

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING COMMUNICATION STRATEGY TO PROMOTE BIOFORTIFIED FOOD PRODUCTS AND IMPROVE ITS CONSUMER AWARENESS IN INDIA

Issued by
The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)
And
HarvestPlus

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF WORK	2
II. INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESPONDING	5
III. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THIS SOLICITATION	7
IV. OFFER OF SERVICES	9

I. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF WORK

1. ABOUT GAIN AND HARVESTPLUS

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.

HarvestPlus believes that hidden hunger (micronutrient deficiency) should not be inevitable for the people most at risk and aims to break down silos between agriculture and nutrition to develop creative solutions to hidden hunger. HarvestPlus’ food-based approach targets some of the most vulnerable populations around the world using a process called biofortification, which adopts conventional breeding to improve crops. This approach complements other nutrition interventions, and is evidence-based, cost-effective, and sustainable. The organisation works across the entire value chain to develop and deliver nutrient enriched seeds, grains and foods to the people who need it the most via a large collection of innovative and traditional supply chain activities. HarvestPlus is part of the CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH).

GAIN and HarvestPlus launched a landmark partnership in 2019 to accelerate progress in improving access to biofortified seeds, grains and foods via commercial channels with the Commercialisation of Biofortified Crops (CBC) programme.

The CBC programme works with national partners to catalyse commercial markets for biofortified crops and foods in six countries with pervasive levels of malnutrition: Bangladesh, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Tanzania. Initial funding for the program is from Germany’s Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The partnership brings together two leading actors in the global nutrition space. It combines the deep expertise of HarvestPlus in all aspects of biofortification with GAIN’s proven track record of working with fortification and food companies to create sustainable market models for nutritious food systems.

In India, the project specifically focuses on 2 crops – Wheat and Pearl Millet biofortified with Zinc and Iron respectively. The target implementation geography would be six states – Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab for Zinc Wheat and Rajasthan, Maharashtra, and Karnataka for Iron Pearl Millet. As part of this work, GAIN is issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP) and will be the administrative lead organisation for this RFP. The purpose of this RFP is to engage the services of a service provider to develop and implement a communication strategy to promote biofortified food products of zinc wheat and iron pearl millet and improve their consumer awareness in the six target states in India.

2. BIOFORTIFICATION IN INDIA

India is home to some 1.3 billion people. In India, 30% of adult males, 45% of adult females, 80% of pregnant females, and 60% of children are iron deficient. Meanwhile, some 300 million Indians (22% of the population) are deficient in zinc, including 44% of all Indian children under the age of five.

Nationally, pearl millet is consumed by 6-7% of households in India but reaches a much higher percentage in six states, i.e. Rajasthan, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Maharashtra, and Uttar Pradesh. Gujarat, Haryana and Rajasthan account for 90% of pearl millet production and consumption. Other states where the crop is often consumed include Maharashtra and Karnataka. Consumption of pearl millet is highest in the state of Rajasthan, at 60 grams per day on average. Wheat is widely consumed across all states in India with an average consumption of 138 grams per day, accounting for 20% of daily caloric intake. Outside of southern India, average consumption is even higher. Major wheat cultivation and production hub are found in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Punjab.

Biofortified¹ varieties of pearl millet and wheat are potential vehicles for increasing iron and zinc intakes, respectively, that could significantly reduce the prevalence of iron and zinc deficiency in the Indian population. Iron pearl millet is estimated to provide up to 70% of daily iron needs in young women while zinc wheat biofortified is estimated to provide up to 50% of daily zinc needs.

In support of the production and consumption of biofortified iron pearl millet, the Indian Council on Agricultural Research (ICAR) has mandated that all released varieties of hybrid pearl millet seed be biofortified to a minimum of 42 ppm iron. In addition, iron pearl millet has recently been included as a commodity that will be distributed via the Public Distribution System (PDS). India's PDS, managed through central and state governments, works to ensure that staple commodities are available to India's poorest at fair prices. This system has a reach of some 800 million people.

Under the CBC programme, GAIN (based in New Delhi) and HarvestPlus (based in Hyderabad) will collaborate to support and facilitate the commercialisation of biofortified iron pearl millet in Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Karnataka, and zinc wheat in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Punjab. The project will work with selected value chain actors involved from farmers to food processors and establish a sustainable value chain for iron pearl millet and zinc wheat.

With both crops, the focus is to work with a limited number of small to mid-size food processors and millers, having established packaged, labelled and branded food products in the local/regional market. The project will facilitate these selected millers and processors and their associated value chain partners (retailers, aggregators) in integrating and marketing biofortified food products in their portfolio.

Simultaneously, we will engage with state and national governments to encourage the procurement and distribution of biofortified grains through ongoing programmes and social protection schemes.

3. OBJECTIVES

The main objective is to engage a service provider to develop and implement a communication strategy to promote biofortified food products from zinc wheat and iron pearl millet and improve their consumer awareness in the six target states in India.

The target implementation geography would be focussed on districts within six states – Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Punjab for Zinc Wheat and Rajasthan, Maharashtra, and Karnataka for Iron Pearl Millet.

The key objectives of this assignment are:

- Design and develop a communication strategy to improve awareness and promote food products from biofortified wheat and pearl millet in target markets.

¹ Biofortification enhances the nutritional value of staple food crops by increasing the density of vitamins and minerals in a crop through conventional plant breeding, agronomic practices or biotechnology and is carried out in the agriculture sector.

- Determine key communication channels in the target markets that will provide improved visibility of biofortified products,
 - a) at point of purchase such as retailers, wholesalers
 - b) localized activations and events for consumer awareness
 - c) other cost-effective consumer media platforms and
 - d) for food processors and value chain actors
- Implementing the proposed localised campaign to improve awareness and market penetration of the select biofortified foods and food products in open and retail markets in the selected states.
- Support selected food processors in developing communication materials for marketing, branding, and labelling of their biofortified products.
- Implementing communication strategy to improve awareness on biofortification amongst food processors and other targeted intermediaries.

4. SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES

4.1. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION STATES: Punjab, Uttar Pradesh & Bihar (Wheat) and Rajasthan, Maharashtra & Karnataka (Pearl Millet) (Specific districts/cities yet to be finalised)

- A communication plan along with timelines that is scalable, sustainable and could factor in gradual increase in awareness and production across states
- Development of communication collaterals and roadmaps for each state on both food crops for:
 - A. Consumer recognition:
 - Key messaging and designs for localized communication campaigns
 - Creative collaterals that could be adopted by food processors in their respective communications – key messaging, identification, colours, and guidelines etc.
 - Media plan for the proposed campaign
 - B. Value chain actors' recognition:
 - Key messaging and design for value chain actors primarily food processors and intermediaries
 - Creative collaterals for influencing the value chain actors
 - Media plan for the proposed campaign
 - C. Pretesting of key messages, designs and concepts with target audiences for finalisation
- Production and implementation of finalised creatives for targeted campaigns in select cities in six states.
- All designs, art files and communication collaterals in standard editable formats
- Final report, including overview of the strategy, activities, results, impact evaluation of the activities carried out and future recommendations.

4.2. PROPOSED PROJECT TIMELINE: 16 August 2021 – 30 June 2022

4.3. DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINE:

The timeline for submission of deliverables is outlined in the following table:

DELIVERABLE	DEADLINE
Deadline to submit any questions	22 July 2021
Technical and financial proposal submission	30 July 2021
Presentation by shortlisted organisations	06 August 2021
Final response regarding selection of the executing agency	13 August 2021
Contracting process Initiated	16 August 2021

II. INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESPONDING

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

1. CONTACT

Key programme and technical staff from GAIN and HarvestPlus 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. with the subject line: COMMUNICATION STRATEGY FOR BIOFORTIFIED FOODS IN INDIA. 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 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 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. FORMAT FOR PROPOSAL

The proposal needs to be formatted as two separate documents:

- Technical proposal outlining
 - Description of previous relevant work and creative portfolio (maximum 3 pages)
 - Composition of team with names and brief biographies of all key staff (maximum 3 pages);
 - Detailed proposal explaining how the areas of work mentioned in Scope of Work will be addressed, implementation timeline, risks, and mitigation strategy (maximum 10 pages).
- Financial proposal outlining budget head for Planning, Design, Production, and Implementation of the campaign

4. SUBMISSION

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

An electronic copy containing the documents preferably in MS Word along with all the required information including the fee proposal should be submitted at the above given mail id.

5. DEADLINE

Completed proposals should be submitted to rfp@gainhealth.org by **5:00 pm IST on 30 July 2021**.

6. UNACCEPTABLE

The following proposals will automatically not be considered or accepted:

- Proposals that are received after the RFP deadline.
- Proposals received by fax or post.
- Incomplete proposals.

7. REVISIONS

Proposals may be revised by email 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 before the deadline specified in the timeline above.
- 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 reserve 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.
- **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.

5. REVIEW PROCESS

The review process will involve a Review Panel with participants selected by GAIN and HarvestPlus. The shortlisted organizations would be required to present their plans along with creative design options to GAIN and HarvestPlus.

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 authorize 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 rfp@gainhealth.org. 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 authorized 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.

(Print or type business, corporate name and

address)

8.

9. 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. [to be completed]

b. [to be completed]

c. [to be completed]

d. [to be completed]

10.

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.

13. 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)
