

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

ASSESSING THE ROLLOUT AND UPTAKE OF A MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (FORTIFYMIS) FOR MONITORING OIL FORTIFICATION OUTCOMES IN BANGLADESH

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. At GAIN, we believe that everyone in the world should have access to nutritious and safe food. We work to understand and deliver specific solutions to the daily challenge of food insecurity faced by poor people. By understanding that there is no “one-size-fits-all” model, we develop alliances and build tailored programmes, using a variety of flexible models and approaches. We build alliances between governments, local and global businesses, and civil society to deliver sustainable improvements at scale. We are part of a global network of partners working together to create sustainable solutions to malnutrition. Through alliances, we provide technical, financial and policy support to key participants in the food system. We use specific learning, evidence of impact, and results of projects and programmes to shape and influence the actions of others.

2. BACKGROUND

Large-scale fortification of staple foods and condiments is a cost-effective strategy to help address micronutrient deficiencies when it is implemented through centralized food industries and adequately enforced (Bhutta et al., 2013; Horton, 2006). Unfortunately, fortification compliance with national standards is often low, thereby limiting its potential for impact (Aaron et al., 2017). This trend is apparent in the Bangladesh edible oil fortification program, as evidenced by recent findings.

GAIN is working with governmental and non-governmental partners to support the fortification of edible oil with vitamin A to address the high prevalence of deficiency (20.59% of children of school age were Vitamin A deficient, according to the Bangladesh Micronutrient Survey of 2011-2012). One of the goals is to support the management of the program through a functional management information system, which will facilitate the availability of monitoring data to guide decision making by the Ministry.

2.1. FORTIFICATION REGULATORY MONITORING IN BANGLADESH AND FORTIFYMIS

One of the main intervention components that is being explored in Bangladesh (and various other countries globally) is the strengthening of regulatory monitoring through capacity building and technical support. Regulatory monitoring has been highlighted as a main constraint to improved program performance (Luthringer, Rowe, Vossenaar, & Garrett, 2015). Specifically, it is agreed that information on program performance needs to be collated and transferred to persons such as producers (during procurement, production, dispatch) and inspectors (during external, import, or market inspections), who need this information to make upstream decisions that ensure the downstream supply of a quality food vehicle that meets national fortification standards.

It is against this backdrop that GAIN and Food Fortification Initiative (FFI) have designed and are rolling out the **fortification management information system (FortifyMIS)** in select countries, including Bangladesh. The FortifyMIS was recently (March 2018) accepted by the Ministry of Industry in Bangladesh for implementation in the coming months to facilitate the collection and aggregation and visualization of monitoring data and accelerate availability of information for decision making at different levels. This is being undertaken in partnership with the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution (BSTI). The FortifyMIS will supplement current government monitoring efforts and is intended to make them more efficient. (See Table 1 for indicative list of actors and decisions they are supposed to

make.) It is premised on the plausible assumption that making data and resultant information more readily and quickly available will trigger timelier (corrective) actions.

2.2 What is the FortifyMIS?

The FortifyMIS is a “management information system (MIS), i.e. a computerized platform to facilitate data collection, consolidation, aggregation, and usage for decision-making. An MIS can store and process data from multiple users, combine the data together, and share data between stakeholders to better monitor a process or program, such as a country’s food fortification program. An MIS can also automate data compilation into reports to allow for rapid, real-time data viewing for decision making. An MIS has the benefit of being able to:

- Reduce the resource burden for monitoring;
- Speed up reporting and sharing of data by tracking information in real time;
- Decentralize data collection to reduce fraud and better triangulate data; and
- More efficiently and effectively use data for decision-making in a timely, cost-effective, and sustainable way.

Using an MIS does not replace any existing monitoring system and does not create a new monitoring system. An MIS can only facilitate, streamline, and digitize an existing monitoring system or framework that is in use. It uses existing monitoring procedures (typically done using pen and paper methods) that must already be in use to more effectively and more rapidly facilitate data collection, aggregation, and usage. Where relevant, a roll-out of the FortifyMIS as a monitoring tool should be accompanied by complementary efforts to support and strengthen national monitoring systems, including building capacity for QA/QC at industry level, technical auditing and inspections at the regulatory or food control level, and product testing methods at laboratory level.

FortifyMIS is a web-based MIS that supports compliance monitoring of fortification programs (via inspections at producer and import levels) and performance measurement (via inspections at markets). FortifyMIS can be used on a computer, mobile phone, or tablet device. Although it is web-based, it is designed to also be used offline where WIFI or cellular data is not available and will automatically sync to the server once online again. FortifyMIS can be completely customized to any country context with their own data collection tools, dashboards, and reports based on needs and specific interests. This includes customizing the language of the MIS, the types of users, and user roles and permissions. FortifyMIS can flag outliers to facilitate rapid corrective action and communication between food producers and food regulators/inspectors. Dashboards and reports are automatically generated with key charts and graphs for reporting and data visualization in real time for program managers and other decision makers. FortifyMIS is safe and secure. Each user has a unique login and password and is set up with individual roles, access rights, and viewing privileges as defined by a country’s monitoring framework. Only users with the right permissions and roles can access the data. Identifying, proprietary, or sensitive data can be blinded to ensure user confidentiality. FortifyMIS does not create any new work or new procedures. It simply digitizes existing procedures so that they can occur more effectively and more rapidly to facilitate responsive decision-making.” (FortifyMIS User Manual, 2020)

At this early stage of planning and during early implementation, **it is important to assess the readiness of potential users to accept, take up and utilize the system and inform scale up of the innovation in Bangladesh and globally.**

Table 1. Fortification actors in Bangladesh and their roles in monitoring (Indicative list)

Component	Sub-component	Responsible entity	Purposes	Key indicators ¹
Internal Monitoring	Quality Assurance (QA)	Oil producers/refineries and repackers: procurement, production, QC and storage personnel	Implement necessary procedures to manufacture fortified food vehicle that complies with national fortification standards	QA procedures in place at the food vehicle production site and well documented
	Quality Control (QC)	Oil producers/ refineries and repackers: QC personnel	Confirm that fortified food vehicle complies with national standards	QC procedures in place and well documented, including sampling and testing protocols. Food vehicle tests from producers meet fortification specifications according to country standards
Producer/internal lab				
External Monitoring	Quality assurance – Auditing	Government regulatory authority: BSTI /Mol (Dhaka, Chittagong, Khulna, Rajshahi and Sylhet)	Verify that QA activities are performed at fortified food producers according to established internal monitoring protocols.	Auditing protocol in place and well documented.
	Quality control - Inspection	Government regulatory authority: BSTI /Mol (Dhaka, Khulna, Rajshahi, Sylhet and Chittagong)	Verify that QC activities are performed at fortified food producers according to established internal monitoring protocols. Confirm that fortified food vehicle complies with the fortification standards	Inspection protocol in place and well documented. Samples of food vehicle from producers meet fortification specifications according to country standards
BSTI lab, sanitary inspectors, mobile court				
Commercial Monitoring		Government regulatory authority: BSTI /Mol (Dhaka and Chittagong)	Confirm that all food vehicle available to the consumer in the marketplace complies with quality, packaging, labeling, fortification levels as indicated in the fortification standards	Retail and market samples of food vehicle meet fortification specifications according to country standards
		BSTI lab, sanitary inspectors, mobile court		
Import Monitoring		Customs (Dhaka and Chittagong)	Confirm that food vehicle entering the country is fortified in the country of origin, is accompanied by proper documentation, and complies with fortification standards	Certificate of Conformity (or Analysis) for imported fortified food vehicle
		Customs (Dhaka and Chittagong)		Samples of imported fortified food vehicle tested meet fortification specifications
		BSTI lab /customs		

¹ Ref: WHO/CDC indicators, Regulatory monitoring policy guidance document

3. OBJECTIVES

The main objective is to assess the relevance, readiness and implementation feasibility of FortifyMIS at each stage of fortification program implementation and management and by different users (producer users – during procurement,

production, and dispatch; inspector users – during external, import, or market inspections; and laboratory users) aligning with current government monitoring effort to guide decision making of Ministry.

We envision this objective being met by undertaking a series of formative evaluation methods that include structured observations, document review and verification and in-depth interviews with a representative selection of the key actors (producers during procurement, production, and dispatch; inspectors during external, import, or market inspections; and laboratory staff during quality assurance and quality control) to answer the research questions below. The observations and document reviews will be conducted during a “typical” or normal date of assessment.

At a minimum, the following areas will be assessed:

- i. Current monitoring¹: What tools and processes for data collection, and reporting of key results (as defined by the key data and indicators included in the FortifyMIS) are currently in place to check or verify the extent to which the food vehicle meets national standards: by the:
 - Producers/refineries during procurement, production, dispatch, etc.
 - Inspectors during external, import, or market inspections
 - Laboratory, receiving samples for testing
- ii. Relevance: To what extent are the key decisions and actions needed to drive compliance being made? What are the primary bottlenecks for each category of actors? [Probe to ascertain the importance of information as an input for decision making?]
- iii. Implementation feasibility: What is the state of readiness and what contextual factors exist that could impede or enhance uptake of an electronic management information system?
 - Policies (e.g. the Information, Communication Technology act) are enabling and not in (actual or perceived) conflict.
 - Availability of technology (smart phones, tablets, computers, other devices, internet connectivity).
 - Staff already use and are familiar with aspects of the technology.
 - Availability of sufficiently skilled persons in refineries, Ministries, BSTI.
 - Constraints faced by different actors with current monitoring system.
 - Constraints different actors need to overcome for FortifyMIS to run properly. Willingness of intended users to input or share relevant data.
 - Government willingness to have country data stored in a cloud platform or on their own servers and to share with relevant stakeholders as necessary.
 - What other systems exist in terms of MIS' (e.g. HIS, other MIS, Food Safety, etc.)
- iv. Uptake: How well is the FortifyMIS being taken up and used by frontline implementers and by decision makers? What are the barriers and enablers of effective uptake and use? What can be done to ensure optimal use of the system and data/information?

The results of this assessment will be used to inform further deployment of FortifyMIS to other actors across the fortification value chain. Additionally, this assessment will inform possible integration of FortifyMIS with other data systems and technologies.

The Service Provider should propose the methods for the assessment of the above-mentioned research questions based on their expertise. It is expected that the research will include a review of the literature on management information

¹ Of interest also is the presence, extent and effects of parallel structures for monitoring and reporting that may exist at sub-national levels and/or in support of different organizational projects. For example, GAIN has previously collected data on quality of oil in Bangladesh that is likely different from what the government collected or would/should have collected for their own decision making. Furthermore, it is likely that the same person compiled both parallel reports.

systems and digital technologies across similar value chains, followed by purposeful primary data collection (qualitative and/or quantitative, e.g. key informant interviews, focus group discussions, participant observations) with value chain actors, as appropriate.

4. SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES

4.1. SCOPE OF WORK

The successful applicant shall provide the following services:

- Develop a detailed study protocol (including detailed methodology and justification, sampling plan (where applicable), and data analysis plan) and data collection tools for review and approval by GAIN.
- Conduct review of available literature and secondary data sources as appropriate.
- Obtain relevant access and data collection permissions as appropriate e.g. ethical committees, government, industry. Negotiate relevant access and data collection permissions.
- Develop data entry tools and data quality standard operating procedures.
- Carry out all aspects of primary data collection, quality assurance, and data entry, cleaning, management and analyses.
- For any primary data collected, provide GAIN with raw and clean datasets, accompanying codebooks, and syntax and output of all data analyses. If quantitative data are collected, data documentation must be provided using Nesstar².
- Develop final report outline for review and approval by GAIN.
- Draft full report, including literature review, methods, data collection activities, results and conclusions/recommendations.
- Revise and finalize report based on inputs from GAIN.
- Collaborate with GAIN on the development of peer-reviewed publications.

4.2. DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINE

The timeline for completion of all aspects of the Scope of Work and submission of deliverables is by end of June 2021 as outlined in the following table:

DELIVERABLE	DEADLINE
Proposal submission	21 August 2020
Final response regarding selection of Service Provider	4 September 2020
Contracting process finalized	15 September 2020
Methodology and tools finalized and presented to GAIN; approvals obtained	30 September 2020
Literature review of MIS for fortification, and lessons learned from other programs and contexts. Detailing implications for FortifyMIS, and the current research.	30 October 2020
Data collection, and data analyses completed	March 2021

² A free editor developed in conjunction with the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD) <http://www.nesstar.com/software/publisher.html>

Presentation of preliminary results to GAIN	April 2021
Draft report submitted	May 2021
Final report submitted	30 June 2021

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

Key program and technical staff from GAIN are part of the selection team of the organisation and will review the proposals. They will be available via email to respond to clarifications on this solicitation. Please direct all inquiries and other communications to rfp@gainhealth.org. Responses will not be confidential except in cases where proprietary information is involved.

2. BUDGET

Applicants are required to provide GAIN with a detailed budget in Bangladeshi Taka and/or US Dollars, 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 will 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. FORMAT FOR PROPOSAL

The proposal needs to be formatted as two separate documents:

- Technical proposal outlining the research objectives and methods;
- Financial proposal outlining budget accompanied by a budget narrative.

4. SUBMISSION

Complete proposals should be submitted in electronic copy to: rfp@gainhealth.org

Required components for proposal submission (see also evaluation criteria for additional guidance) are:

- i. Description of previous relevant work (maximum 1 page)
- ii. Composition of team with names and brief (maximum 3 page) bio of all key staff
- iii. Detailed proposal explaining how the areas of work mentioned in Scope of Work will be addressed (maximum 15 pages)
- iv. Budget
- v. Detailed budget justification
- vi. Risk and mitigation strategy
- vii. Timeline
- viii. References

5. DEADLINE

Completed proposals should be submitted to rfp@gainhealth.org by **5:00 pm CET on 21 August 2020**.

6. 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 post.
- Incomplete proposals.
- Proposals that are not signed.

7. REVISIONS

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

8. 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.

9. COMPLETION

- Proposals must be submitted on official letterhead of the lead organisation or firm and 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 GAIN at rfp@gainhealth.org 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.

10. 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.

11. 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.

12. 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

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. 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 using the proposed information technology platform.
- 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.
- 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.

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:

(Print or type business, corporate 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 prices:
3. [to be completed]
4. [to be completed]
5. [to be completed]
6. [to be completed]
7. 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.
8. 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 [add month and year] in [add location].

_____ [add title]

Signature (applicant)

_____ [add title]

Signature (applicant)