EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

FOR THE PROVISION OF DATA HOSTING CENTER SERVICES

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 to all people.

GAIN’s work to improve the consumption of safe and nutritious food is based on three interlinked strategic objectives:

1. to improve the demand for safe, nutritious foods;
2. to increase the availability of nutritious foods and enhance the nutritional value of foods; and
3. to strengthen the enabling environment to improve the consumption of safe, nutritious foods.

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, Benin, Uganda and Tanzania. Programmes and projects are carried out in various other countries, particularly in Africa and Asia.

2. BACKGROUND

Funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Digitalisation of Fortification Quality and Traceability Plus (DFQT+) project is led by GAIN and implemented by a consortium of partners. Collaborating with stakeholders in Nigeria, the project aims to develop a system that enhances transparency in quality assurance and traceability across the food fortification value chain. GAIN and TechnoServe, partnering with leading IT companies and technology innovators, are creating a consortium to deliver this solution. It is designed specifically for Nigerian stakeholders to establish a country-owned digital system. This user-friendly system will enable mills and authorities to generate, govern, share, and utilise real-time, secure, and traceable data on food fortification quality from factories to markets.

Through the DFQT+, GAIN seeks to empower data-driven, evidence-based strategies to promote food fortification in Nigeria. The proposed digital solution will record, track, and evaluate food fortification data at various production and distribution stages, offering critical insights to support our global and national advocacy work. In Nigeria, pilot producers (PZ Willma, Sunnola, Apple & Pears) and key regulatory agencies (NAFDAC, FCCPC, and SON) have been designing and building this system. Thanks to their leadership, feedback, and expertise, a test platform for the digital system has been developed and is scheduled to be rolled out in 2023.
3. SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES

3.1. OBJECTIVES

The successful provider will be responsible for supplying a reliable, secure, and scalable data hosting service that includes:

- Guarantee of 24/7 data accessibility with minimal downtime
- Provision of secure data storage, backup, and recovery mechanisms
- Operation of Container Runtime Platform (Kubernetes)
- Effective customer support and troubleshooting services

3.2 Guiding Questions

1. How will you access the applications on various pods within a container? Port number separation?
   a. K8s-level pod/container access, TCP/IP between pod/container ports as configured in the deployment charts. Ingress/egress via Istio gateway.

2. What are we load balancing?
   a. Istio gateway ingress/egress traffic, tcp/ip

3. How do you plan to use the firewall?
   a. Restricting all but allowed ports for ingress/egress

4. How many SSL Certificates or SSL Certificate types do you require?
   a. Server certificate primarily for traffic encryption of ingress/egress. We can work with one, but prefer one per access type à three

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. MINIMUM ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

Candidates must meet the following criteria:
- Demonstrable experience in providing data centre hosting services, preferably in similar projects
- Comprehensive understanding of data privacy and security laws and regulations in Nigeria and globally
- Capability to deliver scalable solutions to cater for future expansion
- Nigerian based and owned company

2. CONTACT

Staff will be available to respond to clarifications on this solicitation. For further information, please get in touch with etinuoye@gainhealth.org. We eagerly anticipate your involvement in this ground-breaking initiative, which seeks to raise the profile of food fortification on a global scale, particularly in Nigeria. We look forward to receiving your EOIs.

3. BUDGET

Applicants are required to provide an illustrative budget in 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) a 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.

4. **FORMAT FOR PROPOSAL**

The proposal needs to be formatted and attached as two separate documents:
1. Technical proposal outlining the methodology, and processes: detailed profiles (qualification, expertise, relevant experience etc.) of the agencies and individuals who will be completing the work including their full names, their expertise, past experience (previous work undertaken over the last five years which are relevant for this work) and references.
2. Financial proposal outlining budget accompanied by a budget narrative (as above).

5. **SUBMISSION**

EOIs should be in English and submitted in electronic copy to the following e-mail address: n quotation@gainhealth.org. Please include BMGF-DFQT+ in the subject line.

6. **DEADLINE**

Completed EOIs should be submitted electronically to GAIN before 23:59 PM West African Time (WAT) on Friday 1st September 2023

7. **UNACCEPTABLE**

The following proposals will automatically not be considered or accepted:

- Submissions that are received after the deadline.
- Submissions received by fax.
- Incomplete Submissions
- Submissions that are not signed

8. **REVISIONS**

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

9. **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.

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 contract, 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 contract and upon written request to GAIN, only the following information will be released:
- Name of the successful applicant.
- The applicant's own individual ranking.

13. SUMMARY OF DEADLINES

- EOI will be disseminated on the website by Monday 28th September 2023
- Submission deadline: September 1st 2023
- Response from GAIN on acceptance or rejection of proposal: 3rd September 2023
- Pitching To Committee: 6th September 2023
- Award of contract: October 2023

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:
  - 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 in similar kind of projects]
- 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:
  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 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. 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.

_________________________________________
Signature (applicant)

_________________________________________
Signature (applicant)