

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

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# FORMATIVE STUDY FOR IMPROVING VEGETABLE CONSUMPTION IN BENIN – PERSPECTIVES FROM THE TARGET AUDIENCE

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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 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.

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

### 2. BACKGROUND

Most people in Benin do not consume diets that would meet dietary recommendations. According to the Global Diet Quality Project, only 42% of women of reproductive age meet the minimum dietary diversity standard of consuming at least 5 out of 10 food groups. This suggests that a large proportion of women have a lower probability of having nutrient adequate diet. Furthermore, only 21% of adults consume all food groups typically recommended in food-based dietary guidelines, including pulses, nuts or seeds, vegetables, fruits, animal-source foods, and staple foods. In addition to staple foods, the food groups most consumed are vegetables, pulses and nuts, and animal-source foods.<sup>1</sup> However, fruits and vegetable daily intake is lower than WHO’s recommendation of 400 g per day; on average, individuals have a daily consumption of 75 g of fruits and 99 g of vegetables.<sup>2</sup>

In line with national efforts to improve consumption of nutritious foods, GAIN has been developing a novel market-based approach to scaling programmes that aim to improve diets. By emphasizing the need to generate a desire for both nutritious diets and individual nutritious foods, GAIN’s approach is focused on creating sustainable demand for healthy food choices. This two-tiered approach, which emphasizes both diet and individual foods, forms the foundation of GAIN’s demand work.

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<sup>1</sup> Global Dietary Database. (n.d.). Benin. Retrieved August 23, 2023, from <https://www.dietquality.org/countries/ben>

<sup>2</sup> Global Nutrition Report. (2020). Benin nutrition profile. Retrieved August 23, 2023, from <https://globalnutritionreport.org/resources/nutrition-profiles/africa/western-africa/benin/>

GAIN Kenya is the first country in which this approach will be deployed at scale. We have created a nutritious food brand called FoodFiti (FF) for promoting nutritious diets (tier 1). This brand was developed based on consumer insights from urban, lower-middle income parents of children 3-9 years of age.

The first nutritious food category that will be promoted under the FF brand in Kenya are vegetables. The project conducted a consumer survey to understand the drivers of vegetable purchases in Kenya. The study concluded that *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 (FFZ) 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 of vegetables (tier 2). FFZ will address a specific consumer problem, as tied to the Brand, and offer a solution to those needs.

GAIN is currently looking to engage a service provider to conduct consumer research with the double aim of i) testing whether the insights used to generate the FoodFiti brand in Kenya hold for urban Benin (tier 1); ii) further characterizing vegetable consumption patterns (i.e., access, purchasing behaviours, consumption behaviours, and general perceptions and awareness of vegetables) of urban low-income households with children 3-9 years of age (1.9 to 3.2 USD/ppp/day) in Benin. The latter will help validate whether an adaptation of FFZ might be an adequate solution for promoting vegetable consumption in urban Benin.

Specifically, the study aims to address the following questions-

#### Aim 1

- Do the consumer insights in Kenya resonate with urban consumers in Benin?
  - Do they share similar attributes of parenting identities and food parenting practices to [those identified in Kenya](#)?
  - Does the FoodFiti brand resonate with urban consumers in Benin?

#### Aim 2

Characterize consumption patterns to inform project design by addressing:

- Purchasing behaviours of target population
  - Who is the main responsible for buying vegetables?
  - Where do they buy the vegetables?
  - What are all the vegetables purchased by household in the last week?
  - What is the usual amount of key vegetables (e.g., spinach, kale, tomatoes, cabbage) purchased during a regular shopping trip?
  - How do consumers conceptualize/group vegetables? What are common substitutions among vegetable groups?
  - How do they assess the quality of vegetables?
- Consumption behaviours of target population
  - How are vegetables prepared? What are the common dishes prepared with vegetables? What other ingredients are required to prepare them? What are common vegetable substitutes for these dishes? How easy/convenient are they to prepare? How frequently are they consumed? By whom? When? What are the usual portion sizes?
  - What are common strategies used to promote vegetable consumption of children?
- General perceptions and awareness of vegetables

- What are some common attitudes and beliefs related to vegetables? (health benefits, perceptions)
- Apart from cost, what are main barriers for eating more vegetables?
- Exposure to messages & Awareness
  - What type of messages have they heard about vegetables?
  - Are they aware of any recommendations on vegetable consumption, including the recommended portion sizes?
  - What are the delivery approaches to reach the final beneficiary and cause change on the consumption patterns

For Aim 1, we expect the service provider to conduct Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) or similar methodology. The results of FGDs will allow us to refine the research questions of Aim 2. The Service Provider will propose the data collection activities and will conduct data collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting.

### 3. SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES

#### Tasks:

1. In collaboration with GAIN, draft research protocol including data collection instruments. Provide recommendations to adapt to the local context.
2. Translate data collection instruments to local language
3. Request ethical approval to local ethics committee.
4. Prepare recruitment plan to ensure reaching the intended target audiences.
5. Prepare training materials and brief data collection manual. In collaboration with GAIN, conduct training of recruiters and data collectors to ensure following high-quality data collection methods and safety protocols.
6. Prepare and implement a quality control process to ensure quality of data collection.
7. Prepare all preliminary activities needed to conduct field work activities such as requesting local permission for field work.
8. Test data collection instruments with target group. Refine instruments and data collection procedures based on results.
9. Conduct data collection according to established protocol and manuals.
10. Prepare brief field work report describing field work activities and progress, findings from quality control process and corrective measures.
11. Conduct all post-survey activities including preparing anonymized dataset ready for public distribution, codebook, and other accompanying resources (questionnaire). Prepare anonymized transcriptions (in English) of interviews and/or focus group discussions.
12. Develop a Powerpoint presentation with preliminary results.
13. Prepare final report.
14. Participate in discussions with GAIN and partners regarding data analysis and interpretation.

#### Objectives

The objectives of the research study are to i) test whether the insights used to generate the FoodFiti solution in Kenya hold for urban Benin; ii) further characterize vegetable consumption patterns (I.e., access, purchasing behaviours, consumption behaviours, and general perceptions and awareness of vegetables) of urban low-income households with children under the age of 9 years (1.9 to 3.2 USD/ppp/day).

### 3.1. DELIVERABLES

The service shall be performed between 16 March and 15 July 2023. The proposed deliverables and deliverable dates are planned for in-person data collection.

Deliverables	Date Deliverable Due
Complete application for Ethical approval including research protocol, data collection instruments, and informed consent form	15 October 2023
Preliminary results - focus group discussions (aim 1)	15 December 2023
Updated data collection instruments (aim 2);	15 January 2024
Brief report on results of instrument testing, including revised instrument	15 February 2024
Brief field work report	15 March 2024
Anonymized dataset, codebook and questionnaire; Powerpoint presentation with preliminary results; transcripts	20 April 2024
Final report	30 April 2024

## 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 [rfp@gainhealth.org](mailto:rfp@gainhealth.org) with subject line 'Consumer Study Benin - inquiry'. Responses will not be confidential except in cases where proprietary information is involved.

### 2. BUDGET

Applicants are required to provide AIN 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

Interested applicants should prepare a brief proposal (maximum 5 pages) that includes:

- Description of research proposal with clear activities and process for conducting this service. This should include the type of research methods, justification for use, and sampling.
- *Activities and timeline:* A timeline for undertaking and completing the main activities, including planning, implementation, and reporting, should be provided. A Gantt diagram is preferred.
- *Budget:* Provide a budget in USD (US Dollar), broken down by main cost categories (Personnel, travel, operational, direct, and indirect costs) and by main activities. Include a brief narrative justification for line items included. The budget should be inclusive of all taxes/VAT and indirect costs.
- Detailed profiles (qualification, expertise, relevant experience etc.) of the individuals who will be completing the work including their full names, their expertise and publications in relevant research.

- A completed 'Offer of Services' form (see end of RFP for template).

#### **4. SUBMISSION AND DEADLINE**

Completed proposals should be submitted in electronic format to [rfp@gainhealth.org](mailto:rfp@gainhealth.org) by email on **22 September 2023** with subject line 'Consumer study Benin – proposal'.

#### **5. 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.

#### **6. REVISIONS**

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

#### **7. 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.

#### **8. 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.

#### **9. 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.

## 10. 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.

## 11. 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 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:

- Understanding of the scope of work:
  - o 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:
  - o Providing detailed technical documentation of the proposed strategy.
  - o 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:
  - o Proposal shall include a feasible work plan to ensure successful completion of deliverables.
  - o The work plan details how activities will be coordinated.
- Detailed budget and cost-effectiveness of proposed approach:
  - o Evidence of cost-effective approaches to undertaking the scope of work within the proposed budget.
  - o Proposal shall identify possible challenges and include creative approaches to addressing them.
- Management and personnel plan:
  - o The team members working on this project shall have the relevant qualifications and overall experience required to successfully implement the project.
  - o Roles and responsibilities of each team member shall be clearly defined. GAIN shall 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.

## **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 authorize 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. 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)

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Click or tap here to enter text.

Signature (applicant)