

Call for Research Concepts

Research for Policy Advocacy

The Hidden Costs of Migration: the Bangladesh-Malaysia Corridor

I. About the Program

The [John D. Rockefeller 3RD Program \(JDR3\) Scholars Program](#) is a research grant competition that promotes independent research and strengthens analytical skills in young professionals by giving grants to multi-disciplinary, applied research teams. The JDR3 program is designed to foster and build a cadre of experienced, qualified researchers and encourage them to conduct further policy-oriented research. The research products from this competition will contribute to evidence-based decision-making around migration policies.

This JDR3 research grant is being implemented in collaboration with the [USAID Asia Counter Trafficking in Persons \(CTIP\)](#) program, a five-year (2016-2021) regional program that focuses on transnational and regional challenges to combat trafficking in persons. The program, implemented by Winrock International, aims to reduce the trafficking of persons in Asia through coordinated and consolidated action by governments, civil society, and business that will foster cross-border cooperation, develop opportunities for private-sector leadership, and improve the quality of data associated with human trafficking. The total grant award for the research will be approximately USD 50,000 (the full amount remains to be confirmed). The research is anticipated to take approximately three (3) months of full-time work

II. Context of the Research

Legal, safe, and affordable migration policies can fill gaps in the labor markets, contributing to overall prosperity within countries. However, without appropriate protections, unchecked labor migration can increase vulnerability and increase the risk of human trafficking.

Although migrants from Bangladesh have historically been one of the largest migrant population in Malaysia, the Malaysian government suspended the official recruitment program with Bangladesh in 2019. Since this time, the government of Malaysia has been working to establish a new MOU with Bangladesh to reinstate the migration process. Employers, recruitment agencies, and migrant workers have been waiting for this MOU between Bangladesh and Malaysia to reestablish the parameters of safe and legal migration.

It is essential that this new MOU curbs migrant workers' vulnerability to debt bondage, forced labor, and other forms of exploitation by providing means for Bangladeshi workers to legally migrate with zero or minimal costs to Malaysia. This research aims to address research questions surrounding this endeavor.

III. Research Selection Process

To reduce migrants' vulnerability to trafficking and to encourage a fair recruitment process, Winrock is seeking to engage research teams who will investigate the full spectrum of costs borne by Bangladeshi workers on their journey from their origin in Bangladesh to Malaysia, and study how these costs increase vulnerability even before reaching Malaysia. This research will support policymakers by providing clarity around recruitment fees and other direct and indirect costs of recruitment and practices, how these costs cause vulnerability, and recommendations for reducing

vulnerability of Bangladeshi migrants entering Malaysia for work. All research questions in this study should include a gender and social inclusion lens, examining how recruitment costs and processes may affect genders or specific groups differently. The primary scope of this research is to build an understanding around **the hidden costs of recruitment incurred by Bangladeshi workers seeking employment in Malaysia**. These costs can include direct costs such as transportation, accommodation, and documentation, but may also include hidden costs such as high interest loans, collateral lost, bribes, or others.

In order to address the scope of research, the following should be taken into consideration:

- A wide variety of migrants should be included in the research to understand differences based on gender, social/ethnic group, economic industry or sector
- The research should build an understanding of the cost of living and ability to recuperate expenses amongst migrants
- A wide variety of stakeholders should be interviewed alongside migrants, including agencies, sub-agents and local brokers in Bangladesh and Malaysia
- The research should provide recommendations of improved practices and solutions for a monitored, efficient, transparent, and accessible recruitment process
- The current impact of COVID-19 on migration and repatriation of workers
- Operational definitions, including recruitment fees, will be based on [ILO principles and guidelines](#), forced labor on [ILO Forced Labour Convention](#), and trafficking in persons on the [UN Trafficking in Persons Protocol](#).

IV. Application Information

All forms in the application package must be legibly typed in English, in 12-point Calibri font, and include:

1. A **three to five-page concept note for the research project** (not including annexes), which must include:
 - 1.1. Background on the topic, significance, and research problem
 - 1.2. Methodology, including sampling strategy and plan for data collection
 - 1.3. Expected outcomes and limitations
2. **Annexes**
 - 2.1. **CVs** of the principal researcher and research assistants (no more than 5 pages per CV)
 - 2.2. Timeline (template provided below)
 - 2.3. Budget (template provided below)

Q&A period: applicants with questions or seeking clarification on the content of this call for concepts are encouraged to reach out to the JDR3 team at JDR3.AsiaCTIP@winrock.org by **August 20, 2020**. All applicants will receive our responses to all questions in writing at the same time.

Interested research teams or individuals must **submit their applications by September 3, 2020 to JDR3.AsiaCTIP@winrock.org with “JDR3 Application” in the subject line**. Winrock's JDR3 team and the Selection Committee will carefully examine all complete concept notes.

The Selection Committee will then select three concept notes to move to the next round of selection. Successful applicants will be notified via email. The JDR3 team will release an award of USD 1,000 to each of the three research teams or institutions to support their preparation of a full research proposal over a one-month period. The three finalists will participate in a two-day online

training event and final selection process, hosted by the JDR3 team, to learn how research findings can be translated to policy actions. One research proposal will be awarded the full research grant at the end of the training and selection event.

The total research grant amount will vary depending on the research scope selected for funding. A group of advisors will support the selected research team on research scope, methodology, and subject matters.

V. Evaluation Criteria

Interested applicants must demonstrate a strong background in related subjects, such as laws, policies, statistics and qualitative and quantitative research methods. The research concepts notes should demonstrate experience with and knowledge of research design, development of measurement for migration costs, data validation, sampling methods, and knowledge of concepts surrounding trafficking in persons. Special consideration will be given to concept notes that consider the psycho-social conditions in which research will be carried out and explicitly plan a Do No Harm approach.

Applicants may choose to apply as an individual, an organization, or a team of researchers. The principal researcher should have at least a master's degree in a relevant field and research experience. Winrock encourages principal researchers to include research assistants, taking into consideration graduate students or junior professional researchers. Research teams with the principal researcher who is not yet a well-established expert in the labor migration field and a view to provide sufficient experience to research assistants are encouraged to apply.

Applicants should be based in Malaysia and consider partnering with a team based in Bangladesh. Applications from Bangladesh are also encouraged on the condition that a partnership exists with a team in Malaysia.

Preference will be given to local research teams who speak local languages and have direct experience working with migrants and other actors involved in the recruitment process (employers, recruiting agencies, government agencies). Joint teams with researchers from both countries are strongly encouraged to apply.

VI. Adjustments for COVID-19

Applicants may require research teams based in both Malaysia and Bangladesh to conduct the research or an interview assistant who can speak the language. The data collection may employ online platforms or phone calls when necessary to mitigate exposure to health risks for the research team and interviewees.

VIII. Template for Budget Projection

Applicant must provide a detailed budget using the template below. Applicants can add more rows or columns as needed. Please provide narrative notes to explain or justify all costs.

Expenditure	Unit	Rate per Unit (USD)	Total Cost (USD)	Justification
I. Staffing				
Salaries by role				
Fees and stipends by activity				
Subtotal				
II. Deliverable I				
Supplies and materials				
Events and etc. by each				
Transportation and travel/per diem by activity				
Subtotal				
III. Deliverable II				
Supplies and materials				
Events and etc. by each				
Transportation and travel/per diem by activity				
Subtotal				
IV. Other Direct Costs				
Other direct cost 1				
Other direct cost 2				
Subtotal				
Total Amount				