

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

IMPROVING ACCESS TO SAFE, HEALTHY AND AFFORDABLE NUTRITION AND PROMOTING ITS CONSUMPTION AMONG THE MOST VULNERABLE POPULATIONS THROUGH BIOFORTIFICATION AND COMMERCIALIZATION OF BIOFORTIFIED CROP VALUE CHAINS

Implementing the commercialization of biofortified crops in select geographies in India

**Issued by
The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)**

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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 improves nutrition and public health by developing and promoting biofortified food crops that are rich in vitamins and minerals while providing global leadership on evidence and technology. HarvestPlus is part of the CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH). CGIAR is a global agriculture research partnership for a food secure future. Its science is carried out by its 15 research centres in collaboration with hundreds of partner organizations. The HarvestPlus programme is headquartered at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI) in Washington, DC and collaborates with multiple CGIAR centres and partner organizations around the world.

GAIN and HarvestPlus share an ambition to expand coverage of biofortified nutrient dense foods to at least 200 million consumers by 2022, realizing a higher reach of up to three times this (600 million) from the initial investment by 2028. The current focus will be on biofortified varieties of six highly promising crops, developed by HarvestPlus and its partners. These crops form the frontline cluster of sentinel nutritious staple crops to be considered for commercialisation at scale by the partnership. We define commercialisation – the priority delivery approach – as the process of introducing a product into commerce or making it available in the market, rather than producing solely for family consumption.

2. BACKGROUND

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 an executing agency to implement the ‘commercialization of biofortified crops’ project 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.

2.1. 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.

GAIN (based in New Delhi) and HarvestPlus (based in Hyderabad) will collaborate to support the commercialisation of biofortified iron pearl millet in Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Karnataka, and zinc wheat in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, and Punjab. The food processing sector is seen as a key element for developing a market for biofortified foods. With both crops, we will work with food producers to develop new and innovative food products that are appealing to low-income consumers. Simultaneously, we will engage with governments to encourage distribution of biofortified varieties within the PDS system.

The draft implementation plans for both crops have been developed; however, additional information on the food processing sector in the selected locations was needed to finalize the programme designs. GAIN and HarvestPlus commissioned two assessments – a) to understand the value chains of the two crops in their respective states with extensive information on value chain actors such as farmers, aggregators, millers and processors and b) to understand the scope of an agri digital marketplace for commercialization of biofortified varieties and shortlisting the potential ones. These assessments were used to develop the biofortified pearl millet and wheat programme strategy and activities under the GAIN-HarvestPlus partnership to commercialise biofortified foods.

3. OBJECTIVES

The main objective is to engage the services of an executing agency to implement the 'commercialization of biofortified crops' project 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.

The key objectives of this project are:

- Setting-up of a Technical Support Unit, to ensure effective on ground implementation of Commercialization of Biofortified crops project in India
- Facilitate activities related to the implementation of the agri-digital marketplace in two states – Bihar and Rajasthan
- Oversee project monitoring, promotions and reporting
- Coordination and logistical support for project advocacy and outreach

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.

4. SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES

4.1. SCOPE OF WORK

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION STATES: Punjab, Uttar Pradesh & Bihar (Wheat) and Rajasthan, Maharashtra & Karnataka (Pearl Millet)

PROPOSED PROJECT TIMELINE: 1 January 2021 - 30 November 2022

The successful applicant shall provide the following services:

- Setting-up of a Technical Support Unit:
 - Establish the Project Management Team for implementation and coordination of 2 crops in 3 states each
 - Along with HarvestPlus team, facilitate and undertake project activities for biofortified crops – seed & grain - with seed multipliers, farmers, farmer associations, NGOs etc.
 - Interface with the food processors and millers for the uptake of biofortified grain and establish linkages with value chain intermediaries of respective food crops
 - Initiate meetings with different stakeholders - state government departments, NGOs, existing seed multipliers, farmers groups and digital marketplace partner
- Facilitate execution of promotional campaigns and activations for biofortified foods
- Coordinate with the agri-digital marketplace teams to facilitate activities related to deployment and operations of the agri-digital marketplace in two states – Bihar(Zinc Wheat) and Rajasthan(Iron Pearl Millet)
- Interact with state stakeholders – government departments and industry for project advocacy and outreach via stakeholder meetings, consultations and workshops.
- Provide capacity-building support to value chain actors especially food processors, millers, traders, aggregators and other identified intermediaries between farmers and consumers
- Oversee project monitoring and data reporting to GAIN
- General project logistics and activity management support
- Some crop-wise target numbers:

| # | Activities | Output | Target numbers (2021) | | Remarks |
|---|--|--|---|---|--|
| | | | Zinc Wheat | Iron Pearl Millet | |
| 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Onboarding/Sensitizing Value Chain Actors (VACs) primarily aggregators, millers and processors regarding biofortified crops • Participating with HarvestPlus in engagement with farmers, farmer producer organizations and seed companies | MoUs/Agreements with selected VACs | Aggregators: >12 Millers: >6 Potential farmers (HarvestPlus): >50,000 | Aggregators: >18 Millers: >9 Potential farmers (HarvestPlus): >30,000 | Target numbers subject to change and increase year on year |
| 2 | Facilitating biofortified grains (IPM and ZnW) aggregation and segregation throughout the value chain to maintain traceability | Supply chains for commercialization on established | Quantity: >12,000 MT | Quantity: > 60MT | |

| | | | | | |
|---|--|---|---|---|-----------------|
| 3 | Project review meetings – quarterly, bi-annually | Word reports, presentations, photographs, videos etc. | 1 quarterly, 1 bi-annual & 1 annual report with presentations/review meetings | 1 quarterly, 1 bi-annual & 1 annual report with presentations/review meetings | To be finalized |
|---|--|---|---|---|-----------------|

The project activities will involve extensive travel to the project implementation states, for engaging with state governments, industry partners and convening stakeholder meetings etc.

4.2. DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINE

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

| DELIVERABLE | DEADLINE |
|---|------------------|
| Deadline to submit any questions | 15 November 2020 |
| Technical and financial proposal submission | 30 November 2020 |
| Final response regarding selection of the executing agency | 7 December 2020 |
| Contracting process Initiated | 14 December 2020 |

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

4. SUBMISSION

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

5. DEADLINE

Completed proposals should be submitted to rfp@gainhealth.org by **5:00 pm ISD on 30 November 2020**.

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.
- 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. **The organization must have an active certification adhering to The Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Act, 2020** (Amendment to the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Act, 2010)

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 using the proposed information technology platform.
 - **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 & 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 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:

- a. [to be completed]
- b. [to be completed]
- c. [to be completed]
- d. [to be completed]

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 [add month and year] in [add location].

_____ [add title]

Signature (applicant)

_____ [add title]

Signature (applicant)