RESPONSE TO PROPOSAL QUERIES:

MID-TERM EVALUATION OF PORTFOLIO: “IMPROVING ACCESS TO SAFE, HEALTHY AND AFFORDABLE NUTRITION AND PROMOTING ITS CONSUMPTION AMONG THE MOST VULNERABLE POPULATIONS”

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS ACTIVITY NUMBER 4000000622

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QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

1. We understand that the scope of the mid-term evaluation covers the overall portfolio including eleven (11) work streams; as well as five (5) additional focus areas including LSFF India, Urban Governance for Nutrition, Gain’s Dutch Engagement, as well as sub-grant to Smarter Futures and GAIN’s Research & Evaluation investment portfolio. Could you provide more details regarding the last two elements: Smarter Futures and GAIN’s Research & Evaluation investment portfolio (objectives, activities, work stream they are attached to, if any)?

Smarter Futures: this subgrant falls under GAIN’s Large-Scale Food Fortification Workstream. Smarter Futures is a uniquely organised collective action network that brings together cross-sector stakeholders who share a common mission, management, and are mutually reinforcing activities around food fortification in Africa. The grant to Smarter Futures supports them to carry forward an independent programme of work to (1) advocate on the importance of fortification through the provision of right evidence-based information; (2) develop and expand strategies for rice fortification; (3) build capacity for appropriate QA/QC and provide technical assistance to remove common fortification barriers; (4) support countries technically in monitoring and surveillance; and (5) network and share best practices through events, regional bodies, partners and other fora.

GAIN’s Research & Evaluation investment portfolio: Funds from the Dutch grant have been set aside to embed implementation research (research with the explicit objective of informing design and or assessing aspects of delivery to identify opportunities for improvement), and to support impact evaluations (with the objective of assessing results to inform future programming and for accountability). Priorities are set by the Knowledge Leadership team in collaboration with the program and country teams, and all studies are expected to follow GAIN research procedures, and in addition to internal learning, should contribute to the scientific evidence base (i.e., upload rigorous research standards including complementarity to existing evidence).

2. Our understanding is that GAIN will share the existing programme ToC and Results Framework. Is GAIN expecting the Consultant to revise these programme documents?
We do not ask the evaluators to revise the documents specifically, but we do anticipate the evaluation to provide recommendations for any modifications deemed appropriate.

**Question: Are ToC and RF available for each of the eleven (11) work stream to be evaluated?**

Yes.

**Is GAIN expecting the Consultant to revise these work stream-level documents?**

As noted above in question 2.

3. **How do we interpret Annex 2:**

The table shows which evaluations have been completed and which ones are currently undergoing. We have reports available for those evaluations which have been completed. For the undergoing evaluations, the protocol and any other relevant documentation will be made available.

4. **It would be good to have some information on the Making Markets Work evaluations to understand the amount of information that is to be considered.**

As noted above.

5. **And to what extend those MMW under review will be available during the MTE**

The only evaluation which will be completed and available by the time of the MTE is the evaluation on SUN Business Network, in addition to the program assessments completed for the PLAN and LSFF program areas. As noted above, for all evaluations and program assessments that are on-going, the protocols and other documents will be made available.

6. **Estimated number of documents for the countries in which no assessments have been done**

For those programs in each country where no evaluation or assessment was done, we can provide logic models, results frameworks, workplans and in some cases, additional documents describing aspects of the approach.

7. **Can you explain how you see the Deep Dives?**

For the programs identified as “Deep Dives”, no external evaluations or assessment have been undertaken. We expect the evaluation will focus primarily on these areas, reviewing documentation as available, as per the proposal review using OECD criteria.

8. **To what Workstreams belong 3. Smarter Futures and 4. GAIN research and evaluation investment portfolio; or are they X-cutting overall?**

Smarter Futures falls under GAIN’s Large-Scale Food Fortification workstream. The GAIN research and evaluation investment portfolio is cross-cutting overall workstreams.

9. **Do you expect that for the Deep Dives (international) travel is needed?**

Given the current situation, no international travel should be included in the proposed approach. Work for all aspects should be done through review of documentation and key virtual stakeholder interviews.

10. **be a possibility to talk to any beneficiaries or their representatives (as this will be a virtual exercise)?**

Key stakeholder interviews should be part of the evaluation approach.
11. One of the foreseen team members is an active member of the NWGN (NWGN is mentioned under Dutch Engagement) but was not in any way involved with GAIN’s workstreams apart from this membership. Therefore, we do not consider this a Conflict of Interest, and seek your confirmation here.

While we do not anticipate that this presents a conflict of interest, we expect all relationships with GAIN/ the Dutch MFA or other relevant bodies to be declared. Bidders should provide a self-assessment of whether they perceive any potential interests, and if so, how specifically those will be mitigated.

12. Due to the summer holiday period within the planned period, and looking at the scope and importance of the MTE we would like to request if there is a possibility to extend the MTE with one or two weeks?

Unfortunately, the timeline for the MTE cannot be modified. Please do note that extensions will not be given once contracting of the selected firm is finalized.

13. How will the MTE be guided by GAIN? Will there be an Evaluation Quality Assurance team?

GAIN seeks a balance of involvement to ensure that the evaluators fully understand the programs/approaches but are able to work independently. To do this will be engaged in the beginning of the process to make sure the methodology and workplan are in line with the goal of the MTE. We remain available throughout the MTE process in case the consultant needs any documents or has questions. At the end of the evaluation, GAIN will comment and provide feedback to be taken into consideration in the final report. This process will be led by GAIN’s Knowledge Leadership team.

14. Is it expected that a dissemination of findings is to be done to the various stakeholders (WS/countries) and – if yes - in what form (workshop?)

We expect the evaluators to lead a virtual “sense-making” workshop to be held with GAIN and MFA representatives (to be organized by GAIN) during which we will review results and draft recommendations and provide input to ensure their clarity, accuracy and relevance. The final report will be property of GAIN to disseminate as appropriate.

15. Could you indicate the expected level of effort (person days) and/or the maximum budget?

The maximum budget for the assignment is USD 60,000. We recognize that in the RfP, the mid-term evaluation sounds very extensive. Please note that priority should be given to the areas that are currently not being subjected to evaluations/assessments, and that the exact scope will be refined during the inception phase. We ask the evaluators to suggest a scope and approach within that framework that they consider feasible within the budget.

16. Could you let us know what is possible in this regard, as it determines our ability to put in a fitting response to your request for proposals?

Unfortunately, it is not possible for us to extend the deadline.

17. Besides, we note that there is no budget indication in the RfP. Do I understand correctly, that you request an initial budget to be included in the proposal, which then will be finalized in consultation with the selected service provider?

Yes, that is correct.

18. We note that this is a broad evaluation, covering 12 streams of work; at the same time you require it to be completed in an elapsed time of only two months. This suggests either that you expect a rather light review by a small team, or that a deeper study would require more experts working in parallel. Please could you give us an indication of the approximate budget you are considering and/or of the size of team you think might be necessary, so that we have a better chance of matching your expectations.
As noted in the proposal, several programming areas have/are undergoing rigorous impact evaluations and/or program assessments. We therefore anticipate a very light touch review of those, with focus on those areas identified as deep dive. The maximum budget for the assignment is USD 60,000. We recognize that in the RfP, the mid-term evaluation sounds very extensive. Please note that priority should be given to the areas that are currently not being subjected to evaluations/assessments, and that the exact scope will be refined during the inception phase. We ask the evaluators to suggest a scope and approach within that framework that they consider feasible within the budget.

19. We noted that the timeline proposed for this assignment is between 13 July and 15 September. To what extent is there flexibility with the timing of this MTE and when would it need to be completed by at the latest?

The MTE needs to be completed by 15th September. Unfortunately, it is not possible for us to extend the deadline. The timeline should provide a gauge to the depth of review that is anticipated at this time.

20. On page 5 of the TOR it is mentioned that applicants should provide references for past work. Can you please clarify how many references you would like to receive?

At least 3 references should be provided.

21. Considering the short timeframe between the expected date of receipt of answers (16 June) to queries and the date of submission of the proposals (22 June), is there a possibility to extend the submission deadline, for instance by a week?

Unfortunately, it is not possible for us to extend the deadline.

22. Is the evaluator expected to focus more on assessing the portfolio as a whole and its coherence, or the individual contents of the portfolio?

The evaluator is expected to assess the portfolio as a whole, except for the various deep dive areas.

23. What will be the level of involvement of the funder in the process (e.g., defining questions, determining methodology, engaging on interim and final deliverables)?

The funder has been involved in setting up the RfP. They will be involved at the end of the process, when we share the report with them for feedback and comments.

24. What are the expectations around the "deep dive" on the five projects that have not yet been evaluated -- how deep are these assessments expected to be relative to programs that are not part of the deep dive?

For the programs identified as “Deep Dives”, no external evaluations or assessment have been undertaken. We expect the evaluation will focus primarily on these areas, reviewing documentation as available, as per the proposal review using OECD criteria.

25. What are the expectations around engaging with local stakeholders beyond implementation partners?

Engaging with local stakeholders beyond implementation partners is possible and encouraged if that is required as part of the evaluation process and can fit within the scope, timing and approach of the evaluation.

26. What data do you have available to share with the evaluator?

For those programs in each country where no evaluation or assessment was done, we can provide logic models, results frameworks, workplans and in some cases, additional documents describing aspects of the approach. We have reports available for those evaluations which have been completed. For the undergoing evaluations, the protocol and any other relevant documentation will be made available.
27. How much flexibility is there on the timeline?

Unfortunately, it is not possible for us to extend the deadline.