

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

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# **Consultant – Review Of Research On Metrics, Indicators And Methods For Assessing Indigenous And Traditional Foods**

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**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**

Food system transformation approaches must grapple with multiple food system challenges at once; for example, improving the quality of diets while also reducing environmental impacts of the food system. One opportunity for supporting multiple aspects of food systems simultaneously may lie in indigenous and traditional foods. Indigenous and traditional foods embody millennia of accumulated wisdom about sustainable living, ecological balance, and cultural identity. Preserving and revitalizing indigenous and traditional food systems may be able to help maintain cultural diversity, support food sovereignty, and create more resilient and sustainable approaches, which could have broader relevance for food system transformation.

Indigenous / traditional foods may be more nutritionally dense and bioavailable than modern processed alternatives, having evolved alongside human populations to meet specific dietary needs. They may also support biodiversity by preserving heritage varieties of crops and maintaining traditional agricultural practices that work in harmony with natural ecosystems rather than against them. However, it is not a given that all indigenous and traditional foods are necessarily more nutritious or more sustainable, though this distinction is not always clear in existing research and measurement.

To better understand the extent to which indigenous/traditional foods are grown, eaten, processed, and traded, as well as the extent to which this is contributing to positive versus negative outcomes within a specific context, clear definitions, metrics, and methods are needed. However, existing definitions and approaches may not clearly flag distinctions among different types of indigenous/traditional foods, and they may not well cover all aspects of the food system (e.g., the value chain and policy level, as well as the food or diet level).

GAIN is seeking to identify whether there is scope for developing additional metrics, indicators, or measurement approaches related to indigenous/traditional foods, and if so which are the specific topics on which such work is most needed.

As part of this work, GAIN seeks to undertake a scoping review to understand existing definitions, indicators/metrics, and methods / measurement approaches for understanding indigenous/traditional foods. The review should include indicators, indexes, survey questions, diagnostic tools, food profiling tools, and tools for policy and document analysis. The scope should cover indigenous/traditional foods as they manifest throughout the food system, including at the levels of foods, diets, food environments, value chains / food supply, and policies and other drivers. Particular focus should be placed on the extent to which the approaches examined

specifically focus on foods with documented beneficial aspects, considering human health as well as other factors where relevant. Where relevant, the review should make distinctions between ‘indigenous’ and ‘traditional’ foods as well as between how the terms might be used differently in different contexts or fields.

The review must use transparent and reproducible methods in line with best practices for systematic scoping reviews. The review should include both peer-reviewed, published studies and “grey literature” (e.g., documents from NGOs, government, and UN agencies; unpublished research studies and reports). Both quantitative and qualitative approaches should be included, with no restrictions on location.

GAIN seeks a consultant to undertake this review.

### 3. SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES

The consultant shall provide the following services:

- Work with the GAIN team to finalize the research questions to be answered by the review and its methodology.
- Develop a review protocol (search terms, databases, etc.), and finalize it based on input from GAIN
- Undertake keyword searches in relevant databases (e.g., Scopus, Web of Science) and search the websites of relevant organizations (e.g., UN agencies) to identify relevant documents, clearly documenting the search methods
- Screen all identified documents for inclusion using defined inclusion/exclusion criteria, clearly documenting reasons for exclusion
- Review the full text of all relevant documents and extract relevant information using a standardized template
- Regularly update GAIN on the progress of the review, including discussing initial results and using those to adapt strategies if necessary
- Carefully document all steps of the review process
- Develop an outline for the final report, for GAIN review and approval
- Draft a full report on the review, including methods, data collection activities, results and conclusions/ recommendations, with all referencing done using a reference management software such as Zotero
- Revise and finalize report based on GAIN input

#### 3.1. DELIVERABLES

The consultant shall provide the following:

- A completed and approved review protocol
- PDFs of all identified papers included in the review
- A draft report summarizing the literature, including an in-depth discussion of existing definitions, metrics, and methods, their strengths/weaknesses, and gaps
- A finalized version of this report, revised based on GAIN feedback

The table below provides illustrative dates for the work.

Deliverable	Deadline
Contract signing	25 June, 2025
Review protocol and draft outline (approved by GAIN)	15 July, 2025

Draft report + copies of all papers included + reference management software file containing information on all references	7 September, 2025
Final report	10 October, 2025

### 3.2 EXPECTED EXPERTISE

The consultant should have prior experience undertaking systematic reviews and/or scoping reviews. S/he should have strong knowledge of nutrition and food systems. S/he should be fluent in English. Specific knowledge of indigenous/traditional foods related topics is desirable. Knowledge of or experience with assessment/development of metrics/methods is desirable. **The consultant must have existing access to academic journal subscriptions through, for example, an academic library; GAIN will not be able to pay for journal access.**

Either individuals or institutions are eligible to apply, but close attention will be paid to cost-effectiveness, and the number of work person-days spent and the associated budget are expected to be relatively modest.

**Note this call is open for proposals only from organizations registered in the European Union, European Economic Area, Switzerland, or Low- and Middle-Income countries. For more details on which countries these are, please refer to the [EU PRAG Rules](#) and [Annexes](#).**

## 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.

### 1. CONTACT

Please direct all inquiries and other communications to [rfp@gainhealth.org](mailto:rfp@gainhealth.org)

### 2. BUDGET

Applicants are required to provide GAIN with a detailed fee proposal, including the number of days of work projected and the daily rate. The final fee will have to be approved by the organisation prior to starting the project.

### 3. SUBMISSION

Interested consultants should prepare: (a) an expression of interest (no more than 4 pages) including reasons for interest in the task, relevant qualifications, prior experience with undertaking systematic or scoping literature reviews, and estimated days and daily rate; (b) a brief (up to 4 pages) CV of highlighting recent relevant experience and publications; and (c) a completed 'Offer of Services' form (see end of document).

These documents should be sent to GAIN ([rfp@gainhealth.org](mailto:rfp@gainhealth.org)) **by 15 June 2025**. Please use the subject line 'Indigenous/traditional Foods Metrics Review' when responding.

#### **4. DEADLINE**

Completed proposals should be submitted to [rfp@gainhealth.org](mailto:rfp@gainhealth.org) before **15 June 2025, 23:39 Central European Time**.

#### **5. UNACCEPTABLE**

The following proposals will automatically not be considered or accepted:

- Proposals that are received after the RFP deadline at the specified receiving office.
- Proposals received by fax or mail.
- Incomplete proposals.

#### **6. 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.

#### **7. COMPLETION**

- 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 Request for Proposal (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.

#### **8. 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.

#### **9. REFERENCES**

GAIN reserves the right, before awarding the consultancy, 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.

#### **10. RELEASE OF INFORMATION**

After awarding the consultancy and upon written request to GAIN, only the following information will be released: Name of the successful applicant.

### **III. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THIS SOLICITATION**

#### **1. 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.

#### **2. 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.

#### **3. 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.

#### **4. EVALUATION CRITERIA**

Proposals will be reviewed by the Selection Team using the following criteria. This list is not exhaustive or 100% inclusive and is provided to enhance the applicants' ability to respond with substance.

- Understanding of the scope of work:
- Past experience undertaking similar work
- Rate

**GAIN reserves the right to contact the individual in order to verify the information provided as part of the Proposal.**

#### **5. REVIEW PROCESS**

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

#### **6. 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.

#### **7. 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.

## **8. 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.

## **9. 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.

## **10. 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.

## **11. 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:

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(Print or type name and address)

2. 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 estimated fee:
- a. \_\_\_\_ Days
  - b. At \_\_\_\_\_ USD per day
3. 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.
4. 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)