

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

**PROVISION OF AUDIT AND TESTING SERVICES TO
THE GAIN PREMIX FACILITY**

**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, Rwanda, Tanzania & Uganda. Programmes and projects are carried out in a variety of other countries, particularly in Africa and Asia.

The GAIN Premix Facility ([GPF](#)) was established in 2009 to provide the food industry, agencies and governments, a procurement mechanism for fortification micronutrients & premix blends.

A supply base of over 60 micronutrient producer sites are pre-qualified, assessed, audited and approved by the GPF and a published approved supplier [list](#) is maintained. This quality-assured supplier list is the basis for supply of micronutrients and premix blends to GPF customers around the world.

2. BACKGROUND

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

The purpose of this RFP is to select a Service Provider who will provide supplier auditing and food testing services to the GAIN Premix Facility from 1st July 2024, through to end December 2025.

Currently there are 62 GPF-approved supply sites across 44 supply companies and in over 20 countries. All supplier sites are required to hold an appropriate food safety management systems certificate, then undergo a remote pre-audit assessment with documentation review, followed by samples analysis and on-site audit according to a GAIN-specific checklist. Supplier approval depends upon the score achieved at audit and approval is granted for a 1 to 3-year period prior to the next approval audit.

The GAIN Premix Facility supplies micronutrients and premixes through their online tender platform which allows for GAIN-approved suppliers to quote for orders to supply GAIN's clients. This facility effectively makes quality premix available for the purpose food fortification and also more affordable due to the competitive element of the tender process.

For all supply orders, samples are sent from the micronutrient supply site to the testing Service Provider's laboratory and then a schedule of tests is conducted for quality monitoring purposes.

Due to the specialised nature of fortificant testing and supplier auditing, the GAIN Premix Facility requires an established organisation with global reach, to provide these services.

3. SCOPE OF WORK, SUBMISSION AND DELIVERABLES

3.1. SCOPE OF WORK

GAIN requires a proposal that will provide information to assess prices and quality of service for:

a. Supplier auditing services

b. Sample testing services

Supplier auditing services

For both new audit instructions and for ongoing re-audits, the Service Provider will contact GAIN's supplier to make arrangements for audit and will provide them with GAIN's audit checklist in advance. The audit will be conducted on the agreed date by a lead auditor who is qualified to conduct food safety audits to GFSI standards.

Depending upon the actual site, the audit may be for a single approval category or in some cases, more than one category (dry premix, oil premix, vitamin A, mineral, micronutrient powder sachet, fortified rice kernel), in which case, a combined checklist is used.

The audit will be conducted within one day.

Audits will be scored according to conformity with the GAIN checklist (available on request).

After preparing an audit report, the Service Provider will submit audit findings to the supplier with a summary of scoring and details of any non-conformities.

The Service Provider will request and obtain a Corrective & Preventative Action CAPA plan which will be reviewed against audit findings. Corrective actions for all non-conformities and evidence (major & higher) will be reviewed and, if suitable, accepted.

Upon acceptance of CAPA plan and evidence, the Service Provider will issue a GAIN letter of approval (certificate) for an appropriate duration which will be 1-3 years depending upon audit score.

A GAIN letter of rejection will be issued if audit score does not meet minimum requirements.

The Service Provider will monitor renewal-audit requirements and then arrange audits accordingly, in agreement with GAIN, so that continuity of approval is maintained.

The number of audits per year may range between 15 up to 45 in number, depending upon need and frequency.

Country scope as per GPF current approved supplier [list](#) and may include the following countries:

USA, Canada, Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Mexico, India, China, Bangladesh, Malaysia, Singapore, Pakistan, Thailand, South Korea, Nigeria, South Africa, France, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Netherlands, Denmark, UK, Ireland, Czech Republic, Poland, Bulgaria.

Sample testing services

The GAIN Premix Facility procures micronutrient premixes and nutrients from approved suppliers using an online tender platform and arranges delivery of these products directly to clients. Each batch of every consignment is sampled by the manufacturer/blender and those samples will be securely couriered to the Service Provider's food testing laboratory in sufficient quantity for testing to be conducted.

The Service Provider will nominate one location point for receipt of all batch samples. The Service Provider may test in other locations but transfer of samples to those alternative locations, will be at their responsibility and cost.

Sample storage is required only in accordance with standard laboratory practices, typically minimum 1 month from receipt unless instructions for further testing are received.

Batch samples are to be tested on a predefined schedule which details the micronutrients and other parameters to be conducted on each type of micronutrient product.

Dry premix blends	Tested for a range of micronutrients including at least one fat-soluble vitamin, one water-soluble vitamin if present, typically two minerals, microbiological tests, particle size and in some cases heavy metal contaminants
Oil premix blend	Vitamins A & D3 plus one rancidity indicator & microbiological tests
Potassium iodate	Particle size and FCC tests: Appearance, assay & lead
Di-calcium phosphate	Particle size, microbiology and FCC tests: Appearance, assay, arsenic, lead
Liquid vitamin A	Peroxide Value, Acid Value and FCC tests: vitamin A activity
Other micronutrients	Various according to schedule

The number of batch samples requiring testing per year will be dependent upon orders and is expected to include in a 12-month period:

Potassium iodate: 8-12 samples, dry premix blends: 30-40 samples, oil premix: 2-5 samples, Di-calcium phosphate: 10-15 samples, liquid vitamin A: 4-8 samples.

Invoicing for services will be on a monthly basis following delivery of services. Testing may be invoiced on completion of testing and issue of report of analysis. Auditing may be invoiced once an audit is conducted and a report issued. Other services may be invoiced monthly.

3.2. PROPOSAL SUBMISSION

Please provide the following information:

An overview of the company providing the proposed services, along with key locations to be used for administration functions, location of testing laboratories to be used routinely and the proposed location for receipt of samples.

Confirm the country office locations from where auditors will provide audit services for each country listed in 3.1 and, identify which of those countries do not have a country office and/or do not have available qualified food safety auditors in country.

Advise the corporate position on accreditation for food safety auditing and food testing services. Confirm what will be the expected minimum qualification for any auditor who will be conducting GAIN supplier audits eg. GFSI lead auditor.

Provide an overview as to how your organisation will monitor and maintain continuity of evidence for pre-qualifying food safety certification for every GAIN-approved supplier site.

Provide a description of the process by which your organisation will monitor, schedule and conduct GAIN site audits, including the process for reporting, CAPA management and certification.

For each laboratory to be used, the accreditation scope in relation to the tests discussed in 3.1 and how your organisation can ensure reliability of test results.

Advise of specific expertise related to the testing of food micronutrient chemicals (vitamin and mineral compounds) and micronutrient premix blends.

Provide a description with examples, anonymised if necessary, of other similar work currently and/or previously conducted for clients in both auditing and micronutrient testing.

Provide a list of prices in Euro or US Dollars that will form the basis of an agreed pricelist and to include:

- Fixed audit price split by country
 - A price per country audit (for all countries listed in 3.1) which will include all auditor time and administrative work including:
Contact with supplier to arrange audit, the site audit (1 day), auditor travelling time, generating audit report, review of findings & identification of non-conformities, scoring, issue of report to supplier, obtain Corrective and Preventative Action (CAPA) plan and evidence of implementation, review CAPA evidence, issue letter of supplier approval.
 - The country audit price does not need to include in-country transport costs, accommodation, or meal expenses, as these may be charged separately and additionally when supported by expenditure receipts. If such additional expenses are expected to exceed \$500 then an indication of the anticipated additional expenses will be required in the quotation.
Note: GAIN will only reimburse economy-class travel expenses.
 - For any country (listed in 3.1) where international travel will be required to conduct an audit, these countries should be identified, along with an indication of the travel and accommodation arrangements that are already included within the quoted price and an indication of the additional expenses that are not included in the quoted price but will be required to complete such audit.

- Testing prices. Indicate method type and limit of detection where applicable for the following tests:
 - Particle size, per sieve
 - Minerals: Iron, Zinc, Copper, Selenium, Iodine
 - Heavy metals: Arsenic, Mercury, Cadmium, Lead
 - Vitamins in dry premix: A (as RE), D3, B1, B2, B3, B5, B6, B9, B12, Biotin, E, K1
 - Microbiology on dry premix, as test package of: TVC <1000cfu/g, Yeast <10 cfu/g, Moulds <100 cfu/g, Enterobacteriaceae <10 cfu/g, Salmonella Abs/25g
 - Peroxide Value
 - Potassium iodate, as test package of: Appearance (FCC), Particle size (single sieve), Assay (FCC), Lead (FCC)
 - Dicalcium phosphate, as test package of: Appearance (FCC), Arsenic & Lead (FCC), Assay (FCC), Particle size (single sieve), Microbiology TVC <1000cfu/g, Yeast <10cfu/g, Mould <100cfu/g, Enterobacteriaceae Neg/g.

- Administrative charges.
 - A standard, fixed monthly amount which will be charged to cover ongoing administrative and project management including but not limited to:
 - Sample receipt, organisation and storage.
 - Liaising with courier and/or customs departments to provide information related to clearing of any problematic samples being delivered to the Service Provider’s laboratory.
 - Management and update of shared online documents relating to sample testing status.
 - Weekly online meetings with GAIN Premix Facility team, to update on supplier certification status, audit status, arrangements for audit and other pertinent issues.
 - Management and update of shared online documents relating to supplier pre-qualifying certificate status and audit approval status.
 - Obtaining and continuously maintaining an up-to-date pre-qualifying food safety certificate on file for each approved supplier.
 - Issue of a GAIN letter of approval to a supplier following successful audit.
 - Maintaining and modifying as agreed with GAIN, the GAIN audit checklists.

3.3. DELIVERABLES & TIMELINES

DELIVERABLE	
Submission of proposal by Service Provider	1 st May 2024
Review of proposals by GAIN	10 th May 2024
Contracting for services	31 st May 2024
Provision of services	From 1 st July 2024

3.4. QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

The organisation taking on this role will be expected to have considerable experience in all aspects related to food premix and micronutrient analyses. On supplier auditing, it is expected that the Service Provider will have access to qualified food safety lead auditors who are operating to GFSI standards and who are able to conduct audits in all the named countries.

KEY CRITERIA

Established at least 10 years in similar fields of work.

To make available a primary point of contact or contacts for the GAIN account.

Ability to communicate with GAIN in the English language.

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 proposal, all inquiries and other communications to the contact below. Responses will not be confidential except in cases where proprietary information is involved.

David Morgan, Senior Technical Specialist, GAIN
E-mail: dmorgan@gainhealth.org.

2. BUDGET

Applicants are required to provide a detailed proposal based upon the proposal submission in 3.2

3. SUBMISSION

Application proposals to be submitted by email within the indicated timeline.

4. DEADLINE

Completed proposals should be submitted to GAIN by **23:59hrs on 1st May 2024 Central European Time.**

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.

6. REVISIONS

Proposals may be revised by electronic mail if such revisions 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 issued by a principal or authorising person 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:

- 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 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:

- 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. 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

OFFERS WHICH DO NOT CONTAIN THE ABOVE-MENTIONED DOCUMENTATION OR DEVIATE FROM THE PRESCRIBED COSTING FORMAT MAY BE CONSIDERED INCOMPLETE AND NON-RESPONSIVE.