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**REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS**

**DESIGN OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY SOLUTION FOR IMPROVING VEGETABLE SOURCING FOR  
LAST MILE VENDORS IN KENYA**

**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 a Swiss-based foundation launched at the UN in 2002 to tackle the human suffering caused by malnutrition. Working with both governments and businesses, GAIN aims 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.

Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, GAIN has representative offices in The Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States. In addition, we have country offices in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Benin, Uganda, Pakistan, and Tanzania. Programmes and projects are carried out in a variety of other countries, particularly in Africa and Asia.

### 2. PROJECT BACKGROUND

Vegetables for All Project is a five-year project that aims to improve vegetable consumption for 1.1 million urban and peri-urban Bottom of the Pyramid (BoP) consumers in alignment with global guidelines. The project targets families with children aged 3-12 in the lower income group, Living Standard Measure (LSM)3-6, earning 15,000 - 45,000 KSH per month.

The project conducted a consumer survey in 2022 to understand the drivers of vegetable purchases. The study concluded that vegetable *purchases* are driven by 3 consumer expectations: freshness, proximity of vegetable seller, and safety. The desire to *consume more* vegetables was driven by taste and variety. Variety was constrained by price and seasonality. Taste was driven by familiarity and availability of specific vegetables. Taste preference is main barrier to consumption for some types of vegetables, like traditional leafy greens. While vegetables were generally regarded as positive, consumers discussed a tension between buying vegetables to fill a hungry stomach vs. vegetables as a source of enjoyment.

FoodFiti Zones (FFZs) are the last mile/point of purchase integrated solution offered by the FoodFiti Brand to deliver the consumers’ expectations on freshness, safety, proximity, variety and taste. The FFZs have been conceived as a catchment areas around low-income estates in urban and peri-urban areas. These FFZ cover a minimum of 1,000 households in which at least 50% are low-income earners. In 2023, the project established 53 FFZs in Nairobi, Kiambu, Machakos, Mombasa and Nakuru counties. By June 2024, the project aims to establish 614 FFZ to reach 4.7 million low-income consumers to increase the vegetable consumption.

At the heart of the FFZ is the *mama mboga*, specifically women with a semi-permanent stall, who have a loyal and frequent customer base. Included in the FFZ are other small retailers that sell to our target audience including retailers and traditional markets. Other community services, such as schools and churches, are considered relevant stakeholders in the FFZ due to their ability to communicate our brand messages and influence consumption.

The FFZ has a sourcing and distribution model that was established to support the *mama mbogas* in improving their offering of fresh and varied vegetables with improved safety at a competitive price. This model, known as the Market Facilitator (MF) model. The MF model consists of a market facilitator (MF) who aggregates orders from *mama mboga's* (last mile vendors) and places orders to farmer producing organisations that follow good agricultural practices. In some instances, especially in non-vegetables producing counties, the market facilitators can also source their vegetables from other traders/ aggregators who source their vegetables from GAP (Good Agricultural Practices) compliant farmers/suppliers. The market facilitator then delivers the orders directly to the *mama mbogas*.

The MF model is an integrated solution as it supports *mama mbogas* to meet the consumers' purchasing needs of proximity, price, taste, and variety, and it also ensures freshness, safety and traceability of vegetables. The MF model prioritizes assured vegetable supply as the proposed way to address the issues faced by *mama mboga's* in the value chain. By establishing a mutually beneficial relationship between suppliers and profiled Farmer Producing Organisations (FPOs), as well as traceability and safety systems that ensure the quality and reliability of supplies, this model strives to make sourcing more efficient and predictable. *Mama mboga's* will benefit from more consistency and lower order costs by using the MF model. Overall, the MF model provides a more inclusive and efficient sourcing option, resulting in a more sustainable and equitable system for all stakeholders.

A recent study (2023) found that only 12% of vegetable vendors used digital platforms for sourcing vegetables. The limited use of these platforms was associated with lack of awareness (46.7%), inability to see value that digital systems bring (30.7%), and lack of knowledge on how to use the platform (20%). Some digital Platforms connect farmers and small traders via a mobile app, but uptake is low due to low awareness about the value of digitalization as well as limited digital skills of LMVs.

To improve efficiency in the supply chain, GAIN Kenya seeks to engage a service provider to provide a digital technology for ordering, aggregation and sourcing vegetables, thereby linking the *mama mboga's* with the Market Facilitator (MF), MF with FPO/supplier, or aggregator. This will increase the efficiency of the market facilitators, and turnaround time for ordering and delivery of vegetables.

The digital technology is intended to use and leverage bulk SMS or similar and a web interface to aggregate data, simplify order placement, facilitate credit access, traceability and enhance transparent and predictable value chain. The SMS-based system will empower the MF to aggregate orders from multiple *mama mboga's* efficiently and ease the linkage to GAP compliant Farmer Producer Organisation with enhanced inbuilt traceability mechanism.

### 3. SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES

The successful organization shall work in the five project counties of Kiambu, Nairobi, Machakos, Nakuru and Mombasa and provide the following services.

- a. Working closely with GAIN, acquire a comprehensive understanding of the requirements that this technology aims to address.
- b. Adopt a user-centered methodology in crafting a genuinely user-friendly interface and experience. This entails integrating an intuitive design for seamless navigation, incorporating accessibility features to address diverse user needs, and implementing a mobile-friendly interface for convenient on-the-go usage. Use a human-centered design approach or similar to ensure a focus on user satisfaction and engagement throughout the development process.
- c. Develop a digital technology for use by the Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs), Market Facilitators (MFs) and *Mama Mboga's*. The technology should operate on an SMS-based or equivalent platform with no charges to sender. The digital technology is expected to consider the following:

- Integration capabilities: demonstrate the ability to integrate with existing systems or platforms used by users; ensure compatibility with diverse technological infrastructures to enhance user experience and streamline processes.
- Data security and privacy: establish robust measures to safeguard data security and privacy and align with and adhere to GAIN's data protection policies.
- d. Scalability and sustainability: develop a solution that is scalable to accommodate potential growth in user base and transaction volume; ensure adaptability to evolving needs and technological advancements, thereby guaranteeing long-term sustainability of the digital technology. Conduct testing and quality assurance, including rigorous testing for functionality and security, beta testing with actual users for feedback, and continuous monitoring and updates for improvements.
- e. Conduct comprehensive training for users and administrators; propose a plan for knowledge transfer and capacity building within the local users and administrators.
- f. Provide technical support and troubleshooting for at least the first months of use of the technology. FPOs
- g. The user-friendly interface and forms promote collaborative data management. The project manager, and PCs can easily add, update or remove end users ensuring a well-maintained database.
- h. Allows traceability mechanism including provision of unique ID for end-users and possible linkage to other project activities.

### 3.1. DELIVERABLES

The consultant will submit:

- Requirements Documentation: Clearly defined requirements document outlining the functionalities and features of the digital technology based on consultations with stakeholders, including last-mile vendors and farmers.
- System Design and Architecture: Detailed system design and architecture documents specifying the technical infrastructure, databases, and overall architecture of the digital solution.
- Wireframes and Prototypes: User interface (UI) wireframes and interactive prototypes illustrating the proposed design and user experience for both vendors and farmers.
- Development Milestones: A schedule of development milestones with associated timelines and deliverables, outlining key stages of the technology development process.
- Mobile Application: A fully functional mobile application (iOS and/or Android) for vendors, with features for sourcing produce, order management, and any other relevant functionalities.
- Web Platform: A web-based platform for farmers and administrators, allowing for produce listing, order processing, and data management.
- Integration with Existing Systems: Documentation and evidence of successful integration with existing systems, such as inventory management or payment processing, used by vendors and farmers or GAIN platforms.
- User Training Materials: Training materials for users and administrators, including user guides, video tutorials, and any other necessary resources.
- Testing and Quality Assurance: Test plans and documentation demonstrating rigorous testing procedures to ensure the reliability, security, and performance of the digital technology.
- Data Security Measures: Documentation outlining the implemented data security measures to protect sensitive information throughout the supply chain.
- Scalability Plan: A plan for scalability, detailing how the digital technology can accommodate growth in the number of users, vendors, and farmers over time.
- Technical Support and Maintenance Plan: A plan for ongoing technical support, including response times, issue resolution procedures, and details on software updates and maintenance.
- Documentation for End Users: Comprehensive documentation for end-users, including guidelines on system usage, troubleshooting, and contact information for technical support.

- Evaluation Report: A final evaluation report summarizing the project's success against predetermined goals and key performance indicators.
- Knowledge Transfer Session: A knowledge transfer session for GAIN team, ensuring that they can manage and maintain the digital technology independently after the consultancy period.

### 3.2. PROPOSED TIMELINES AND DEADLINES

The engagement is expected to commence in January 2024 and is anticipated to be completed by mid-April 2024.

DELIVERABLE	DEADLINE
a) RFP issuance	16 <sup>th</sup> January 2024
b) Deadlines for questions and clarifications	29 <sup>th</sup> January 2024
c) Submission of full proposal	5 <sup>th</sup> February 2024

### 3.3. BUDGET

Applicants are required to provide GAIN with a detailed budget in Kenya Shillings (Kshs.) 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.

### 3.4. ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS AND CRITERIA FOR PROPOSAL SELECTION

The consultant shall be an organization or institution with the following expertise:

- Strong understanding of digital technology in the supply chain
- Strong understanding of metrics and methods as applied in the food safety space including indicators of safe food.
- Proven experience in conducting similar assignments especially implementation of a digital technology for agri-food systems.
- Proven experience working with diverse stakeholders, particularly those in the vegetable value chain.

## 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

Please direct all inquiries and other communications to [gainkenya@gainhealth.org](mailto:gainkenya@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 fee percentage proposal. The final budget amount will have to be approved by the organisation prior to starting the project.

### 3. FORMAT FOR PROPOSAL

The proposal should be formatted as follows:

- **Technical proposal:**
  - i. Executive summary
  - ii. Technical proposal:
    - a. Development process: explain the process you envisage to carry out the assignment, including major milestones and evaluation,
    - b. Address the deliverable and quality criteria.
  - iii. Schedule:
    - a. Provide a detailed workplan with deliverables, on a week-by-week basis
    - b. Include a schedule for preparation and review by GAIN
  - iv. References and relevant attachments:
    - a. Description and links to previous relevant work done for other partners and portfolio.
    - b. Relevant qualifications and experiences in relation to this RFP.
    - c. Organizational capacity statement &/or proof of experience on the assignment.
    - d. Team's composition and key CVs.
- **Financial proposal:**
  - i. Include a break-down of costs for the work components and deliverables, including budget justification.
  - ii. Include travel costs if required.
  - iii. Offer of services.

### 4. SUBMISSION

An electronic copy containing the documents, preferably in MS Word or PDF formats, along with all the required information, including the fee proposal should be sent to GAIN.

Please include '**Digital Technology**' as reference in the email subject line.

Email to: [gainkenya@gainhealth.org](mailto:gainkenya@gainhealth.org)

### 5. DEADLINE

Completed proposals should be submitted to GAIN on [gainkenya@gainhealth.org](mailto:gainkenya@gainhealth.org) Proposals may be postmarked on the due date, provided that an email of the proposal is submitted by the deadline (**5<sup>th</sup> February 2024**)

## **6. 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.

## **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.

## **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. If 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 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. If 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 reserves 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:

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- 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 in delivering similar solutions
- 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.
- A duly completed offer of services.

**GAIN reserves the right to contact the individuals and contractor(s) 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.

## **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:
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. (Print or type business, corporate name and address)
4. 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.
5. 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.
6. 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.**

Dated 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)