

## Expression of Interest

### Research Partner for a new Market Systems Programme in Nigeria

Issued by

The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)

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GAIN's procurement is conducted based on our procurement principles, including "a focus on ethical and sustainable procurement which requires us to take note of our legal and ethical commitments... in our procurement and supplier management."

We require all our partners, suppliers and service providers to familiarise themselves with our [Code of Conduct](#) (Code) and to adhere to either our Code or to their own equivalent code or set of behaviours.

This is addition to any relevant clauses and provisions in our contractual terms.

We also expect our partners, suppliers, and service providers to proactively inform GAIN, via the mechanisms detailed in the Code, of any breaches, potential or perceived breaches of its provisions.

Any supplier or service provider found to be in violation of these principles will be excluded from this process and may be barred from responding to future opportunities.

#### 1. Introduction

##### 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 The Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States. We currently have a presence and conduct programming activities in Bangladesh, Benin, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.

### **About the Programme**

The programme led by the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and delivered by a five-partner consortium, aims to transform Nigeria’s agrifood system into an inclusive engine for dignified and fulfilling work for young people age 18-35, particularly young women, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and internally displaced persons (IDPs). The programme expands access to education, skills, and finance while fostering entrepreneurship, digital innovation, and agrifood industrialisation. By aligning with the donor’s purpose of poverty relief and youth empowerment, the programme provides the structural bridge that connects training and financial inclusion investments to tangible employment and enterprise opportunities within agriculture, manufacturing, and the digital economy.

Over a three-year period (2026–2028), the programme will catalyse a system-level transformation of Nigeria’s agrifood economy to enable 380,000 financially disadvantaged youth, particularly young women, persons with disabilities (PWDs), and internally displaced persons (IDPs), to secure dignified and fulfilling work and entrepreneurship opportunities across ten states: Kano, Kaduna, Niger, Benue, Nasarawa, Plateau, Jigawa, Oyo, Ogun, and Lagos. Rather than addressing constraints in isolation, the programme intentionally rethinks how value chains function, from input access and production to logistics, processing, and market delivery, so that groups most affected by exclusion participate on fairer and more predictable terms. Focusing on the soybean, sesame, tomato, and ginger value chains, the programme integrates seven interlinked objectives that collectively strengthen the agrifood system (1) Enhance agricultural productivity, (2) Efficient agricultural supply chains, (3) Improve processing and manufacturing, (4) Improve access to markets, (5) Inclusive agricultural supply chain, and (6) expand access to affordable and inclusive finance mechanisms, and (7) strengthen institutional and systemic frameworks.

Ultimately, the programme aims to reach approximately 450,000 youth, based on a conservative effectiveness assumption of 85%, translating into 380,000 youth securing decent and fulfilling work and enterprise outcomes. See figure 1 for the Theory of Change of the programme.

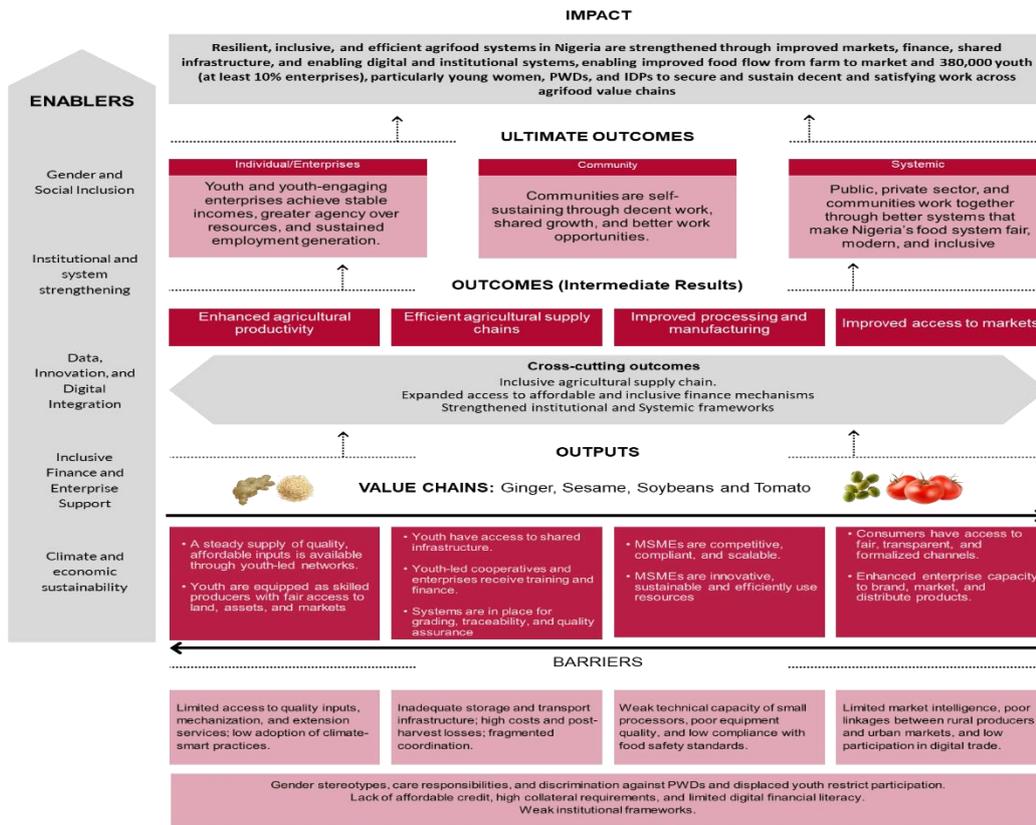


Figure 1 Theory of Change

## I. Background & timescales

The purpose of this Expression of Interest (EOI) is to identify and shortlist qualified organisations/consortia with relevant expertise and experience. Shortlisted applicants will be invited to participate in a subsequent Request for Proposals (RFP) process. Ultimately, we aim to engage the services of a qualified research and thought partner to focus on formative research, programme evaluation, and adaptive learning. The research partner is expected to be an active consortium member throughout the grant period (2026 – 2028).

Set out below is the proposed timescale for this procurement. It is a guide and whilst the GAIN does not intend to depart from the timetable, it reserves the right to do so at any stage.

EOI issue date	2 <sup>nd</sup> of March
EOI closes - deadline for submission	13 <sup>th</sup> of March 12:00 pm CET
GAIN to invite shortlisted Bidders to develop a full proposal	20 <sup>th</sup> of March
Deadline for shortlisted Bidders to submit questions	25 <sup>th</sup> of March, 12:00 pm CET

Information and clarification session for shortlisted Bidders	27 <sup>th</sup> of March, time TBD
Deadline for submission of full proposals	3 <sup>rd</sup> of April, 12:00 pm CET
GAIN clarifications, evaluation & interviews with shortlisted bidders	6 <sup>th</sup> – 10 <sup>th</sup> of April
Contract award - subject to negotiation & due diligence checks	10 <sup>th</sup> of April
Planned contract signature date	15 <sup>th</sup> of April
Date by which all work is to be completed	March 2029

## 2. The Opportunity

The research partner is expected to lead on the following elements:

**Formative research:** Conducted during the inception period (month 1 – 3), formative research will establish benchmarks and stress test both the program theory and theory of change. Through landscape analyses, needs assessments, and targeting analysis, it will assess whether core assumptions about how the intervention works hold in context, and whether the proposed results pathway is plausible and achievable. Findings will inform refinements to design, targeting, and implementation strategy prior to scale-up, and guide evidence-informed monitoring throughout implementation.

**Programme evaluation:** The evaluation will collect annual data (baseline, midline, and endline) on outcome and impact measures across representative samples of actors and targeted individuals in all 10 states, 4 value chains and 7 strategic objective areas. Quantitative analysis will be complemented by qualitative enquiry to explain results and test underlying mechanisms. The evaluation will independently assess progress toward outcomes, validate the monitoring system, and analyse the programme impact pathway to examine whether the intended causal logic is holding. Findings will inform the learning agenda, support adaptive management, and strengthen accountability.

**Adaptive learning:** Facilitate a process which will generate insights that focus on understanding what works, for whom, and under what conditions to promote scalability and sustained impact of the programme across diverse agricultural contexts. Quality improvement systems will be developed and applied to identify, test and document project adaptations throughout the programme period.

## Deliverables & Timescales

Year	Key Milestones and Deliverables
2026	<p>Inception (formative research, finalizing the learning agenda)</p> <p>Baseline evaluation</p> <p>Contribute to the development and application of the adaptive learning system</p>
2027	<p>Midline evaluation</p> <p>Adaptive learning continued through e.g., input into the adaptive learning system and the facilitation of discussions with programme teams</p> <p>Review of learning agenda, documentation of key learnings thus far through the development of knowledge products</p>
2028	<p>Endline evaluation and report out</p> <p>Adaptive learning continues and key project adjustments documented as knowledge products</p> <p>Knowledge products developed on outcomes and impact of the project, as well as key learnings against the learning agenda</p>

## Governance and accountability

Governance arrangements, including the establishment of an Evaluation Steering Group or equivalent oversight mechanism, will be confirmed prior to contract signature. Key deliverables will be subject to review and approval by the designated oversight body.

### II. Instructions to bidders

The selection of a research partner for the programme will be managed through a 2-stage process. Initial responses must be based on the information available in this EOI only and does not represent a commitment on your part to submit a full proposal should the additional details modify the interest. GAIN anticipates inviting 2-4 bidders to submit a full proposal under a Request for Proposal process.

In order to be considered for this work, please submit a response of no more than **4 pages** (including 1 page for the financial justification) containing at least the following information:

- Clear explanation of the bidder's understanding of the role of the proposed research partner
- Brief overview of proposed approach
- Capacity statement outlining key proposed team members and overview of relevant experience

- One page overview and justification of anticipated costs in USD (excluding field data collection and costs to be borne by local partners). Budget figures submitted at EOI stage are indicative and non-binding and will be refined at RFP stage.

### ***Preparing your response***

- Bidders must obtain, at their own responsibility and expense, all information necessary for the preparation of response.
- Bidders should notify GAIN promptly of any perceived inconsistency, or omission in this EOI, or any of its associated documents.

### ***Submitting your response***

The Proposal and any accompanying documents must be in English

Bidders must submit their EOI in the following way:

Email to [rfp@gainhealth.org](mailto:rfp@gainhealth.org). The subject heading of the email should be 'EOI: Research Partner for new Market Systems Programme'. All submitted documents must be viewable using the Microsoft Office or Adobe suite of applications. Your submission should not exceed 30MB.

### ***Notes on submissions***

- Bidders should not include in their submission any extra information which has not been specifically requested in the EOI for example, any sales literature etc.
- No response may be modified after the deadline for receipt.
- GAIN may request additional information from Bidders to assist further evaluation of responses.

### ***Evaluation criteria***

The following indicates a list of the significant criteria against which the EOI will be assessed (evaluation criteria for the subsequent RFP stage will be communicated to shortlisted bidders). This list is not exhaustive and is provided to enhance the applicants' ability to respond to this Opportunity.

#### **Technical quality of proposal**

- Clear articulation of the respondents understanding of the scope of work and objectives
- Proposed approach for meeting the stated objectives

#### **Team profiles and experience**

- Demonstrated expertise and prior experience in the evaluation of similar programs
- Composition of team
- Experience working in Nigeria

### **III. Terms and conditions**

This section constitutes the full conditions of this EOI and any subsequent procurement process, and participation in the process automatically signals that the Bidder accepts the conditions.

### ***Jurisdiction***

Any Contract resulting from this EOI and any subsequent procurement process, shall be governed by Swiss law.

### ***Late Proposals***

Any bid received after the deadline may be rejected at GAIN's absolute discretion.

### ***Disclaimers***

Bidders will not be compensated for costs incurred in preparing responses or proposals, submitting revised proposals or in participation in any meeting or presentation.

This EOI, and any subsequent procurement process, does not commit GAIN to any course of action, it is not an offer or a contract and does not commit GAIN to contract for any of the services detailed within the EOI.

GAIN reserves the absolute right to:

- accept or reject any or all Proposals with or without notice or reason
- accept or reject any proposal in whole or in part
- accept a proposal other than the lowest priced
- negotiate with any, all or none of the Bidders
- modify or cancel this EOI and any subsequent procurement process

### ***Acceptance of Proposals***

GAIN is under no obligation to accept the lowest priced response or proposal, or any response or proposal and reserves the right to reject any response or proposal which is incomplete, conditional, or not complying with the procurement documents.

A response or proposal may be for all or part of the Opportunity and may be accepted by GAIN either wholly or in part.

A response or proposal will not be accepted, in whole or in part, unless and until GAIN has signed a Contract in writing to the successful Bidder. GAIN reserves the right to:

- amend the terms and conditions of the procurement process
- cancel the evaluation and award process at any stage
- require the Bidder to clarify its Proposal in writing and/or provide additional information.

Failure to respond adequately may result in the Bidder not being selected.

### ***Amendments***

Prior to the final date for submission of response or proposal GAIN may issue amendments to clarify, modify or add to the procurement documents. A copy of each amendment will be issued to each Bidder and shall become part of the EOI.

### ***Validity of Proposals***

Proposals submitted in response to this EOI and any subsequent procurement process are to remain valid for a period of not less than 90 days from the closing date.

### ***Withdrawals***

Proposals may be withdrawn at any time prior to the EOI closing date and time by written notice to the Company.

### ***Interpretation of Requirements***

Bidders are responsible for ensuring that they have all the information required for the preparation of their responses and proposals, that they satisfy themselves about the information and correct interpretation of terminology used in the tender documentation.

Bidders must also ensure that they are fully conversant with the nature and extent of the obligations to be accepted by them if their tender is accepted.

### ***Assumptions***

Any assumptions that have been made in responding to this EOI should be outlined in the Bidders response documents.

### ***Confidentiality***

Except as required for the preparation of their response, Bidders must not, without GAIN's prior written consent, disclose to any third party any of the contents of the EOI documents.

Bidders must ensure that their employees, consultants, and agents also are bound and comply with this condition of confidentiality.

### ***Feedback to unsuccessful Bidders***

GAIN appreciates that significant time and resource goes into preparing a tender response, and we try to ensure that feedback is provided to all unsuccessful Bidders.

Please note however that GAIN does not share detailed scoring information with unsuccessful Bidders.

### ***Inconsistencies and omissions***

Bidders must promptly advise the Company in writing of any inconsistencies and omissions they discover in the EOI.

### ***EOI documents***

Bidders must destroy all copies of the EOI document if unsuccessful within 30 days of being notified they have not been successful (either issued by GAIN or created by the Bidder).

### ***Disclaimers***

Whilst the material in this EOI and the Information has been prepared in good faith, it does not purport to be comprehensive, nor has it been independently verified.

Neither GAIN nor their advisors, their respective directors, officers, members, partners, employees, other staff or agents makes any representation or warranty (express or implied) as to the accuracy, reasonableness or completeness of the Information; or accepts any responsibility for the information contained in the Information or for their fairness, accuracy or completeness of that Information nor shall any of them be liable for any loss or damage (other than in respect of

fraudulent misrepresentation) arising as a result of reliance on such Information or any subsequent communication.

***Collusive behaviour***

Any Bidder who:

- fixes or adjusts the amount of their response or proposal by or in accordance with any agreement or arrangement with any other party; or
- communicates to any party other than GAIN the amount or approximate amount of its Responses or information which would enable the amount or approximate amount to be calculated (except where such disclosure is made in confidence to obtain quotations necessary for the preparation of the response or insurance or any necessary security); or
- enters into any agreement or arrangement with any other party that such other party shall refrain from submitting a response or proposal; or
- enters into any agreement or arrangement with any other party as to the amount of any response or proposal submitted; or
- offers or agrees to pay or give or does pay or give any sum or sums of money, inducement, or valuable consideration directly or indirectly to any party for doing or having done or causing or having caused to be done in relation to any response or proposal any act or omission.

shall (without prejudice to any other civil remedies available to GAIN and without prejudice to any criminal liability which such conduct by a Bidder may attract) be disqualified.