

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

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# Identifying Solution Hypotheses to Improve Quality of Diets in Rural Contexts

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**

The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) is seeking proposals for a consultant to lead an analytical and consultative process to identify scalable solution hypotheses that will improve quality of diets among rural populations. The process will entail an evidence review, convening of stakeholders and facilitating substantive idea exchange, and finally compiling a report articulating solution hypotheses based on the evidence and consultations.

Many successful programmatic solutions for improving diets among rural populations exist, often broadly described as nutrition-sensitive agriculture programmes. However, there is little understanding of how to implement these at scale (Ruel, Quisumbing, & Balagamwala, 2018). Food systems approaches to improving diets work to bypass this challenge by making system-level changes in markets/value chains, consumer demand, and policy and enabling environments. GAIN has been on the forefront of such innovations. However, these approaches tend to be better suited to urban and peri-urban contexts, and there is a recognized need to expand these efforts to include rural populations, where food consumption decisions are often intrinsically linked to production.

With support from the Dutch MFA, GAIN will facilitate a process towards identifying potential solutions – based on existing evidence and experiences and advice from partners and stakeholders, including other organisations working in related areas. Critically, solution hypotheses must be deployable at large scale and need to be financially sustainable.

The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) is issuing this Request for Proposal (RFP) to engage a Consultancy to support a collaborative ideation & consultation process to identify solution hypotheses for improving quality of diets in rural contexts and GAIN will be the administrative lead organisation for this RFP.

The purpose of this RFP is to engage services of a Service Provider to lead an analytical and consultative process to identify scalable solution hypotheses that will improve quality of diets among rural populations.

## OBJECTIVES

The objective of this consultancy is to lead an analytical and consultative process to identify scalable solution hypotheses that will improve quality of diets among rural populations, in two main components:

1. Identify and review relevant evidence and summarise such that the project team and workshop participants to derive meaningful insights and ideas that will contribute to improved understanding of the problem and to potential solution ideas that address the unique challenges and opportunities within rural contexts.
2. Structure and facilitate three in-person workshops that encourage maximum engagement and sharing of information and learning from participating organisations, but also maintaining focus on identifying areas of agreement around solution hypotheses. Consolidate and refine workshop findings and conduct any additional analysis to support the subsequent workshops

Consolidate and refine workshop findings and conduct any additional analysis to support the subsequent workshops

## SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES

The following describes a potential process for the analytical and consultative initiative: (a). **Kick-off Session (Virtual)**: This initial workshop introduces the series and the consultant leading the sessions. It aims to outline the process and objectives. The focus will be on presenting the framework and goals rather than soliciting input at this stage. (b). **Literature Review**: Review and summarise evidence for scalable solutions for promoting healthier diets in rural contexts. Analyse the fundamental concepts influencing rural consumers' choices in consumption and production relevant across different contexts and value chains. (c). **Core Constructs Discussion (In-Person Workshop)**: In this workshop, participants will discuss and reach a consensus on the key concepts driving consumption and production decisions. The session will also cover initial problem identification and the creation of scenarios or archetypes. (d). **Solution Categories Exploration**: Map out existing strategies that tackle the identified core constructs, building on initial literature review and core constructs discussion. For instance, in addressing the 'risk' construct, potential solutions could include farm insurance and subsidies. (e). **Solutions Review (In-Person Workshop)**: Participants will review and discuss findings regarding potential solutions. The session will refine the initial problem statements and archetypes based on insights from the literature review and workshop discussions. (f). **Theory of Change Finalization (In-Person/Virtual Workshop)**: The final workshop focuses on agreeing upon and finalizing a Theory of Change (or multiple Theories of Change). This theory will encapsulate the problem statements, identified solutions, and applicable scenarios or archetypes.

### Consultations:

(a) Design & facilitate up to 3 workshops. Max 20 participants per workshop, drawn from organizations dealing with or seeking to deal with the rural consumer dietary challenge.

(b) Write up workshop outputs & next steps.

(c) Write a final report that can become the basis of a discussion paper to take the work forward.

## Review Literature:

The first component of the scope of work entails a review and summary of literature to improve our understanding of the problem and potential solutions that address the unique challenges and opportunities within rural contexts. The consultant will be expected to:

Conduct a comprehensive review of existing (published, peer-reviewed and non-peer reviewed, in LMIC's, especially SSA) to review and summarise evidence for scalable solutions for promoting healthier diets in rural contexts. Identify salient factors driving diet change from the literature, across multiple contexts listed in the table below. And highlight gaps, limitations, and potential risks. Specifically:

- (a) Summarise evidence: Guided by the theoretical framework determining diets presented in Figure 1, identify the salient factors associated with diet change, according to the extant evidence. (If pathways or factors are missing from the theoretical framework, these should be added.)
- (b) Consider any factors that are salient along multiple pathways and in multiple contexts.
- (c) Identify commonalities that can contribute to broadly applicable & scalable intervention options.
- (d) The scope of the review and presentation of evidence should include considerations that solutions may exist at different levels is important (for instance, household, community, or value chain levels).
- (e) The review should focus on the ultimate outcome of interest, healthier diets of rural consumers, rather than effects on upstream outcomes like agricultural productivity.
- (f) Using insights gleaned from the literature review, summarise any notable gaps in evidence, limitations of proposed solutions, and potential risks that could constrain or complicate their ability to be implemented and scaled.

The following conceptual framework lays out the commonly discussed pathways to diet change among agrarian communities, as well as the contextual factors that influence those pathways. These pathways and “environmental” characteristics should guide the topics explored.

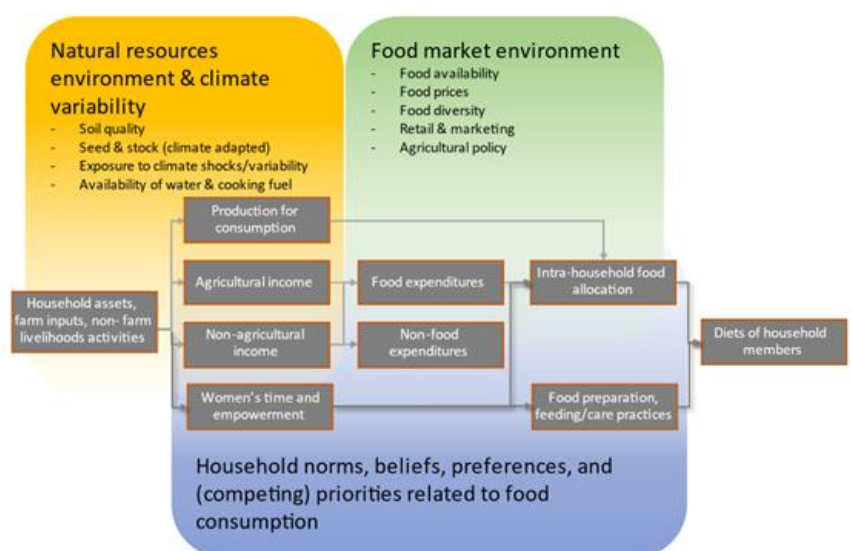


Figure 1 Pathways to diet change in rural populations

Source: Herforth, A., and Harris, J., 2014; updated Ragasa, NL Aberman, CA Mingote, 2019

The project team has also identified different segments within this broad population and tried to describe their characteristics and possible challenges / opportunities. This list is neither exhaustive, nor necessarily correct. But we believe, thinking along these lines is important to ensure we do not run the risk of defining target groups too narrowly / specifically. Because that could go against the goal of solutions that work at large scale.

Factor / Dimension / Consideration	Scenarios / segments		Remarks / Assumptions
1. Target Group: Whose diet are we seeking to improve?	Smallholder farmers and their families living in remote rural areas with low access to food markets where they can buy / sell		Focus can be on growing different foods for own consumption. If income improvement is needed, then it might need to come from non-farming activities or from social protection (possibly paid in return for soil / environment /forest conservation)
	Smallholder farmers and their families engaged in non-food cash crops like tea, coffee, tobacco, chillies, nuts, oil seeds etc. but also have some land to grow food for own consumption. Access to markets for buying / selling could differ.		Focus can be on kitchen garden style interventions for growing some of the foods and income improvement from cash crops to generate resources to buy other foods as well as other needs. Some trade-offs likely between efforts / resources needed for growing food vs. on cash crop. Differences may be in access component for selling and/or for buying.
	Smallholder farmers growing food crops that they sell as well as consume e.g. staples like maize or rice, vegetables, fruits, pulses & beans etc. And have reasonable access to markets for buying / selling food.		Will probably be the most complex scenario as trade-offs are likely to be more difficult to resolve. But, also likely to be the more commonly occurring one.
	Landless labourers with no access to land		Would this be more appropriate for the Social Protection work?
1. Focus foods / commodities	Production-consumption dynamics	Mainly bought from market	For example, dairy or fruits
		Mainly home produced	For example, some vegetables, biofortified staples?
		Can be either	For example, pulses & beans
1.	Income pathway	Mostly sold for income generation	Oil seeds, & non-food cash crops
		Sold & consumed	Vegetables, eggs, milk

## 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

Staff will be available to respond to clarifications on this solicitation. Please direct all inquiries and other communications to the GAIN email address: [rfp@gainhealth.org](mailto:rfp@gainhealth.org). Queries sent by 18 March 2024 at 5:00pm CET will be responded to by 21 March 2024.

### 2. BUDGET

Applicants are required to provide an illustrative budget in US Dollars, 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.

1. Technical proposal outlining objectives and methodological approaches; detailed profiles (qualification, expertise, relevant experience etc.) of the agencies and individuals who will be completing the work including their full names, their expertise and publications in relevant research; and, past experience (previous projects conducted over the last five years which are relevant for this evaluation) and references.
2. Financial proposal outlining budget (in as much detail as possible) accompanied by a budget narrative (as above). Note that the financial proposal should include all applicable taxes and fees.  
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### 3. SUBMISSION

Proposals should be in English and submitted in electronic copy to the following e-mail address: [rfp@gainhealth.org](mailto:rfp@gainhealth.org). Please include “**Identifying solution hypotheses to improve quality of diets of Rural Contexts**” in the subject line.

### 4. DEADLINE

Completed proposals should be submitted electronically to GAIN **before 5:00pm. Central European Time on 1 April 2024. Proposals** may be postmarked on the due date, provided that an email of the proposal is submitted by the deadline.

## **5. UNACCEPTABLE**

The following proposals will automatically not be considered or accepted:

- Proposals that are received after the RFP deadline at the specified Email address.
- Proposals received by fax.
- Incomplete proposals.
- Proposals that are not signed.

## **6. REVISIONS**

Proposals must 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.

## **12. SUMMARY OF DEADLINES**

1. Queries to be submitted by: March 18th, 2024
2. Response will be disseminated by: March 28th, 2024
3. Proposal submission deadline: April 1st, 2024
4. Response from GAIN on acceptance or rejection of proposal by: April 15th, 2024
5. Award of contract: May 6th, 2024

## **III. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THIS SOLICITATION**

### **13. 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.

### **14. 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.

### **15. 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.

### **16. 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.**

## **17. REVIEW PROCESS**

The review process will involve a Review Panel with participants selected by GAIN.

## **18. 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.

## **19. 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.

## **20. 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.

## 21. 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.

## 22. 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.

## 23. 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:
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. (Print or type business, corporate name and address)
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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)

[Click or tap here to enter text.](#)

Signature (applicant)