

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

REDUCING POST HARVEST LOSS ACROSS VITAMIN A MAIZE & CASSAVA VALUE CHAINS IN SELECTED GEOGRAPHIES NIGERIA

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

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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.

At HarvestPlus, we believe that hidden hunger should not be inevitable for the people most at risk. We break down silos between agriculture and nutrition to develop creative solutions to hidden hunger. Our food-based approach targets some of the most vulnerable populations around the world. We use 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. We work 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). 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.

GAIN and HarvestPlus share an ambition to expand coverage of biofortified nutrient dense foods to at least 190 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.

In May 2018, HarvestPlus and GAIN launched a landmark partnership 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 this 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.

The Commercialization of Biofortified Crops (CBC) programme is designed to scale up the commercialization of biofortified foods. The activities of the programme aim to achieve the following three goals with a sound evidence-based footing:

1. Improve access to inputs and markets for biofortified seeds and food products by: identifying and overcoming barriers to access and acquisition of biofortified seeds, accelerating business

development along the supply chains, and ensuring iterative research and development services are opened to link consumer and processor needs to continued crop and product modification.

2. Generate demand for these nutrient-rich staple crops using a demand creation approach that taps into the rational and emotional drivers of consumer choices for nutrient rich staples.
3. Improve the enabling environment for biofortified seeds and food products through advocacy, catalytic financing, and technology licensing services.

2. BACKGROUND

The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) is issuing this Request for Proposal (RFP) and will be the administrative lead organisation for this RFP.

The purpose of this RFP is to engage services of a Service Provider to improve adoption of post-harvest loss reduction practices across vitamin A cassava (VAC) and vitamin A maize (VAM) value chains in Nigeria, with further emphasis on aflatoxin awareness and mitigation strategies for VAM, amongst key value chain actors (i.e., farmer, input dealers, aggregators, transporters, food processors) in selected geographies in Nigeria.

2.1. BIOFORTIFICATION IN NIGERIA

Maize and cassava are grown widely across Nigeria owing to their wide adaptability and acceptance both in rural and urban regions, as they are common staples consumed by Nigerians. The country is the largest producer of cassava, and 12th largest for maize, amounting to about 60 million tons and 11 million MT for cassava and maize annually, respectively. These crops are utilized by various industries and food sectors; In cassava value chain, about 58% is utilized by micro industries, 27% consumed at farm level, 7.2% is utilized by processors and other small- and medium-enterprises (SMEs), and gifts account for the rest. About 46% of the maize produced annually is utilized by animal feed industries, 13% by flour and cereal industries, 7% by breweries, 24% through rural consumption, 10% consumed at farm level, and a percent through informal gifts.

Cassava is widely consumed in the forms of *garri* or *fufu*, which accounts for more than 60% of processed cassava. Over 100 million persons in Nigeria consume cassava products as a daily staple averaging 0.23kg of processed food per person. An estimated 100 million Nigerians consume maize products in one form or the other with per capita consumption standing at 25kg. Two types of maize – white and yellow – are mostly grown and consumed by farmers. White maize is very dominant in the north where it is grown for human consumption and for animal feed, yellow maize is popular in the south where it is grown mostly for fresh consumption. Currently, the market share for biofortified crops annually stand at 2.8% for cassava and 0.3% for maize (Dalberg 2019).

Nigeria is home to some 200 million people. According to 2018 National Nutrition Health Survey, about 60% of children in Nigeria do not receive adequate vitamin A in their diet and are therefore at risk of developing vitamin A deficiency. Biofortified¹ varieties of cassava and maize are potential vehicles to increase vitamin A intake by Nigerians and contribute to reducing the prevalence of vitamin A deficiency, especially for those individuals with less diverse diets. These biofortified crops have the potential of meeting up to 40% of the daily vitamin A needs of individuals.

The International Institute of Tropical Agriculture (IITA), the National Root Crops Research Institute (NRCRI) and the Federal Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (FMARD) have been working jointly over the

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.

years to release improved seed varieties of these biofortified crops to small- and medium-scale processors in the food sector, enhancing availability and distribution of the biofortified crops across the country. Likewise, the Federal Ministry of Health, via the Department of Family Health and Nutrition recommended biofortification as a long-term strategy to control vitamin A deficiency in its 2013 National Guidelines on Micronutrient Deficiency Control.

GAIN and HarvestPlus will collaborate to support the commercialisation of biofortified Maize and Cassava in select states. Addressing Post Harvest Loss (PHL) along VAM and VAC value chains is seen as a key input in unlocking commercial values for vitamins A maize, Cassava, and other food derivatives from these nutritious staples. We will work closely with the government and key stakeholders along these value chains to train key actors on PHL and support existing markets to create access and awareness around available solutions. Simultaneously, we will engage with governments to encourage distribution of biofortified varieties through agricultural development programs across the country.

Post-harvest deterioration of cassava and maize greatly impacts the commercial value of these staples, this in the long run affect quantity and quality of food processed by various food processors along the supply chains.

GAIN recently conducted a similar survey across the maize value chains to understand better on control practices associated with Aflatoxin and the determinants their adoption. Application of aflatoxin control practices amongst value chain actors in Nigeria has largely been impacted because of lack of consumer demand, business demand, and knowledge of this harmful toxin amongst actors. Certain key drivers and barriers have been identified (2021) in a study conducted on behalf of gain and HarvestPlus in Kaduna, Niger, Oyo, and Imo states of Nigeria. The following highlights key challenges that impact businesses from applying two or more control measurements to mitigate aflatoxin build up along the supply chain:

Processors

- Absence of consumer and business demand.
- Lack of knowledge about Aflatoxin.
- Lack of accessibility to control practices or lack of knowledge about how to access them.
- Absence of common premium pricing scheme for compliance with acceptable Aflatoxin limits.

Farmers

- Absence of consumer demand.
- Lack of knowledge about Aflatoxin.
- Absence of business demand.
- Absence of common premium pricing scheme for compliance with acceptable Aflatoxin limits.

Aggregators and Transporters

- Lack of knowledge about Aflatoxin.
- Absence of consumer demand.
- Absence of common premium pricing scheme for compliance with acceptable Aflatoxin limits.

On the other hand, some of the actors surveyed highlighted key drivers for the application of control practices which included the followings:

- Consumer/Client demand.
- Brand protection.
- Selling of quality produce.
- Contribution to food safety.
- To get premium prices.

3. OBJECTIVES

The main objective is to improve adoption of post-harvest loss reduction practices across the VAC and VAM value chains in Nigeria, with further emphasis on aflatoxin awareness and mitigation strategies for VAM, amongst key value chain actors (i.e., farmer, input dealers, aggregators, transporters, food processors).

The scope of the work will focus on Kano, Oyo, Niger, Kaduna, Cross River, Osun and Oyo states.

The specific objectives are:

1. Design and implement a strategy to support the adoption of post-harvest handling techniques of VAC and VAM crops post farm gate to retail markets. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - handling, transportation, aggregation, and storage -pre-factory gate;
 - handling and storage within processing facilities; and
 - post factory handling, distribution, and storage/merchandising in retail/wholesale markets.
2. Conduct a sensitization campaign on Aflatoxin, targeting maize value chain actors across the supply chain.
3. Improve adoption of aflatoxin control practices and the usage of Aflasafe™ amongst VAM value chain actors (i.e., input dealers, farmers, aggregators, transporters, food processors).
4. Build capacity of value chain actors on best control practices to address Aflatoxin build up along the VAM value chain.
5. Facilitate market linkages amongst actors that have adopted control practices to optimise the supply chain and deliver safe VAM crops and products.

4. SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES

4.1. SCOPE OF WORK

The successful applicant shall provide the following services:

- Develop concepts and best methods to communicate on PHL reduction across VAM and VAC value chains in Nigeria.
- Design and produce relevant communication materials on PHL reduction, Aflatoxin control campaign and training materials for value chain actors on Good Agronomic Practices (GAP) and Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP).
- Implement campaign and trainings on best practices for the control of Aflatoxin to promote pre-harvest, harvest and post-harvest practices to reduce toxin build up in selected States where GAIN and HarvestPlus are promoting VAM taking into our account the different timeline of events across the VAM value chain.
- Make recommendations to GAIN and HarvestPlus on business development support that can be provided to businesses across the VAC and VAM values chain to mitigate PHL amongst value chain actors we are working with.
- Draft monthly progress report on all activities with milestones covered for each crop in the 8 states (to be outlined in the implementation plan).

- Draft a final report, including overview of the strategy, activities, results, and future recommendations.

4.2. DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINE

The timeline for completion of all aspects of the Scope of Work and submission of deliverables is outlined in the following table:

DELIVERABLE	DEADLINE
Deadline to submit any questions	16 July 2021
Proposal submission	22 July 2021
Final response regarding selection of the executing agency	30 July 2021
Contracting process Initiated	1 August 2021
Kick off meeting with GAIN and HarvestPlus	10 August 2021
Implementation plan on full scope of work, for approval by GAIN and HarvestPlus	30 August 2021
Dissemination of communication materials and implementation of Post-harvest Loss support to actors	September-February 2021
Pre-Harvest and Harvest trainings on Aflatoxin control	March-June 2022
Monthly progress report	August - June 2022
Final report	June 2022

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 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: **Reducing PHL across VAM and VAC value chains in Nigeria**. Responses will not be confidential except in cases where proprietary information is involved.

2. BUDGET

Applicants are required to provide GAIN and HarvestPlus 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 and HarvestPlus prior to starting the project.

3. FORMAT FOR PROPOSAL

The proposal needs to be formatted as two separate documents:

- Technical proposal:
 - i. Description of previous relevant work (maximum 1 page);
 - ii. Composition of team with names and brief biographies of all key staff (maximum 3 pages);
 - iii. Detailed proposal explaining how the areas of work mentioned in Scope of Work will be addressed, including risk and mitigation strategy and timeline (maximum 10 pages);
 - a. An outline of the proposed strategy and implementation plans to make businesses investment ready strengthen in the eight states, including supporting rational illustrated with relevant Initial thoughts.
 - b. Details on how the agency intends to build the capacities of selected businesses to make them improve business efficiency and operations.
 - c. A plan on how agency will support businesses with linkages to credit/financial institutions.
 - iv. References.
- Financial proposal:
 - i. Budget;
 - ii. Detailed budget justification;
 - iii. Offer of services.

4. SUBMISSION

Complete proposals should be submitted in electronic copy to: rfp@gainhealth.org with the subject line: **Reducing PHL across VAM and VAC value chains in Nigeria**.

5. DEADLINE

Completed proposals should be submitted to rfp@gainhealth.org by **17:00 pm WAT on 22 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.
- 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 and HarvestPlus 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 and HarvestPlus have 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 and HarvestPlus. 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 and HarvestPlus reserve 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 and HarvestPlus 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 and HarvestPlus reserve 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.
- 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. GAIN and HarvestPlus shall each 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.

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:

- 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)