

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

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### **Implementation Research Study on Pilot Support for Food Systems SMEs in Marsabit and Isiolo**

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Issued by  
The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)

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## I. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF WORK

### 1. ABOUT GAIN

The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) is an alliance driven by the vision of a world without malnutrition. Created in 2002 at a Special Session of the UN General Assembly on Children, GAIN supports public-private partnerships to increase access to the missing nutrients in diets necessary for people, communities and economies to be stronger and healthier.

### 2. ABOUT NAWIRI

The USAID BHA funded 5-year Development Food Security Activity (DFSA) in Kenya, *Nutrition in ASALs within Integrated Resilient Institutions* (Nawiri) Program aims to sustainably reduce levels of acute malnutrition among vulnerable populations in Isiolo and Marsabit counties of the arid and semi-arid lands (ASAL) regions of Kenya.

Nawiri interventions includes those which work with local private-sector actors (e.g., producers and processors) who support the value chains for milk and meat, as well as work to support the role of the private sector in the local food system more broadly. To help inform this work, GAIN, the partner on the consortium leading the Market and Food Systems work, will work alongside other partners on the CRS-led Nawiri consortium to undertake a pilot intervention to test the feasibility and potential effects of providing support to milk and meat producing businesses through grants and bespoke technical assistance.

A study will accompany the implementation of these activities to test the viability of the approach in the context of Isiolo and Marsabit counties. This will include:

- Identifying whether the technical assistance and/or financing received has the potential to support local businesses' ability to improve the year-round supply of safe, nutritious foods (meat and milk).
- Identifying ways in which the approach may need to be adapted to better align to the context of Isiolo and Marsabit and ensuring all year-round supply and consumption of nutritious food.

The overall goal is to examine whether such support can result in viable business models for SMEs to commercialize meat and milk products in Isiolo and Marsabit counties and specifically to reach vulnerable communities with those nutritious food products.

### 3. PURPOSE OF THE RFP

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 undertake a research study to answer the following research questions:

#### ***Main Pilot question:***

How can the MNF approach result in a viable business model for SMEs commercializing meat and milk products to vulnerable communities in Isiolo and Marsabit counties?

#### ***Pilot Sub-questions:***

1. Can the MNF approach support SMEs to develop or improve feasible business models for greater food commercialization in Isiolo and Marsabit counties?
2. For these business models to prove viable for the milk products in Marsabit and meat product in Isiolo, what technical and/or financial support do the firms require?
3. How do the generated products and retail marketing strategies, once implemented, align with local demand and preferences (e.g., in terms of taste, affordability, convenience, perceived safety/quality, frequency of purchasing), particularly those of women-headed

households? How do these products align with consumer perceptions (e.g nutritious value, origin, way of production, relate to food safety, quality of the product?

4. What level of production and sale of preserved meat and milk can be achieved by an SME under Isiolo and Marsabit real-world conditions, after short-term technical or financial assistance and without other value chain interventions?

The first sub-question will examine the various areas wherein the SMEs may need support (e.g., preservation technology, marketing, food/ safety) and test whether and how those needs can be met, in practice, through technical assistance providers. This would include examining whether external constraints and barriers (e.g., poor road access for distribution, lack of cold chain and refrigeration solutions, irregular market demand) within the ASAL region are too high to be overcome through technical assistance and financing alone. Within the second sub-question, when the business models are found to be not viable, the consultant should consider how business models might need to be changed, or how the local SMEs might need to be further supported, to increase the viability of the business models and improve productivity. The research should also verify that the approach can be delivered at scale (e.g., that sufficient eligible SMEs exist, and sufficient local technical assistance providers exist to meet their needs) and that the firms' business models are plausibly sustainable (actual sustainability cannot be established within such a short pilot). Within the fourth sub-question, the research should quantitatively measure production and sales changes before and after implementation of support, paying close attention to seasonality and issues of the stability of production and sale across seasons.

## Data Collection Methods

The research will use the following data collection methods:

- **Focus group discussions (FGDs):** Three FGDs in each county (with approximately 6-8 participants) will be carried out with participating vulnerable households at the start of the study, to better understand relevant practices, experiences, and ideas and to inform how to best position processed meat and milk products to ensure they align with local contexts and preferences.
- **Key informant interviews (KIIs):** Key community influencers and gatekeepers, including local business leaders, market managers, financial services providers, and/or select government officials from relevant county departments (trade, agriculture, health etc.), will be interviewed to give insight on the local viability of the approach.
- **Interviews with target SMEs:** A series of interviews with leaders/owners and, as useful, staff will be conducted at each of the two supported businesses to assess adoption of the proposed business model including potential support required, production and sales volumes of preserved products, functionality of the existing value chain, barriers to commercialization, and the ease of doing business in the county, including in priority Isiolo and Marsabit communities that contribute to acute malnutrition. Quantitative data on production and sales will also be collected. It is expected that there will be at least three sets of interviews (at beginning, middle, and end of implementation), each targeting 2-3 staff members at each firm.
- **Interviews with retailers:** Interviews will also be carried out with the retailers to examine their perceptions of these products at point of sale, possible/expected barriers for these sales and how they can be addressed constructively. It is expected that at least 10 retailers per firm will be interviewed.
- **Interviews with consumers:** At the end of the pilot, intended consumers will be interviewed (either via individual interviews, group interviews, or a survey—to be determined) to gauge their levels of exposure and access to the dried meat and milk products, their perception towards the products any trial purchases and repeat purchases, and the overall acceptability (affordability, convenience, taste) and satisfaction from the products available for purchase, during the pilot period. It is expected that

15-20 consumers per firm will be interviewed if using individual interviews, with a larger sample size if group interviews or a survey is used.

In addition, the consultant should also undertake a review of existing Nawiri research, which will be provided to the consultant, and situate the results within that research.

#### **4. SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES**

The consultant will lead this research, including designing the detailed methodology and tools, collecting data, analysing data, and reporting on the results. The consultant will lead in the hiring of any additional staff needed to undertake the work (e.g., interviewers or translators) and with all logistical arrangements for the fieldwork. All work should be done in close collaboration with GAIN.

The Service Provider shall provide the following Services:

- Based on existing summary methodology, develop a clear study protocol encompassing the above-mentioned data collection methods
- Develop a clear protocol for all the above-mentioned data collection methods.
- Translate data collection tools and instruments into local language(s), as needed.
- Develop a logistical plan to undertake data collection throughout the pilot project period, incorporating comments from GAIN
- Lead the Contracting of interviewers and supervise interviewers (and translators, if needed)
- Develop a training plan and supporting materials for the interviewers, incorporating comments from GAIN.
- Train interviewers: note that contracting and training interviewers will need to be done twice, for the data collection at the beginning of the study and that at the end.
- Manage all aspect of the data collection for this study including any preliminary activities needed to conduct field work such as contacting community leaders, requesting permissions to conduct the field work, and identifying potential participants.
- Conduct the above-mentioned data collection activities (focus group discussions, key informant interviews, SME interviews, retailer interviews, consumer interviews/survey)
- Train SMEs to collect necessary data (e.g., production, sales)
- Ensure the SMEs provide the necessary data (e.g., production, sales) on a regular basis (monthly or weekly) and follow-up with them as needed to obtain this data
- Supervise data collection and ensure activities are conducted as planned
- Transcribe and translate into English all qualitative data collected as part of this study
- Input into a database all quantitative data collected as part of this study
- Share preliminary results with GAIN on an ongoing basis
- Analyze the data using appropriate quantitative and/or qualitative data analysis methods, via appropriate data analysis software
- Report on the initial results, ongoing learnings, and final results of the pilot study
- Present, as requested, to stakeholders on the pilot study results
- Provide GAIN with all data collected in the study in Microsoft Excel, Stata, and/or Microsoft Word formats

#### **4.1 DELIVERABLES**

The Service Provider shall provide the following deliverables:

- A study protocol, revised based on GAIN input
- A complete set of data collection tools, revised based on GAIN input
- An initial report on the first set of data collection activities (focus group discussions, key informant interviews)
- A mid-term report including the first few months of data collection from the SMEs and the SME interviews
- A final draft report including the results of all data collection activities and responding to all of the above-mentioned research questions

- A revised version of this report, taking into account GAIN and stakeholder feedback
- Presentations to relevant stakeholders based on this report
- All quantitative and qualitative data collected through the pilot study.

#### 4.2 TIMELINE

The work is expected to begin in **April 2021**, with the final report submitted by **September 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.

### CONTACT

Please direct all inquiries and other communications to the contact information below. Responses will not be confidential except in cases where proprietary information is involved:

**Sigu Jacqueline** on [jsigu@gainhealth.org](mailto:jsigu@gainhealth.org)

## 5. BUDGET

Applicants are required to provide GAIN with a detailed fee percentage proposal. The final budget amount will have to be approved by the organisation prior to starting the project.

## 6. FORMAT FOR PROPOSAL

The proposal needs to be formatted as follows:

- A technical proposal, not to exceed 5 pages of single-spaced text, outlining the consultant's plan for the research and the associated methodological approaches, including for data analysis. The proposal should include sample sizes for all data collection methods, a timeline, information on types of data collection and analysis software to be used, information on interviewers to be recruited and clear explanations of how the study will answer the research questions outlined above.
- Detailed profiles (qualification, expertise, relevant experience etc.) of the individual(s) who will be completing the work including full name(s), expertise and publications in relevant research.
  - The applicant should have relevant experience with implementation research on the topic of market development or business development in the agri-food sector in Kenya; experience within the ASALs region is a strong advantage
- A financial proposal, in a separate document, that includes a budget for all costs (including, for example, personnel, travel, meetings, overhead if applicable, and miscellaneous expenses). All prices/rates quoted must be in Ksh and inclusive of all taxes/VAT as required.

**Interested service providers should submit technical and financial proposals (separately) using the GAIN technical and financial proposal templates. To receive the templates, please send a request for those to**

**Sigu Jacqueline** on [jsigu@gainhealth.org](mailto:jsigu@gainhealth.org)

## 7. SUBMISSION

Interested consultants should Submit their Technical and Financial proposal, this should be an electronic copy preferably in MS Word to GAIN through an online submission to [gainkenya@gainhealth.org](mailto:gainkenya@gainhealth.org)

## 8. DEADLINE

Completed proposals should be submitted to GAIN **before 5:00 PM EAT on 10/04/2021.**

## 9. 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.
- Incomplete proposals.
- Proposals that are not signed.

## 10. REVISIONS

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

## 11. 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.

## 12. 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 the responsible person at GAIN under section II. Point 1., prior to making their submission.
- While GAIN has used considerable efforts to ensure an accurate representation in this Request for Proposal (RFP), the information contained in this RFP is supplied solely as a guideline. The information is not warranted to be accurate by GAIN. Nothing in this RFP is intended to relieve applicants from forming their own opinions and conclusions with respect to the matters addressed in this RFP.
- By responding to this RFP, the applicant confirms its understanding that failing to comply with any of the RFP conditions may result in the disqualification of their submission.

## 13. 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.

## 14. 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.

## 15. 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**

#### **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.

#### **16. 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.

#### **17. 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.

#### **18. 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:
- Demonstrate a clear understanding of the technical requirements and methodological approaches of this RFP
- Comprehensiveness of work plan and reasonableness of proposed time frame:
- Detailed budget and cost-effectiveness of proposed approach:
- Personnel qualifications
- 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.**

#### **19. REVIEW PROCESS**

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

#### **20. 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.

#### **21. 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.



## 22. 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.

## 23. 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.

## 24. 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.

## 25. SCOPE OF CHANGE

Once the contract is signed, no increase in the liability of GAIN or in the fees to be paid by GAIN for the services resulting from any change, modification or interpretation of the documents will be authorised or paid to the applicant unless such change, modification or interpretation has received the express prior written approval of GAIN.

## IV. OFFER OF SERVICES

1. Offer submitted by:

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(Print or type 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. Click or tap here to enter text.
  - b. Click or tap here to enter text.
  - c. Click or tap here to enter text.
  - d. Click or tap here to enter text.
3. I (We) agree that the Offer of Services will remain valid for a period of sixty days (60) calendar days after the date of its receipt by GAIN.
4. I (We) herewith submit the following:
  - (a) A Proposal to undertake the work, in accordance with GAIN's requirements specified.
  - (b) A duly completed offer of services, subject to the terms herein.

**OFFERS WHICH DO NOT CONTAIN THE ABOVE-MENTIONED DOCUMENTATION OR DEVIATE FROM THE PRESCRIBED COSTING FORMAT MAY BE CONSIDERED INCOMPLETE AND NON-RESPONSIVE.**



Date this day of Click or tap here to enter text. In Click or tap here to enter text.

\_\_\_\_\_ Click or tap here to enter text.

Signature (applicant)

\_\_\_\_\_ Click or tap here to enter text.

Signature (applicant)