REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

ASSESSING THE DRIVERS AND BARRIERS OF SUPPLY AND DEMAND FOR BIOFORTIFIED RICE AMONG VALUE CHAIN ACTORS IN BANGLADESH

Issued by
The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)

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I. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF WORK

1. ABOUT GAIN 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 and HarvestPlus are jointly issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP). GAIN will be the administrative lead organisation for this RFP.

The purpose of this RFP is to engage services of a Service Provider to assess the drivers and barriers of supply and demand for biofortified rice among value chain actors in Bangladesh. The results of this assessment will be used to inform the design of the biofortified rice programme activities under the GAIN-HarvestPlus partnership to commercialise biofortified foods.

2.1. BIOFORTIFICATION IN BANGLADESH

Bangladesh is home to some 164 million people, of whom 90.5 million are deficient in zinc. Rice is an essential component of the diet of a typical Bangladeshi and there are limited sources of zinc, such as meat, in the diet. Daily per capita consumption of rice in Bangladesh is 390 to 450 grams, compared to an average of 145 g
globally, making biofortified zinc rice a potentially ideal food vehicle for increasing zinc intakes in the population.

Currently, over eight varieties of biofortified zinc rice are in production in Bangladesh. One variety (BRRI dhan 74-coarse) has shown promise in increasing on farm consumption of biofortified zinc rice. Another new variety (BRRI dhan 84-slender) has demonstrated higher yields, which may have greater potential for commercialisation. However, farmers have been slower to adopt these new varieties, expressing concerns about their productivity, and consumers typically prefer a finer grain of rice as opposed to the coarse zinc rice variety that is most widely produced.

In 2019, GAIN and HarvestPlus commissioned Dalberg to conduct a review on biofortified rice in Bangladesh that aimed to assess the potential for commercialising biofortified zinc rice in Bangladesh. The Dalberg report concluded that there were some important barriers to the commercialisation of zinc rice. In brief, these included: (1) misalignment of consumer preferences for a fine grain rice and the currently produced zinc rice varieties being mainly coarse; (2) low awareness of the existence of zinc rice among consumers; (3) limited agronomic competitiveness of currently available zinc rice varieties, in comparison to market leading rice varieties (however, the report recognized the potential for addressing this concern with newer (and updated) BRRI dhan 74-coarse and BRRI dhan 84-slender varieties); and (4) a lack of differentiated post-farm supply chain.

The Dalberg findings illustrate the complex issues around supply and demand of biofortified rice in Bangladesh. Considering this, GAIN and HarvestPlus are commissioning additional research to test a series of outstanding assumptions around the commercialisation of biofortified rice programme in Bangladesh before deciding how or whether to proceed to an implementation phase.

3. OBJECTIVES

The main objective is to assess the drivers and barriers of supply and demand for biofortified zinc rice among value chain actors, and consequently identify opportunities for commercialisation of biofortified zinc rice in Bangladesh.

The following is a list of research questions to be addressed in this research (note: questions are examples but not exhaustive). The scope of this research will cover four administrative districts in Bangladesh where two promising zinc rice types (i.e. BRRI dhan 74-coarse and BRRI dhan 84-slender) are currently being produced: Barishal (coarse); Jashore (coarse and slender); Thakurgaon (coarse and slender); and Bogura (slender).

RESEARCH AREA 1: FOOD MANUFACTURER DEMAND / PROCUREMENT MARKET RESEARCH

1. Who are the major procurers of rice to sell to consumers as a staple food and where do they procure it (e.g. contract farming, open market)?
2. Who are the major procurers of rice to sell to the processed food industry and where do they procure it (e.g. contract farming, open market)?
3. What potential market exists to increase consumption of these specific zinc rice types through public or private institutions or government feeding programmes?

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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. What is the nature of the market for minimally processed rice (e.g. whole grain/brown, white, flattened rice, pre-cooked, puffed rice) and what potential market exists for replacing it with zinc rice?
5. What is the nature of the market for processed products made from rice (e.g. puffed rice, canned rice foods, rice cakes) and what potential market exists for using zinc rice in these products?
6. To what extent are the different types of rice currently segregated as they pass across different value chain actors along the commercial supply chain?
7. To what extent could zinc rice be segregated in the market?
8. To what extent are aggregators willing to segregate zinc rice in the market and what influences that?
9. To what extent are millers willing to purchase segregated zinc rice and what influences that?
10. To what extent are processors willing to purchase segregated zinc rice and what influences that?
11. To what extent are processors willing to consider contract farming/aggregation as a method of procurement to secure zinc rice?
12. What are the drivers and barriers of aggregators and millers that can be used to increase processing of biofortified rice into commercial markets (supply)?
13. What are the drivers and barriers of processors that can be used to increase processing of biofortified rice into commercial markets (supply)?

RESEARCH AREA 2: FOOD SALES MARKET RESEARCH

1. How much of the rice market is formal vs. informal and who are the major players?
2. How is rice sold in the markets (e.g. packaged, open)? (include photos of packaging for the major types)
3. What are the main types of rice (e.g. fine, slender, coarse, etc.) and processed rice products (e.g. flat rice, puffed rice) available?
4. What proportion of the rice market is do these specific zinc rice types account for?
5. Where do consumers purchase/obtain their rice (e.g. market, home production) and how does this vary by locality (urban/rural) or socioeconomic status?
6. What are the preferred types of rice purchased/obtained by consumers (i.e. fine, slender, coarse, etc.) and how does this vary by locality (urban/rural) or socioeconomic status?
7. What are the preferred types of processed rice products purchased/obtained by consumers (e.g. flat rice, puffed rice) and does this vary by locality (urban/rural) or socioeconomic status?
8. What proportion of the consumers currently consume these specific zinc rice types and how does this vary by locality (urban/rural) or socioeconomic status?
9. How much of each of the main rice types (e.g. fine, slender, coarse) do consumers usually purchase and how much do they spend on that amount?
10. What factors drive consumers to choose a specific rice type (e.g. taste, type, health, price, availability, packaging, labelling)?
11. What are the drivers and barriers of consumers that can be used to increase consumption of zinc rice (demand)?
The results of this assessment will be used to inform the design of the programme activities for commercialising biofortified zinc rice in Bangladesh under the GAIN-HarvestPlus partnership and should therefore include the following recommendations:

1. Which type of zinc rice (e.g. coarse BRRI dhan74, slender BRRI dhan84, or both) has the greatest potential for commercialisation?
2. Which type of zinc rice has the potential to reach highest number of consumers?
3. What specific activities can be done to increase supply of the selected zinc-rice type(s) in the market? How should these activities be best sequenced?
4. What specific activities can be done to increase demand for the selected zinc-rice type(s) among consumers?
5. Are there any trends or future predictions related to the above that should be considered?

The Service Provider should propose the methods for the assessment of the above-mentioned research questions based on their expertise, but it is expected to include first, a review of the literature and existing data sources (including the Dalberg assessment⁵, which will be made available to interested bidders upon request) followed by purposeful primary data collection (qualitative and/or quantitative, e.g. focus groups, key informant interviews, market research, consumer insight surveys) with value chain actors, as appropriate.

4. SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES

4.1. SCOPE OF WORK

The successful applicant shall provide the following services:

- Develop a detailed study protocol (including detailed methodology and justification, sampling plan (where applicable), and data analysis plan) and data collection tools for review and approval by GAIN and HarvestPlus.
- Conduct review of available literature and secondary data sources as appropriate (must include the Dalberg assessment).
- Obtain relevant access and data collection permissions as appropriate, e.g. government.
- Carry out all aspects of primary data collection, quality assurance, and data entry, cleaning, management and analyses.
- For any primary data collected, provide GAIN and HarvestPlus with raw and clean datasets, accompanying codebooks, and syntax and output of all data analyses. If quantitative data are collected, data documentation must be provided using Nesstar³.
- Develop final report outline for review and approval by GAIN and HarvestPlus.
- Draft full report, including literature review, methods, data collection activities, results and conclusions/recommendations.
- Revise and finalize report based on inputs from GAIN and HarvestPlus.

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² The Dalberg assessment report will be made available to interested bidders upon request to rfp@gainhealth.org by the deadline outlined in the table of deliverables. Bidders are expected to review and incorporate it into the submitted proposal so as not to repeat any previous data collection efforts.
³ A free editor developed in conjunction with the Norwegian Centre for Research Data (NSD)
   http://www.nesstar.com/software/publisher.html
4.2. DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINE

The timeline for completion of all aspects of the Scope of Work and submission of deliverables is by end of June 2020 as outlined in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>DELIVERABLE</th>
<th>DEADLINE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Deadline to request Dalberg assessment report and submit any questions</td>
<td>6 March 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Proposal submission</td>
<td>16 March 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final response regarding selection of Service Provider</td>
<td>30 March 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contracting process finalized</td>
<td>13 April 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Methodology and tools finalized and presented to GAIN and HarvestPlus;</td>
<td>27 April 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>approvals obtained</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Literature review, data collection, and data analyses completed</td>
<td>1 June 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Presentation of preliminary results to GAIN and HarvestPlus</td>
<td>8 June 2020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Draft report submitted</td>
<td>15 June 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final report submitted</td>
<td>30 June 2020</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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. 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 outlining the research objectives and methods;
- Financial proposal outlining budget accompanied by a budget narrative.

4. SUBMISSION

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

One hard signed copy of the proposal and an electronic copy containing the documents preferably in MS Word along with all the required information including the fee proposal should reach GAIN at the address mentioned below:

5. DEADLINE

Completed proposals should be submitted to rfp@gainhealth.org by 5:00 pm CET on 16 March 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 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)