/objectives and priorities of current Request for Applications?	10
2. How clearly defined and strategically chosen are those involved (target groups)? Have their needs been clearly defined and does the proposal address them appropriately? Will the target population and (or) their representatives be involved in the project (project inclusiveness)?	10
3. How elaborated, logic and coherent is the overall design of the action? Does it reflect the analysis of the problems involved?	10
4. Is the action feasible? Will the intervention achieve its objectives and its results?	10
5. Is there a mechanism to ensure the institutional and financial sustainability of the project after the end of the grant agreement? Visibility strategy	10
<b>2. Organizational Capacity / Past Performance</b>	<b>40</b>

1. Proven experience in managing grants/project from International Organizations	10
2. Does the applicant have previous or on-going experience in implementing similar activities? [Proven expertise in service provision and program intervention for TIP. Experience in networking and referral of trafficked survivors]? What results have been achieved in previous activities of the applicant, what were the quantitative, qualitative and impact-level results?	10
3. Physical presence of the office in the city/region.	10
4. Is the staff capacity of the applicant appropriate for implementation of the suggested activities? Number of staff assigned to the project. Relevant education and experience	10
<b>3. Budgeting</b>	<b>10</b>
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.	10
<b>Overall Rating (out of 100 points)</b>	<b>100</b>

## 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 **3 months** after the submission deadline, as stated on the cover page of this RFA. Final negotiations and awards will be managed by Winrock.

**All grants are subject to approval by the U.S. Department of State Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons**

## 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 awards will be negotiated, denominated and funded in Kazakhstan Tenge. 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 next steps in the application process.

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

- Private ceremonies, parties, celebrations or "representation" expenses
- Ineligible Commodities, including but not limited to: military equipment, police or law enforcement equipment, surveillance equipment, abortion equipment and services, weather modification equipment, luxury goods, and gambling equipment
- Construction, infrastructure, renovation, or rehabilitation projects
- 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
- Previous obligations and/or bad debts
- Fines and/or penalties
- Creation of endowments
- Other costs unallowable under U.S. Department of State and/or federal regulations, such as alcoholic beverages.
- Expenses intended to influence the outcome of elections or other political processes

## SECTION 7: ANNEXES

Annex A – Application Form

Annex B – Detail Budget Template

Annex C - Budget Narrative Template