

GAIN Central IT Service Provider RFP Prospective Vendor Questions - Consolidated By Category With Answers

SECTION 1: COMMERCIAL & PRICING

COM-001: Commercial Model for Operations & Support

Representative Question: What is the commercial model for ongoing operations and L2 support (fixed monthly retainer, time-and-materials with cap, or another structure)? Do you have a preference?

GAIN ANSWER: Operations and Support is preferred as a fixed retainer.

COM-002: Budget Range & Ceiling

Representative Question: Can you share a non-binding budget range or ceiling for the 18-month contract to help us align our proposed team size and workplan with your financial expectations?

GAIN ANSWER: The budget range is USD 180,000 to USD 220,000. An additional allocation is reserved for further development work.

COM-003: Feature Pricing Structure

Representative Question: Do you prefer a single fixed price for the full feature package, separate fixed prices per feature, or billing based on agreed day rates (time-and-materials)?

GAIN ANSWER: Refer to the Budget template which separates Feature/Advancement CapEx (2 features listed), and Handover Plan costs as distinct line items, each with a total expected.

COM-004: Contracting for Future Enhancements

Representative Question: For new features or major enhancements beyond the current roadmap, how do you plan to contract these (change orders against a rate card, separate SOWs, or amendments to this contract)?

GAIN ANSWER: To be clarified with selected vendor during contracting.

COM-005: Cloud Hosting Cost Responsibility

Representative Question: The RFP states cloud hosting costs are excluded. Should we include them as pass-through expenses or will GAIN pay Azure directly?

GAIN ANSWER: GAIN pays these costs directly.

COM-006: Payment Terms & Billing Cycles

Representative Question: What are the expected payment terms (net 15, 30, etc.)? Are there milestone-based payments or quarterly billing cycles?

GAIN ANSWER: Payment terms to be negotiated with selected vendor during contracting. One possible arrangement is: fixed retainer amounts time-based, feature development deliverable-based.

COM-007: Budget Template & Cost Component Justification

Representative Question: For budget template submission, what level of justification is required if we need to add cost components beyond the template structure? Can you provide an example of an acceptable addition?

GAIN ANSWER: As the budget instructions state, additions are allowed with justification. We defer to your best judgement, as these additions will be discussed in the Shortlisting and Revision period.

COM-008: Currency Fluctuation Handling

Representative Question: Will currency fluctuations for non-CHF/USD vendors be accounted for, or must bids assume a fixed rate?

GAIN ANSWER: Assume a fixed USD rate.

COM-009: Intellectual Property Ownership

Representative Question: Can GAIN confirm that pre-existing vendor frameworks or libraries used to deliver services remain vendor IP, while all DFQT+ custom code vests with GAIN?

GAIN ANSWER: GAIN can confirm the contract IP clause will follow industry-standard work-for-hire practices.

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SECTION 2: SUPPORT & SLA REQUIREMENTS

SLA-001: Existing SLAs vs. Vendor Proposal

Representative Question: Do you already have defined Service Level Agreements (SLAs) for DFQT+, or do you expect the vendor to propose them? If SLAs exist, could you please share them?

GAIN ANSWER: See RFP. "The service provider will propose a reasonable Environment SLA for the dev/test and Demo environments in line with industry best practices."

SLA-002: Availability Targets by Environment

Representative Question: What exact availability targets do you expect for (a) dev/test/demo environments and (b) L2 support for country production environments (target uptime %, maximum planned downtime, standard maintenance windows)?

GAIN ANSWER: We are open to proposed targets which will be discussed in the Shortlisting and Revision period.

SLA-003: Support Hours & Time Zone Coverage

Representative Question: What support hours and time zone coverage do you expect for L2 support? Is 24/7 or on-call arrangement for critical production incidents required?

GAIN ANSWER: See RFP. "Vendor can provide at least 3 hours/day of time zone overlap with West Africa Time (WAT, UTC+1)" This is mandatory minimum. 24/7 is not required.

SLA-004: Level 2 Support Ticket Volume

Representative Question: What is the typical monthly volume of support tickets/incidents from Bangladesh and Nigeria production instances requiring central provider involvement? Can you provide current peak user counts to estimate this volume?

GAIN ANSWER: GAIN expects a gradual increase in peak users throughout the project period. Currently peak users sit at less than 20 DAU per country instance. Support tickets have been minimal to-date.

SLA-005: Hand-off Format from Local Providers

Representative Question: What is the expected hand-off format from local providers in Nigeria and Bangladesh for Level 2 support? Do they provide logs and stack traces via a shared observability tool?

GAIN ANSWER: This will be coordinated with GAIN during the onboarding period.

SLA-006: Historical Support Metrics

Representative Question: Please provide the monthly average of Level 2 tickets generated by local providers over the past 12 months.

GAIN ANSWER: Support tickets have been minimal to-date. Due to the stability of the current platform, we expect the majority of tickets to be in the form of feature requests.

SLA-007: Severity Classification & Response Times

Representative Question: Does GAIN already have defined incident severity levels (e.g., Sev-1 to Sev-4) and corresponding response/resolution expectations for the Central IT Service Provider, or should vendors propose their standard severity and SLA framework?

GAIN ANSWER: Vendors should propose their standard severity and SLA framework to be negotiated in the Shortlisting and Revision period.

SLA-008: Handover Timeline to Local Providers

Representative Question: Is there an estimated timeline for the handover to local providers?

GAIN ANSWER: This question is not clear, however the Handover Plan mentioned in the proposal is referring to handover to a subsequent Central IT Service Provider, if necessary, which may last approximately 30 days.

SLA-009: Production Data Access for L2 Troubleshooting

Representative Question: Will the central provider have direct access to production logs/data of country instances for troubleshooting, or will all access be mediated through local providers?

GAIN ANSWER: Most likely indirect access via local providers.

SLA-010: Demo Environment Criticality

Representative Question: How frequently is the Demo environment used for external purposes (donor demonstrations, onboarding, UAT)? Should it be treated as business-critical in SLA terms?

GAIN ANSWER: The Demo environment is used regularly by GAIN country teams for sales, user training, etc. It can be considered business-critical in support of the go-to-market strategy, but does not host usage of production customers.

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SECTION 3: INFRASTRUCTURE & HOSTING

INFRA-001: Kubernetes & Infrastructure-as-Code

Representative Question: The RFP specifies Kubernetes. Are the clusters managed via Azure Kubernetes Service (AKS), and are there existing Helm charts or Terraform scripts for environment replication?

GAIN ANSWER: Terraform is used

INFRA-002: MongoDB Hosting Type

Representative Question: For MongoDB, are you using Azure Cosmos DB (with Mongo API) or a self-hosted MongoDB cluster on VMs?

GAIN ANSWER: To be discussed in shortlisted interviews.

INFRA-003: RTO & RPO Requirements

Representative Question: What are the current RPO (Recovery Point Objective) and RTO (Recovery Time Objective) requirements for backups?

GAIN ANSWER: There are no established requirements. These specifications for non-production instances will be agreed with the GAIN team.

INFRA-004: CI/CD Pipeline Tooling

Representative Question: Are the CI/CD pipelines currently built in GitHub Actions, Azure DevOps, or another third-party tool? What is the current state of the CI/CD pipeline and automated test suites?

GAIN ANSWER: Jenkins, ArgoCD, GitOps are in place to provide the environment for pipelines to be revised or further developed. Existing automated test suites can be considered as minimal.

INFRA-005: Azure Spend & Resource Configuration

Representative Question: Can you provide approximate monthly Azure spend for the dev/test/demo environments, or describe the resource configuration (VM sizes, storage volumes, etc.)?

GAIN ANSWER: No. This can be discussed in the Shortlisting and Revision period.

INFRA-006: Environment Configuration

Representative Question: Are dev, test, and demo environments three separate environments, or is dev/test combined as one environment plus demo as another?

GAIN ANSWER: To be discussed in the Shortlisting and Revision period.

INFRA-007: Azure Subscription Ownership

Representative Question: Will the existing Azure subscription and resource groups be transferred to the service provider, or will we need to provision new resources under our own Azure account?

GAIN ANSWER: Access to existing resources will be shared to the service provider.

INFRA-008: Current MongoDB Database Size

Representative Question: What is the current size of the MongoDB database?

GAIN ANSWER: To be discussed in the Shortlisting and Revision period.

INFRA-009: Schema Evolution Requirements

Representative Question: Can GAIN confirm if a schema migration is anticipated for the high-priority feature (table relationship associating participants with assigned foods), or can the current MongoDB schema support this without major data migration? Are there any known schema evolution requirements during this contract period?

GAIN ANSWER: We expect that the existing schema can be used as is or extended with minimal effort as it was designed with extensibility in mind.

INFRA-010: Day-1 Access Readiness

Representative Question: To ensure we can hit the ground running on Day 1, confirm availability of:

- Source Code Repositories (GitHub/GitLab) and current CI/CD pipelines
- Central Azure Resource Groups (Dev/Test)
- Documentation (Architecture diagrams, API Swagger)

GAIN ANSWER: See RFP. "The service provider will gain access to and assume management of the code base (Github), Azure cloud resources, design files (Figma), Jira planning, Continuous Integration Continuous Deployment, Identity and Access Management, secrets management, and other related tooling." Note: Yes, we expect that access will be granted during the initial onboarding week.

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SECTION 4: TECHNICAL ARCHITECTURE & STACK

TECH-001: Event Bus/Message Broker

Representative Question: The system uses "event-based workflows." What is the underlying message broker or event bus (Azure Service Bus, RabbitMQ, or Kafka)?

GAIN ANSWER: Currently only RESTful APIs. Pub/Sub is not currently configured.

TECH-002: Python Component Responsibilities

Representative Question: Can you clarify the specific responsibilities of the Python components - are they used for data processing, reporting, or specific microservices?

GAIN ANSWER: A RESTful API for data ingestion as middleware.

TECH-003: SQL Operations & Stored Procedures

Representative Question: The Admin Console extension aims to replace "direct SQL operations" for configuration. Are there existing stored procedures or complex triggers that need to be refactored into the Node.js Middleware?

GAIN ANSWER: There are basic manual scripts representing these direct SQL operations. They will be written into the middleware. They are not complex.

TECH-004: Technology Stack Versions

Representative Question: Can GAIN confirm the current versions of Node.js, React, MongoDB, and Kubernetes? This is critical for assessing compatibility risks and potential upgrade requirements.

GAIN ANSWER: To be discussed in the Shortlisting and Revision period.

TECH-005: Microservices Pattern & Communication

Representative Question: What is the specific microservices pattern and inter-service communication method (REST, gRPC, or message queues) currently used?

GAIN ANSWER: REST

TECH-006: Dependency Upgrade Expectations

Representative Question: Is there an expectation to migrate or upgrade React, Redux Toolkit, or TypeScript dependencies during the engagement, or should they remain frozen?

GAIN ANSWER: Security patches (Tier 1) and minor version updates (Tier 2) are expected as part of platform operations and should be included in the operational budget and planned in coordination with the GAIN team. Major version upgrades (Tier 3) will be scoped separately as required.

TECH-007: Planned Architectural Changes

Representative Question: Are there any architectural shifts (e.g., changes to the Identity Provider or reporting stack) already under consideration that are not yet listed in the scope?

GAIN ANSWER: No planned changes. Can be considered additional work to be scoped separately.

TECH-008: Codebase Metrics

Representative Question: Approximately how many repositories, lines of code, and active microservices/containers comprise the DFQT+ system?

GAIN ANSWER: To be discussed in the Shortlisting and Revision period.

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SECTION 5: FEATURE DEVELOPMENT - ADMIN CONSOLE & TRAINING

FEAT-001: Admin Console Design Readiness

Representative Question: For the Admin Console extension, does GAIN have a preferred design or initial Figma mockups already prepared, or should we include UX/UI design time in our fixed-price estimate?

GAIN ANSWER: Figma files with overall design components exist for current features, not for new features. Please include design time.

FEAT-002: Tutorial & Animation Approach

Representative Question: For the animated feature guide, does GAIN prefer specific third-party tools (WalkMe, Pendo, React-Joyride) or custom-developed animations? Is there a preference

for embedded video assets (MP4) or interactive frontend libraries? Are there preferred tools or platforms for hosting tutorial videos or animated walkthroughs?

GAIN ANSWER: Joyride is currently used for step-through tutorials and that is preferred. For video/animation vendors should propose approach and tool selection. For this phase, the most cost effective options will receive preference.

FEAT-003: Feature Delivery Timeline & Sequence

Representative Question: Are there target delivery dates for the two features, or will timelines be collaboratively determined post-contract? Should they be delivered sequentially or in parallel? What are the preferred delivery milestones within the 18-month period?

GAIN ANSWER: Timelines will be determined collaboratively with the Product Owner and CTO. GAIN expects additional features to be scoped throughout the project.

FEAT-004: Reporting, Analytics & Export Requirements

Representative Question: What are the standard reports in the existing system? Do we need more reports, analytics, data visualization, or export options included?

GAIN ANSWER: This is not in the current scope.

FEAT-005: Admin Console Data Volume & Configuration Items

Representative Question: Approximately how many food vehicles, fortificants, and quality attributes currently exist in the system that would need to be configurable via the Admin Console? What is the projected growth for these values?

GAIN ANSWER: The current system has approximately 10 or less of each type. The system was developed to scale these types through expanding the source table records as needed.

FEAT-006: Admin Console Concurrent Users & Load

Representative Question: What is the expected data volume and number of concurrent users for the Admin Console?

GAIN ANSWER: Minimal data volume and concurrent users for the Prod Demo instance.

FEAT-007: Configuration Change Auditability & Versioning

Representative Question: Should configuration changes made via the new Admin Console include a full change history, rollback capability, and user attribution? Should they be auditable and/or versioned?

GAIN ANSWER: That is not a high priority at this stage.

FEAT-008: Tutorial Video Hosting & Format

Representative Question: What is the expected format for tutorial videos and animated guides? Should they be hosted centrally within the app or linked from an external platform?

GAIN ANSWER: Vendors should propose formats. Hosting should be within the app.

FEAT-009: Multi-Language Support

Representative Question: Are multi-language or localized user guidance materials anticipated during the engagement?

GAIN ANSWER: For tutorials and tooltips, language localization will be considered. Vendors should provide a per-language cost.

FEAT-010: User Training and Rollout Support Scope

Representative Question: Should user training and rollout support for new features (Admin Console, Tutorials) be included in the feature development cost, or is training the responsibility of GAIN and local providers?

GAIN ANSWER: Included. Initial training to the GAIN team and local country teams may be necessary.

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SECTION 6: COUNTRY CONFIGURATION & DATA MODEL

CONFIG-001: Database Schema & Configuration Scripts

Representative Question: To support accurate estimation for the Admin Console and country configuration enhancements, can GAIN share the current database schema (ERD) or examples of the SQL scripts currently used by local teams to configure food vehicles, fortificants, and quality attributes?

GAIN ANSWER: Scripts - see TECH-003. Schema - This can be discussed in the Shortlisting and Revision period.

CONFIG-002: Validation Rules Implementation Approach

Representative Question: Are validation rules (e.g., allowable fortificant–vehicle combinations) currently enforced through database constraints, or will this logic need to be implemented at the application layer?

GAIN ANSWER: Fortificant–vehicle combinations are defined at the table/document level and validation rules occur in the middleware.

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SECTION 7: TRANSITION & KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

TRANS-001: Handover Coordination Lead

Representative Question: Who will lead and coordinate the handover from the current technical team to the new central provider? Will it be GAIN, the current vendor, or both?

GAIN ANSWER: GAIN will coordinate the handover.

TRANS-002: Access & Time Availability During Transition

Representative Question: What level of access and time from the current team can we assume during the transition?

GAIN ANSWER: GAIN team members will be actively involved in the onboarding of the vendor. Including the Product Owner and CTO. There is no overlap with the previous vendor.

TRANS-003: Current Documentation Availability

Representative Question: What technical and user-facing documentation is currently available (architecture diagrams, code documentation, runbooks, admin manuals, end-user guides,

training materials)? How would you characterize the current state of technical documentation - comprehensive, partial, or minimal?

GAIN ANSWER: Technical documentation, including architecture, schema, application and source code, is robust and comprehensive. User facing materials are minimal. Confluence is used internally, and doc files/PDFs are maintained.

TRANS-004: Architecture Documentation During Proposal Phase

Representative Question: Can we receive high-level architecture diagrams, system documentation, and component design schemas during the proposal phase to ensure accurate scoping and cost estimation?

GAIN ANSWER: No. GAIN is willing to share more during the shortlisted interviews and revision period.

TRANS-005: Access to Development History

Representative Question: Will we receive access to Git commit history, prior sprint documentation, and historical decision rationale to understand the platform evolution?

GAIN ANSWER: GAIN will share a reasonable level of information on these areas. The vendor will be working closely with the GAIN Product Owner and other key team members who can also share similar context.

TRANS-006: Documentation Platform & Coverage

Representative Question: What platforms are used for documentation (Confluence, Notion, Markdown in repo, etc.)? What percentage of the existing system is currently documented, and what gaps exist?

GAIN ANSWER: See TRANS-003

TRANS-007: Training Materials & Update Effort

Representative Question: There is "an existing library of training materials and technical documentation." What is the current state of these materials, and what is the expected effort for keeping them current?

GAIN ANSWER: See TRANS-003. Expected effort for maintaining current materials is low. New additions/revisions to accommodate new features will be expected.

TRANS-008: Documentation Standards & Tools

Representative Question: Are there specific documentation tools, formats, or standards GAIN requires (Confluence, GitHub wiki, README files)? What is the current documentation platform? Should documentation updates be considered part of feature acceptance criteria?

GAIN ANSWER: See TRANS-003, TRANS-007. GAIN requires rolling documentation updates rather than end-of-project documentation updates as stated in the RFP.

TRANS-009: Transition Phase Duration

Representative Question: What is the expected duration of the transition phase before the new provider assumes full operational responsibility? What is the expected timeline for achieving full operational capability?

GAIN ANSWER: There is no prior vendor overlap and therefore full operational responsibility is assumed in Week 1. However a reasonable onboarding period is expected, supported by existing GAIN team. Risk is mitigated by the fact that country IT service providers have operational responsibility for the country production instances.

TRANS-010: End-of-Contract Handover Structure

Representative Question: Is there a preferred duration or structure GAIN envisions for a potential handover at the end of the contract term?

GAIN ANSWER: Handover to a subsequent Central IT Service Provider, if necessary, may last approximately 30 days.

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SECTION 8: GOVERNANCE & DECISION-MAKING

GOV-001: Decision-Making Structure

Representative Question: Could you briefly describe the governance and decision-making structure for DFQT+ (key roles, who makes final decisions on scope and priorities, and how often you expect project or steering meetings)?

GAIN ANSWER: See RFP Functional Requirements 4.a., and GOV-002

GOV-002: Decision Authority Framework

Representative Question: Which decisions can the Central IT Service Provider make autonomously, and which require approval from the Product Owner or the Strategic and Technical Advisory Committee?

GAIN ANSWER: See RFP Functional Requirements 4.a. Additionally, the GAIN team expects to generally defer to the service provider on matters of engineering best practice. Collaborative decision making will be required on decisions involving key dependencies and tradeoffs.

GOV-003: Success Metrics & Evaluation Criteria

Representative Question: Can GAIN clarify whether there are any defined success criteria or KPIs for the DFQT+ "adoption phase" (e.g., usage levels, country onboarding targets, platform stability metrics) that the service provider should align delivery, reporting, and prioritization against?

GAIN ANSWER: Success criteria for the adoption phase are primarily owned by the GAIN project team. The Project Manager and Product Owners will be responsible for clear collaboration on KPIs which are primarily influenced by DFQT+ application performance.

GOV-004: Configuration Change Approval Workflows

Representative Question: Are there expected governance or approval workflows for configuration changes at the country instance level (e.g., regulator approval before activation)?

GAIN ANSWER: Not at this time.

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SECTION 9: ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

ROLES-001: Production Responsibility Division

Representative Question: Please clarify the division of responsibilities between GAIN, the central service provider and country-level partners for production-related tasks: deployments, backups, monitoring, performance tuning, operating system and dependency patching, and security work.

GAIN ANSWER: See RFP RESPONSIBILITY MATRIX

ROLES-002: L1/L2 Support Interaction Model

Representative Question: Who will provide Level 1 (L1) user support at country level (helpdesk and first-line issue triage), and how will L1 and L2 support interact in practice (ticketing tools, escalation paths, response expectations)?

GAIN ANSWER: See RFP RESPONSIBILITY MATRIX

L1 (Local Provider) handles user support. L2 (Central Service Provider) handles code issues and architecture support.

NOTE: Ticketing tools, escalation paths, response expectations to be designed collaboratively per: "The exact communication routine will be designed in collaboration with the selected service provider."

ROLES-003: Technical Authority & Code Review

Representative Question: Will the Technical Advisor mentioned in the RFP act as the final technical sign-off for code reviews, or will our internal Lead Engineer hold the authority for central codebase merges?

GAIN ANSWER: The responsibility for code quality and approvals will rest with the service provider. External code audits may be commissioned at a later time, outside the scope of this agreement.

ROLES-004: Support Type for Local Country Hosts

Representative Question: For support to local country hosts, can GAIN clarify whether this is expected to be:

- Advisory and code-level support only, or
- Hands-on troubleshooting, patch validation, and release assistance?

GAIN ANSWER: All of the above, with qualification. See RFP RESPONSIBILITY MATRIX. Local providers will escalate to the Central provider in the case of code troubleshooting and if release assistance is required. Release coordination is assumed to have occurred prior to release.

ROLES-005: Team Size Expectations

Representative Question: The RFP emphasizes a "lean team" for a "stable platform." Can you provide guidance on GAIN's expectation for team size to calibrate our proposal appropriately?

GAIN ANSWER: GAIN expects a barebones team for on-call ops/support due the stability of the platform and limited complexity/user activity. The roles listed in the RFP are not prescriptive and we do not have a specific expectation on number of roles and LoE.

ROLES-006: Full Operational Capability Timeline

Representative Question: The contract starts February 17, 2026 with inception meeting scheduled. What is the expected timeline for achieving full operational capability?

GAIN ANSWER: See TRANS-009

ROLES-007: Senior Engineer Requirements

Representative Question: The eligibility states "at least 1 senior engineer with 5+ years experience." Is this the minimum, or does GAIN expect multiple senior-level resources?

GAIN ANSWER: This is minimum qualification. GAIN does not explicitly require or expect multiple senior engineers, but strongly prefers experienced team. Budget implications should be considered.

ROLES-008: Team Overlap Requirements & Flexibility

Representative Question: We note the requirement for a Senior Engineer (5+ years) and 3-hour overlap with West Africa Time (WAT). Does the entire team need this overlap, or only the Tech Lead/Point of Contact? Can the team size scale up/down flexibly during the 18 months based on feature demand, or is a fixed monthly retainer preferred?

GAIN ANSWER: The working hours overlap applies to the technical point of contact. GAIN expects a fixed retainer for ops/maintenance, and a scaling team for feature development, as indicated in the provided budget format.

ROLES-009: Team Member Rotation and Replacement Policy

Representative Question: Can team members be rotated or replaced during the 18-month engagement with prior approval, or does GAIN expect the same individuals committed in the proposal to remain for the full term?

GAIN ANSWER: Consistency for the relationship management and technical lead roles are strongly preferred.

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SECTION 10: SECURITY & COMPLIANCE

SEC-001: Compliance Frameworks

Representative Question: Beyond the general mention of country-level data privacy and residency regulations and GDPR, what specific compliance frameworks must the service provider adhere to or certify against (ISO 27001, SOC 2, HIPAA, etc.)?

GAIN ANSWER: No specific standards are required. Vendors should demonstrate security best practices and ability to adapt to evolving regulatory requirements in production countries (Nigeria, Bangladesh). This is expected to be a collaborative effort. The Central provider will own the technical implementation but business and regulatory requirements will be supported by the GAIN team.

SEC-002: Insurance Requirements

Representative Question: Are there minimum insurance requirements (professional liability, cyber liability, errors & omissions) for the selected provider?

GAIN ANSWER: Standard software vendor insurance should be assumed. This will be confirmed during the selection process.

SEC-003: Security Audits Responsibility & Scope

Representative Question: The RFP mentions "bi-annual security audits." Does GAIN provide/procure these, or should we include the cost in our proposal? What scope is expected?

GAIN ANSWER: The RFP does not mention this. This is not a requirement and should not be costed.

SEC-004: Compliance Monitoring & Reporting

Representative Question: Are there specific compliance monitoring or reporting requirements we should accommodate in our operational processes?

GAIN ANSWER: Not at this stage.

SEC-005: Data Sovereignty & Technical Controls

Representative Question: Given the emphasis on country-level data sovereignty, are there specific technical controls or architecture patterns we must implement? Are there already documented encryption or data residency standards for Nigeria and Bangladesh?

GAIN ANSWER: The vendor can assume that these considerations have been designed into the current solution architecture. GAIN expects the vendor to maintain an adaptive posture to any future standards, though material changes are not expected.

SEC-006: Existing Security Assessments

Representative Question: Has the DFQT+ platform undergone any formal security assessments or penetration testing to date, and are there known gaps requiring attention?

GAIN ANSWER: Yes. Known findings have been addressed.

SEC-007: RBAC Requirements

Representative Question: Will the Admin Console extension require complex Role-Based Access Control (RBAC) at the organization or country level?

GAIN ANSWER: RBAC is already configured via Keycloak

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SECTION 11: SYSTEM ISSUES & RISKS

RISK-001: Known Issues & Limitations

Representative Question: What are the main known issues or limitations in the current DFQT+ system (technical, performance, usability, operational) that you would like the new central

provider to be aware of? Are there any known system stability issues or performance bottlenecks?

GAIN ANSWER: Primary known issues are related to user experience and business cases not yet addressed through new feature development. Specifics will be discussed during vendor onboarding and inception meeting.

RISK-002: Technical Debt & Architectural Risk

Representative Question: Are there any known technical debt items, architectural constraints, or areas of technical debt within the existing DFQT+ platform that vendors should consider when estimating effort for operations and feature enhancements?

GAIN ANSWER: No material technical debt is known. The selected vendor will be requested to note any discovered issues during/after onboarding so that remediation plans can be discussed and scoped.

RISK-003: External Dependencies

Representative Question: What dependencies exist on external systems (government APIs, supplier systems, etc.) that could impact our ability to maintain SLAs?

GAIN ANSWER: None impacting SLAs are expected, though this possibility is not ruled out in the future. These types of dependencies, if they will exist, also involve the local service providers as Level 1 support.

RISK-004: Backup & Disaster Recovery

Representative Question: What are the current backup and disaster recovery procedures? What are GAIN's expectations for RTO (Recovery Time Objective) and RPO (Recovery Point Objective)?

GAIN ANSWER: See INFRA-003

RISK-005: Critical Incident Escalation

Representative Question: For critical incidents affecting the demo environment during business acquisition activities, what is the escalation path and expected response?

GAIN ANSWER: The Demo environment is the responsibility of the central service provider. User-sourced issues will escalate directly to the central provider.

RISK-006: Support Demand Baseline

Representative Question: Is there any historical data or indicative estimate regarding the volume and nature of technical support requests from the Nigeria and Bangladesh country instances?

GAIN ANSWER: See SLA-004 and SLA-006

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SECTION 12: USER GROWTH & SCALING

SCALE-001: User Growth Success Metrics

Representative Question: Does GAIN have a targeted "success metric" for user growth (e.g., number of mills or regulatory agencies) over the next 18-36 months to help us define infrastructure scaling requirements?

GAIN ANSWER: See GOV-003. Additionally, country instance infrastructure scaling is the responsibility of the local IT server providers.

SCALE-002: Seasonal Usage Patterns

Representative Question: Are there known seasonal or cyclical patterns in platform usage that would require scaling considerations for the demo environment?

GAIN ANSWER: No

SCALE-003: Country Expansion Plans

Representative Question: Are additional country instances planned during this 18-month engagement? Are there specific additional countries already anticipated for DFQT+ adoption? What is the expected central provider involvement in new country deployments?

GAIN ANSWER: Additional country instance deployments are not in scope.

SCALE-004: Scaling Plan Detail Expectations

Representative Question: What level of detail is expected in the final scaling plan (high-level recommendations versus implementation-ready guidance)?

GAIN ANSWER: High level is generally acceptable. Further discussions in response to the plan should be expected.

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SECTION 13: DEPLOYMENT & RELEASE MANAGEMENT

DEPLOY-001: Release Cadence & Deployment Timeline

Representative Question: How frequently are central code updates currently propagated to local instances, and what is the typical turnaround time for local providers to implement these updates?

GAIN ANSWER: Code deployments have not followed a strict cadence to date. Due to the fact that local instances are not expected to operate as divergent branches, the turnaround time is expected to be rapid.

DEPLOY-002: Production Deployment Authority

Representative Question: Who holds final approval authority for production deployments at the local country instance level?

GAIN ANSWER: Local providers are responsible for deploying as soon as reasonably possible given local context.

DEPLOY-003: Branch Divergence Prevention

Representative Question: What technical or contractual mechanisms exist to prevent local hosts from modifying core business logic, ensuring they do not become "diverging branches"?

GAIN ANSWER: Local providers do not have codebase edit access by default. Contractual clauses do, or will, exist limiting local provider modifications.

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SECTION 14: PROPOSAL SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS

PROP-001: Subcontracting Policy

Representative Question: If proposing with subcontracted specialists for specific functions (with clearly defined roles), does this negatively impact evaluation?

GAIN ANSWER: It does not prevent a firm from being shortlisted, if properly explained.

PROP-002: Client Reference Requirements

Representative Question: For the 2 required client references, is there a preference for references from the past 2-3 years, or is longer history acceptable? What specific aspects will GAIN focus on during reference checks?

GAIN ANSWER: A timeframe is not specified. The relevance of the work and client experience will be the focus.

PROP-003: Page Limit Compliance

Representative Question: The RFP specifies page limits by section. Are these hard limits that result in disqualification if exceeded, or guidelines for preferred length?

GAIN ANSWER: Exceeded limits are not disqualifying. Please respect the reviewing committee's time.

PROP-004: Appendix Page Limits

Representative Question: Are there page limits for the appendices (Capabilities Statement, Related Projects, CVs)?

GAIN ANSWER: Specific guidelines are listed where expected. Please respect the reviewing committee's time.

PROP-005: Budget Template Provision

Representative Question: Can GAIN provide the Budget Template referenced in the RFP?

GAIN ANSWER: The budget template is a clickable link. Please reach out if you have issues accessing the file.

PROP-006: Technical vs. Commercial Evaluation Sequence

Representative Question: Will commercial bids be opened and evaluated only after technical qualification, or will technical and commercial scores be evaluated simultaneously?

GAIN ANSWER: Technical and Financial scores evaluated together.

PROP-007: Minimum Qualifying Scores

Representative Question: What is the minimum qualifying score for technical and financial evaluation to be considered for the shortlist or contract award?

GAIN ANSWER: No established minimum.

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SECTION 15: ADDITIONAL CLARIFICATIONS

ADD-001: Report Scope - End of Engagement Outlook

Representative Question: Should the "End-of-Engagement Outlook Report" focus primarily on technical infrastructure scaling, or should it also include business model recommendations for long-term sustainability?

GAIN ANSWER: Business model considerations are primarily the responsibility of other members. However, infrastructure costing efficiency recommendations will be welcome.

ADD-002: Adoption Pipeline & Country Expansion

Representative Question: Are there specific additional countries or regions already anticipated for DFQT+ adoption during the contract period that should be considered in scaling assumptions?

GAIN ANSWER: Additional country instance deployments are not in scope.

ADD-003: On-Site Visit Expectations

Representative Question: Is there a preference or requirement for on-site visits to Nigeria, Bangladesh, or GAIN headquarters during the engagement, or is fully remote collaboration acceptable?

GAIN ANSWER: This is a fully remote engagement. No onsite components expected.