

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

INNOVATION CHALLENGE FOR AGRIBUSINESSES IN NIGERIA

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. GAIN's Workforce Nutrition programme aims to improve the nutrition of workers and farmers in low- and middle-income countries or communities. The programme focuses on improving the access and demand for healthier diets using existing business structures as an entry point (workplaces or supply chains). GAIN began its workforce nutrition programme in 2013 and has reached over 230,000 estate workers, smallholder farmers and their families in the tea, cocoa and garment supply chain across Africa and Asia. We currently work with partners in the tea sector (India, Kenya, and Malawi), cocoa sector (Ghana), garment sector (Bangladesh), and we are running pilots in a variety of industry sectors in Mozambique.

Our work on biofortified crops aims to scale access to and demand for nutrient-dense varieties of commonly consumed staples such as maize, sweet potato and cassava through targeted support to address challenges and constraints to increased production and consumption of these foods. We do this through market development and commercialization, such as in our partnership with HarvestPlus and through noncommercial pathways focused on farming households and public procurement systems. A key part of our approach is improving the enabling environment for biofortified seeds, crops and food products through advocacy, catalytic financing, and the licensing of technology and related services.

GAIN supports businesses, especially micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), through most of our programmatic offerings. This support is coordinated through the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Business Network (SBN), which is convened by GAIN in Nigeria and was launched in 2016 to improve and strengthen the private sector's contribution to nutrition. The Network has supported businesses with brokering business-to-business linkages, facilitating connections to government and other sectors, including development partners, and capacity building for MSMEs to address critical barriers to start, grow and scale their business. Specific support areas include access to finance, access to markets, quality control and assurance in their production processes, and food safety and nutrition education.

2. BACKGROUND

The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) is issuing this Request for Proposal (RFP) and will be the administrative lead organization for this RFP.

The purpose of this RFP is to engage services of **four (4) Business Incubators, Accelerators, or Innovation hubs** on an annually renewable contract (from 2022 to 2025) to co-design and implement an Agribusiness Innovation Challenge **in one of the four selected states; Kaduna, Benue, Nasarawa and Oyo states**. This activity is part of business support workstream to be implemented in the focal states for the next four years.

The Strengthening Nutrition in Priority Staples project is currently implemented by the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition in partnership with GIZ and the Green Innovation Centre for the Agricultural and Food Sector in Nigeria (GIC), with support from the German Government through the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). The Strengthening nutrition project will strengthen the GIC priority value chains and improve food security and safety through improved diets for farmers, farmworkers, other workers in businesses in these value chains, and among the wider population in Nigeria.

The business support component will empower women and young people and unleash the creativity and energy of youth and women to support their families, succeed in agri-business and attempt to tackle malnutrition, prevent foodborne illnesses, as well as food and social insecurity. This workstream will increase women and youth involvement in value-added agriculture and entrepreneurship, directly addressing the specific challenges that women and rural youth face in the four focal states of this project. It will respond to opportunities to harness the political will at local, state, and national levels in Nigeria to invest in creating economic opportunities for women and youth in the production, processing, and sale of nutritious and safe foods. This will be achieved by significantly increasing the knowledge and information available to women and young people about nutritious food safety, increasing their participation in decision-making and targeting business support and investments so they can bring forward innovations, increase livelihood opportunities and build nutrition sensitivity into the GIC value chains.

This will be carried out using three interlinked approaches:

- Improving nutrition quality of staple foods produced by SMEs and farmers involved in GIC activities.
- Improving the capacity of food safety and value chain actors to adhere to standards and regulations on best practices.
- Supporting technical innovations for supply chains through innovation challenges and innovation clinics.

2.1. AGRIBUSINESSES IN NIGERIA

The agricultural sector remains the largest employer in Nigeria, employing more than 36% of the labour force and accounting for 22.35% of the Gross Domestic Product in Q1 2021¹. With 82 million hectares of arable land, only 34 million hectares² cultivated, and the country's large and growing population, agriculture is increasingly becoming important as a source of consumer and industrial demand.

¹ <https://www.nigerianstat.gov.ng/download/1241027>

² Oni, J.C (2011) "Tillage in Nigerian Agriculture". Available:

http://iworx5.webxtra.net/~istroorg/download/Nigeria_conf_downloads/Key_Lead_Papers/Oni%20KC.pdf

In spite of Nigeria's high agricultural potential, most value chains are highly undeveloped as they are plagued with multifaceted issues, including shortages in the supply of inputs such as seedlings and fertilizers, climate change, desertification, failure to adopt improved farming practices or advanced mechanized systems, scarcity of resources, lack of financing for small-scale farmers, inefficient transport systems, and absence of value addition resulting in low yields, poor- and low-quality production and food wastage. Nigeria loses and wastes 40%³ of total production each year which is 76.9 million metric tons of food per year.

Agricultural Innovation provides an opportunity to solve the challenges in the different value chains (i.e., production, processing, distribution, and marketing), eliminate wastage, support sustainable development, increase productivity, create decent jobs, and reduce poverty levels. In recent years, Nigeria has seen an increase in the number of Agricultural Technology (Agritech) start-ups aiming to address these challenges faced by smallholder farmers and to improve their livelihoods through leveraging innovation for processing, better access to inputs, credit, assets, and markets. These start-ups, supported by Incubators, Innovation labs, Accelerators, and other Enterprise Support Organizations, are still faced with similar strident barriers, including a challenging business environment, an ecosystem not geared to support long-term growth, low levels of agricultural knowledge and skills and limited access to funding opportunities. With impact investors, venture capital firms and large corporates shying away from the Nigerian Agritech ecosystem due to the perceived risk of investing in agriculture and the opportunity cost compared to other sectors. There is a huge need for holistic support of Agribusinesses in Nigeria for sustainability and scalability.

Considering this, GAIN is seeking proposals from Four (4) Business Incubators, Innovation labs, Accelerators, and other Enterprise Support Organizations to implement an Innovation Challenge for Agribusinesses in one of the project states.

3. OBJECTIVES

The main objective is to design and implement an Agribusiness Innovation Challenge; provide technical assistance training to women and youth-led start-ups to strengthen their capacity, improve their access to financial services, and develop their business concepts leveraging innovation to improve supply chain efficiency in one of the project states; Kaduna, Benue, Nasarawa and Oyo states.

The specific objectives are to:

- Design and implement a state-wide Agribusiness Innovation Challenge for early-stage start-ups in the cassava, maize, rice, and orange-fleshed sweet potato value chains in one of the focal states;
- Implement a Pitch Readiness Bootcamp for selected start-ups;
- Implement two (2) Deal-Day sessions for selected start-ups to pitch to a closed group of angel investors, Angel Networks and Venture Capital firms in Africa;
- Provide 2-month technical assistance support on Business Model Innovation, Customer Development, Go-to-Market & Scale to Agribusinesses.

The Enterprise Support Organization(s) will develop a methodological work plan for all the above objectives based on their expertise in consultation with GAIN staff responsible for the project. The organization should propose a monitoring and evaluation plan for all activities in the select states.

³ The World Bank Group (2020). Nigeria Food Smart Country Diagnostic, <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/bitstream/handle/10986/34522/Nigeria-Food-Smart-Country-Diagnostic>.

3.1. PROJECT STATES

The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition seeks proposals from four (4) Innovation Hubs and other Enterprise Support Organizations to co-implement this project in one (1) of the following states outlined below:

Project States			
Kaduna	Nasarawa	Benue	Oyo

The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition shall not accept applications from organizations to implement this activity in more than one state or any state not outlined above.

4. SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES

4.1. SCOPE OF WORK

The successful applicant shall provide the following services:

- Design a detailed Agribusiness Innovation Challenge work plan.
- Identify mentors and/ judges for the agribusiness Innovation Challenge.
- Develop an online application form.
- Conduct a lean selection process with a two-step screening process, document review and online interview.
- Implement the Agribusiness Innovation Challenge.
- Implement a Pitch Readiness Bootcamp.
- Select winning concepts.
- Award the winners of the Agribusiness Innovation Challenge.
- Implement two Deal-Day sessions with 5-10 venture capitals/investors.
- Provide a 2-month specialized technical assistance and business development training support to winning agribusinesses.

4.2. DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINE

The timeline for completion of all aspects of the Scope of Work and submission of deliverables is outlined in the table below:

Deliverables	Deadlines
The deadline to submit questions	21 March 2022
Proposal submission deadline	28 March 2022
Final response regarding the selection of Service Provider	11 April 2022
Contracting process finalized	20 April 2022
Submission of Inception Report	29 April 2022
Detailed Agribusiness Innovation Challenge Workplan designed and submitted	29 April 2022

Subject matter experts and judges for the Agribusiness Innovation Challenge identified and presented to GAIN	9 May 2022
Online platform for application developed and details shared with GAIN	13 May 2022
Publish application platform	17 May 2022
Conduct a lean selection process with a two-step screening process; document review and online interview and submit the report	27 June 2022
Implement Agribusiness Innovation Challenge.	8 July 2022
Submission of Progress Report	15 July 2022
Award winning concepts	22 July 2022
Implement the Pitch Readiness Bootcamp	27 July 2022
Implement first Deal-Day session with 5-10 venture capitals firms and investors	29 July 2022
Detailed curriculum for specialized technical assistance and business development training developed and submitted	5 August 2022
2-month specialized technical assistance and Business Model Innovation, Customer Development, Go-to-Market & Scale training to winning agribusinesses completed.	10 October 2022
Implement the second Deal-Day sessions with 5-10 venture capitals and investors	14 October 2022
Submission of Draft Final Report	21 October 2022
Submission of Final Report	28 October 2022

5. QUALIFICATIONS

The Service Provider shall be an Innovation hub, Acceleration hub, Incubation hub or Enterprise Support Organization with a minimum of three (3) years of experience in start-up management, hackathons, and the incubation of Agritech Start-ups. The organization must be legally registered in Nigeria and have a complete audited financial statement/annual report for the last two years.

The organization should also have demonstrated experience in start-up acceleration and deal-making activities with Venture Capital firms within and outside the African continent. The Service Provider should have an excellent knowledge of the green ecosystem, start-up life cycle, Series A, B, C Funding, an in-depth understanding of the activities of value chain actors in the select implementation state, and proven expertise in successfully delivering a similar activity.

II. INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESPONDING

This section addresses the process for responding to this solicitation. Applicants are encouraged to review this before completing their responses.

1. CONTACT

Key programme and technical staff from GAIN are part of the selection team of the organization 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 an illustrative budget in Nigerian Naira in a separate document. The final budget will be elaborated as the scope of the assessment is clarified and as part of the contracting process.

The budget submitted with this proposal should include (i) justification of overall value for money, (ii) a comprehensive budget justification which should be presented for each category of costs including, personnel, cost of travel, including subsistence allowances, consultants, meeting/workshop, overhead if applicable, and miscellaneous expenses. All prices/rates quoted must be inclusive of all taxes/VAT as required.

3. FORMAT FOR PROPOSAL

The proposal needs to be formatted as two separate documents:

- Technical proposal:
 1. Description of previous relevant work (maximum 1 page)
 2. Composition of the team with names and brief biographies of all key staff (maximum 3 pages)
 3. Detailed proposal explaining how the areas of work mentioned in objectives and Scope of Work will be addressed, including risk and mitigation strategy, sustainability, and timeline (maximum 10 pages)
 4. References
- Financial proposal:
 1. Budget
 2. Detailed budget justification
 3. Offer of services

4. SUBMISSION

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

5. DEADLINE

Completed proposals should be submitted by **5:00 pm WAT on 28 March 2022**

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 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 the official letterhead of the lead organization or firm and must be signed by a principal or authorized signatory of the lead firm or organization.
- 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 GAIN at rfp@gainhealth.org prior to making their submission before the deadline specified in the timeline above.
- While GAIN has 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. 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 failure to comply with any of the RFP conditions may disqualify their submission.

10. RIGHTS OF REJECTION

GAIN 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 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 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 are 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 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 indicates 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:
 - The 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 similar projects.
- The creative and methodological approaches are required to implement each of the parts of the scope of work.
- The comprehensiveness of work plan and reasonableness of proposed time frame:
 - The proposal shall include a feasible work plan to ensure the successful completion of deliverables.
 - The work plan details how activities will be coordinated.
- Detailed budget and cost-effectiveness of the proposed approach:
 - Evidence of cost-effective approaches to undertaking the scope of work within the proposed budget.
 - The 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.
 - The roles and responsibilities of each team member shall be clearly defined. GAIN 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.

6. LIMITATIONS WITH REGARD TO THIRD PARTIES

GAIN does not represent, warrant, or act as an 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 an 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 authorized or paid to the applicant unless such change, modification or interpretation has received the express prior written approval of GAIN.

IV. OFFER OF SERVICES

Offer submitted by:

(Print or type business, corporate name, and address)

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 authorized representative, the work as described in the Request for Proposal according to the terms and conditions of GAIN for the following prices:

1. [to be completed]
2. [to be completed]
3. [to be completed]
4. [to be completed]

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.

I (We) herewith submit the following:

1. A Proposal to undertake the work, in accordance with GAIN's requirements specified.
2. A duly completed offer of services, subject to the terms herein.

OFFERS THAT 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)