

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

DEVELOPMENT OF A CUSTOM AI CHATBOT FOR THE FOOD SYSTEMS DASHBOARD

Issued by
The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)

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I. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF WORK

1. ABOUT GAIN

The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) is a Swiss-based foundation launched at the UN in 2002 to tackle the human suffering caused by malnutrition. Working with both governments and businesses, we aim to transform food systems so that they deliver more nutritious food for all people. We build alliances between governments, local and global businesses, and civil society to deliver sustainable improvements at scale. Through alliances, we provide technical, financial and policy support to strengthen food systems and use research and evidence to shape our own programmes as well as influence the actions of others.

Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, GAIN has representative offices in the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In addition, we have country offices in Bangladesh, Benin, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. Programmes and projects are carried out in a variety of other countries, particularly in Africa and Asia.

2. BACKGROUND

The Food Systems Dashboard (FSD) is the first tool that brings together country-level and subnational data across all components of food systems in visually appealing ways, providing analysis and guidance on how to use this data to improve food systems. It covers food system processes and outcomes from farm to fork, as well as the cross-cutting factors that influence food systems and must be considered jointly when making food systems decisions. The FSD is organized around three pillars: Describe, Diagnose, and Decide. The FSD describes food systems by bringing together data for almost 300 indicators from over 40 sources. Users of the FSD can explore data by country, region, food systems type, and country income group. Each of the indicators can be visualized in a map, graph, or table to facilitate easy comparison, and the raw data can be downloaded for further analysis. The FSD also includes diagnostics that assess each country's performance on 39 indicators that span food supply chains, food environments, nutrition and health, and environmental outcomes as well as 87 evidence-based policies and actions aimed at improving diets, nutrition, and environmental sustainability. These allow users to identify potential challenge areas within each country's food system and explore actions that could be taken to address these. Additionally, the FSD includes a food systems typology that classifies each country into one of five food system types.

This large number of indicators is necessary to cover all areas of food systems; however, this may present a challenge for users to find the information they need. The FSD also has a wide range of users with different levels of data literacy. Many users come to the FSD with specific questions but have challenges navigating the data. Artificial intelligence (AI) offers opportunities to make the data on the FSD more accessible and improve the overall user experience.

GAIN is interested in exploring the potential to integrate AI into the FSD. We thus invite proposals from qualified consultants to develop a custom AI chatbot that will allow users to find, interpret, and use the data on the FSD more easily, offering data analysis and deeper insights into food systems. The primary objective of this chatbot is to enable users to obtain pertinent information using natural-language queries while consulting only the relevant data on the FSD. Users would be able to ask the chatbot questions about food systems – such as 'why are healthy diets so expensive in country X?' or 'what are the environmental impacts from food systems in country Y and what could the country do to improve these?' Users would also be able to ask the chatbot to help prepare materials – such as 'prepare a presentation on food losses in South Asia'. The chatbot would provide users with answers, explanations, and data visualizations and take them directly to the appropriate area on the FSD.

This project would involve training the chatbot to accurately use all the food systems data on the FSD and working with the FSD team to test the chatbot for accuracy. The project would also involve working with the FSD team and developer on the user interface and making the chatbot available on the FSD. The chatbot could update as it learns how users interact with it and what types of queries they enter, and a prompt for user feedback could help to improve its usability and functionality.

3. SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES

The successful applicant shall provide the following services:

Requirement Analysis:

- Conduct an in-depth analysis of the requirements, including understanding the scope of food-systems data included on the FSD.
- Define the user personas and their information needs.
- Compare different existing chatbot platforms (e.g., ChatGPT, Claude, Gemini) to determine which is best suited to this application, or if a custom solution is needed.

Chatbot Development:

- Build the AI-powered chatbot using suitable third-party tools or other programming languages and frameworks.
- Ensure integration of appropriate Natural Language Processing components, search mechanisms, and a user-friendly interface to create a cohesive chatbot application.
- The interface should be intuitive and user-friendly, providing suggestions to the user and using prompts for clarification.
- If specific types of prompts are needed to ensure the most appropriate output (i.e., 'prompt engineering'), an accompanying guidance document should provide advice to users on how to do this.
- Implement a search mechanism that consults only the designated data and information on the FSD for information retrieval.
- Fine tune the chatbot to ensure it is specialized in food systems data.

Testing and Evaluation:

- Conduct comprehensive testing to ensure the chatbot's functionality, accuracy, and performance.
- Test the chatbot with a diverse set of user queries and scenarios to validate its effectiveness.
- Gather feedback from testers and stakeholders to identify areas for improvement and make these improvements.

Documentation and Training:

- Prepare detailed documentation outlining the chatbot's architecture, functionalities, and usage instructions. This should enable GAIN to maintain the chatbot as needed as well as provide a future user with working knowledge of AI chatbot technology to create a similar chatbot (e.g., for another country's FSD).
- Deploy the chatbot on the FSD, ensuring public accessibility.

3.1. DELIVERABLES

The consultant will provide the following deliverables:

- Fully functional AI chatbot query interface available on the FSD.

- Documentation detailing the chatbot's functionality, architecture, and maintenance procedures.
- Training and support materials for end-users and administrators.
- Regular progress reports and updates throughout the development process.

All deliverables should be initially provided in draft form for GAIN review/testing, then revised in response to GAIN comments.

3.2. PROPOSED TIMELINE

The engagement is expected to commence in June 2024 and is anticipated to be completed by September 2025.

3.3. CONTRACT TYPE AND BUDGET

The final contract will be a firm fixed price contract and is expected that the Offeror(s) selected will complete all services within the timeframe contemplated by the parties at the price fixed. The Offeror(s) should be selected on relevant experience, technical and financial proposals. Applicants are required to provide GAIN with a detailed budget in US Dollars (USD), including fees/travel/accommodation and any other direct costs to be incurred in the delivery of the Scope of Work. Include a brief narrative justification for line items included. The budget must be inclusive of all taxes/VAT and indirect costs. The final budget amount will have to be approved by GAIN prior to starting the project.

3.4. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND CRITERIA FOR PROPOSAL SELECTION

The consultant/firm should demonstrate expertise in the following areas:

- Expertise and practical experience in developing user-friendly AI-powered chatbots with natural-language processing capabilities.
- Proficiency in software development and integration.
- Strong track record of delivering high-quality and accurate AI solutions.
- Excellent communication and project management skills.
- Ability to adhere to timelines and budget constraints.
- Familiarity with food systems is desirable.

Proposals will be evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Experience and qualifications of the consultant/firm.
- Clarity and feasibility of the proposed approach.
- Alignment with project objectives and requirements.
- Cost-effectiveness of the proposed budget.
- Demonstrated ability to deliver high-quality and accurate AI solutions.
- Examples of successful execution of similar projects.

II. INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESPONDING

This section addresses the process for responding to this solicitation. Applicants are encouraged to review this prior to completing their responses.

4. CONTACT

Please direct all inquiries and other communications to rfp@gainhealth.org. Responses will not be confidential except in cases where proprietary information is involved.

5. BUDGET

Applicants are required to provide GAIN with a detailed fee proposal, covering all costs. The final budget amount will have to be approved by the organisation prior to starting the project.

The proposal should also note clearly the ongoing hosting costs associated with the consultant's proposed solution, which will need to be borne by GAIN after the end of the contract to maintain the chatbot's functionality (e.g., a subscription fee to a particular AI platform).

6. FORMAT FOR PROPOSAL

The proposal needs to be formatted as three separate documents:

- Technical Proposal of a **maximum 6 pages**. The proposal shall include:
 - Company or consultant profile highlighting relevant experience
 - CVs can be included in an appendix that does not count to the page limit
 - Proposed technical approach and methodology
 - Expected workplan and timeline to meet deliverables
 - References or case studies of similar projects
 - Ideally, the proposal should include links to AI chatbots the applicant has developed in the past; if not, a short description of these (with screenshot if possible) should be provided. These can be included as an appendix, which does not count to the page limit.
- Financial Proposal (in a separate document), with a detailed budget
- Offer of services (see template attached under IV)

7. SUBMISSION

An electronic copy containing the documents, preferably in MS Word or PDF formats, along with all the required information, including the fee proposal should be sent to GAIN at rfp@gainhealth.org. Please include 'Food Systems Dashboard Chatbot' as reference in the email subject line.

8. DEADLINE

Completed proposals should be submitted to GAIN, by email at rfp@gainhealth.org **before 23:59 Central European Time on May 29, 2024.**

9. UNACCEPTABLE

The following proposals will automatically not be considered or accepted:

- Proposals that are received after the RFP deadline.
- Proposals received by fax or mail.
- Incomplete proposals.
- Proposals that are not signed.

10. REVISIONS

Proposals may be revised by electronic mail provided such revision(s) are received before the deadline.

11. ACCEPTANCE

GAIN will not necessarily accept the lowest cost or any of the proposals submitted. Accordingly, eligibility requirements, evaluation criteria and mandatory requirements shall govern.

12. COMPLETION

- Proposals must be signed by a principal or authorising signatory of the lead firm or organisation.
- In case of errors in calculating overall costs, the unit costs will govern.
- It is the applicant's responsibility to understand the requirements and instructions specified by GAIN. In the event that clarification is necessary, applicants are advised to contact the responsible person at GAIN under section II. point 1., prior to making their submission.
- While GAIN has used considerable efforts to ensure an accurate representation in this RFP, the information contained in this RFP is supplied solely as a guideline. The information is not warranted to be accurate by GAIN. Nothing in this RFP is intended to relieve applicants from forming their own opinions and conclusions with respect to the matters addressed in this RFP.
- By responding to this RFP, the applicant confirms its understanding that failing to comply with any of the RFP conditions may result in the disqualification of their submission.

13. RIGHTS OF REJECTION

GAIN reserves the right to reject any or all submissions or to cancel or withdraw this RFP for any reason and at its sole discretion without incurring any cost or liability for costs or damages incurred by any applicant, including, without limitation, any expenses incurred in the preparation of the submission. The applicant acknowledges and agrees that GAIN will not indemnify the applicant for any costs, expenses, payments or damages directly or indirectly linked to the preparation of the submission.

14. REFERENCES

GAIN reserves the right, before awarding the Proposal, to require the applicant to submit such evidence of qualifications as it may deem necessary, and will consider evidence concerning the financial, technical and other qualifications and abilities of the applicant.

15. RELEASE OF INFORMATION

After awarding the Proposal and upon written request to GAIN, only the following information will be released:

- Name of the successful applicant.
- The applicant's own individual ranking.

III. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THIS SOLICITATION

16. NOTICE OF NON-BINDING SOLICITATION

GAIN reserves the right to reject any and all bids received in response to this solicitation and is in no way bound to accept any proposal. GAIN additionally reserves the right to negotiate the substance of the successful applicants' proposals, as well as the option of accepting partial components of a proposal if deemed appropriate.

17. CONFIDENTIALITY

All information provided as part of this solicitation is considered confidential. In the event that any information is inappropriately released, GAIN will seek appropriate remedies as allowed. Proposals, discussions, and all information received in response to this solicitation will be held as strictly confidential.

18. RIGHT TO FINAL NEGOTIATIONS ON THE PROPOSAL

GAIN reserves the right to negotiate on the final costs, and the final scope of work of the proposal. GAIN reserves the right to limit or include third parties at GAIN's sole and full discretion in such negotiations.

19. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be reviewed by the Selection Team. The following indicate a list of the significant criteria against which proposals will be assessed. This list is not exhaustive or 100% inclusive and is provided to enhance the applicants' ability to respond with substance.

Applicants are required to submit the following information, conforming to the guidelines given in this section:

- Understanding of the scope of work:
 - Proposal shall demonstrate a clear understanding of the project objective and deliverables as outlined in Section I.
- Demonstrate a clear understanding of the technical requirements of this RFP:
 - Providing detailed technical documentation of the proposed strategy.
 - Evidence of experience delivering solutions.
- The creative and methodological approaches required to implement each of the parts of the scope of work.
- Comprehensiveness of work plan and reasonableness of proposed time frame:
 - Proposal shall include a feasible work plan to ensure successful completion of deliverables.
 - The work plan details how activities will be coordinated.
- Detailed budget and cost-effectiveness of proposed approach:
 - Evidence of cost-effective approaches to undertaking the scope of work within the proposed budget.
 - Proposal shall identify possible challenges and include creative approaches to addressing them.
- Management and personnel plan:
 - The team members working on this project shall have the relevant qualifications and overall experience required to successfully implement the project.

- Roles and responsibilities of each team member shall be clearly defined. GAIN shall have one main contact person clearly identified in the proposal.
- A duly completed offer of services.

GAIN reserves the right to contact the individuals and contractor(s) in order to verify the information provided as part of the Proposal.

20. REVIEW PROCESS

The review process will involve a Review Panel with participants selected by GAIN.

21. LIMITATIONS WITH REGARD TO THIRD PARTIES

GAIN does not represent, warrant, or act as agent for any third party as a result of this solicitation. This solicitation does not authorise any third party to bind or commit GAIN in any way without GAIN's express written consent.

22. COMMUNICATION

All communication regarding this solicitation shall be directed to appropriate parties at GAIN. Contacting third parties involved in the RFP, the review panel, or any other party may be considered a conflict of interest and could result in disqualification of the proposal.

23. FINAL ACCEPTANCE

Award of a Proposal does not imply acceptance of its terms and conditions. GAIN reserves the right to negotiate on the final terms and conditions including the costs and the scope of work when negotiating the final contract to be agreed between GAIN and the applicant.

24. VALIDITY PERIOD

The offer of services will remain valid for a period of 60 days after the Proposal closing date. In the event of award, the successful applicant will be expected to enter into a contract subject to GAIN's terms and conditions.

25. INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Subject to the terms of the contract to be concluded between GAIN and the applicant, the ownership of the intellectual property related to the scope of work of the contract, including technical information, know-how, processes, copyrights, models, drawings, source code and specifications developed by the applicant in performance of the contract shall vest entirely with GAIN.

26. SCOPE OF CHANGE

Once the contract is signed, no increase in the liability of GAIN or in the fees to be paid by GAIN for the services resulting from any change, modification or interpretation of the documents will be authorised or paid to the applicant unless such change, modification or interpretation has received the express prior written approval of GAIN.

IV. OFFER OF SERVICES

1. Offer submitted by:

2. _____

3.

4. _____

5.

6. _____

7.

8. (Print or type business, corporate name
and address)

9.

10. I (We) the undersigned hereby offer to GAIN, to furnish all necessary expertise, supervision, materials, and other things necessary to complete to the entire satisfaction of the Executive Director or authorised representative, the work as described in the Request for Proposal according to the terms and conditions of GAIN for the following prices:

(a) Click or tap here to enter text.

(b) Click or tap here to enter text.

(c) Click or tap here to enter text.

(d) Click or tap here to enter text.

11. I (We) agree that the Offer of Services will remain valid for a period of sixty days (60) calendar days after the date of its receipt by GAIN.

12. I (We) herewith submit the following:

(a) A Proposal to undertake the work, in accordance with GAIN's requirements specified.

(b) A duly completed offer of services, subject to the terms herein.

OFFERS WHICH DO NOT CONTAIN THE ABOVE-MENTIONED DOCUMENTATION OR DEVIATE FROM THE PRESCRIBED COSTING FORMAT MAY BE CONSIDERED INCOMPLETE AND NON-RESPONSIVE.

Date this day of Click or tap here to enter text. in Click or tap here to enter text.

_____ Click or tap here to enter text.

Signature (applicant)

_____ Click or tap here to enter text.

Signature (applicant)