REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

FORMATIVE DESIGN OF A DIGITAL PLATFORM FOR INTERGOVERNMENTAL CO-INNOVATION ON NUTRITION-SENSITIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION

Issued by
The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF WORK 2
II. INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESPONDING  5
III. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THIS SOLICITATION  7
IV. ANNEXES 12
I. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF WORK

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.

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, Benin, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, Uganda, and Tanzania.

BACKGROUND

The Social Protection programme at GAIN works across several countries in South Asia, Southeast Asia, and sub-Saharan Africa to promote and safeguard accessibility of nutrition-sensitive social protection benefits among the most vulnerable members of the population. The programme takes a distinctly community-oriented and human-centered approach to social protection, placing primary emphasis on leveraging social protection to improve nutrition—especially among women and girls—through empowerment, resilience, and human capital development.

A central part of GAIN’s global social protection mandate is to catalyse and scale-up innovative design solutions that can improve the nutrition impact of social protection systems. While many social protection systems have shared objectives and challenges, there is often a lack of open exchange across contexts, limiting the extent to which decision-makers can learn from the challenges and successes of others. We view co-innovation amongst public-sector social protection administrators and other system actors as a possible way to bridge this gap and to substantially improve the capacity for nutrition innovation in social protection systems. ‘Co-innovation’ can be defined as ‘the joint production of new ideas, technologies, or ways of doing things through a process that involves sharing perspectives and promoting knowledge appropriation and social learning’.1

GAIN is establishing a Platform for South-South co-innovation and knowledge exchange on nutrition-sensitive social protection, to foster meaningful and targeted co-innovation partnerships across countries, contexts, and social protection systems. The primary intended outcome of the Platform is to facilitate co-innovation, as defined above, among public sector social protection administrators and other system actors/development partners. The Platform endeavors to achieve this outcome by 1) establishing a learning forum to enable open exchange of knowledge and experiences, and 2) facilitating co-innovation partnerships that enable actors to jointly develop and implement novel nutrition-sensitive social protection innovations. The co-innovation

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partnerships, while primarily involving virtual-online interactions, may include in-person exchanges/showcases that will allow participants to engage in practical learning and problem-solving.

Accordingly, the Platform will primarily comprise two elements: 1) a web-based user forum for knowledge exchange, targeted capacity-building opportunities, and virtual dialogues/webinars; and 2) a digital system for managing and implementing co-innovation partnerships, each of which will consist of two or more members and be mobilised around a central innovation challenge/priority.

SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES

1.1. PROJECT OBJECTIVES

GAIN seeks a consultant or research agency who will work closely with GAIN’s global and country-based teams to achieve the following objectives:

- **Objective 1.** Conduct an appraisal of existing and proposed models for intergovernmental co-innovation and collaboration on development issues
- **Objective 2.** Identify recommendations for the most tractable and user-appropriate options for the interface and operationalisation of the Platform components (e.g., the web-based user forum and digital management system for co-innovation partnerships)
- **Objective 3.** Create and test a prototype Platform design based on the identified recommendations

1.1.1. APPRAISAL OF INTER-GOVERNMENTAL MODELS FOR CO-INNOVATION AND COLLABORATION

The consultant will be tasked with conducting a formal appraisal of the range of models that may be used for facilitating inter-governmental (multi-national) co-innovation and collaboration initiatives. The appraisal should comprise (but is not limited to) the following types of inputs:

- **Desk review of relevant literature** on co-innovation and collaboration approaches/models among public-sector actors in the Global South. Special emphasis should be given to co-innovation/collaboration on social protection initiatives, if sufficient literature is available.
- **10-15 Key Informant Interviews** conducted with public-sector social protection administrators in at least 5 countries where GAIN is undertaking social protection projects, to better understand co-innovation needs/opportunities, and any factors that limit or complicate actors’ ability to engage in co-innovation initiatives. GAIN staff in-country will support the consultant in identifying the relevant stakeholders and facilitating formal introductions when needed.
- **Profiling of web-based platforms** targeting, or frequently used by, public-sector actors in the Global South, to better understand best practices for digitally engaging this type of stakeholder.

1.1.2. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CO-INNOVATION PLATFORM DESIGN

The consultant will use their findings from the appraisal to synthesize a set of key recommendations for the design and operationalisation of the Platform. These recommendations should include the following:

- **A written brief** articulating key recommendations, including analysis of required inputs, stakeholders, potential risks/biases, and limitations of a Platform. All recommendations should be supported by evidence/case studies found in the reviewed literature and in the profiling exercise for web-based platforms. The recommendations should clearly identify the potential value of the Platform. If applicable, recommendations may include potential opportunities to leverage or merge this initiative with existing platforms.

1.1.3. CREATE AND TEST DESIGN PROTOTYPE

The recommendations should, ideally, build from the appraisal to produce a specific prototype of what the Platform’s digital ‘architecture’ might look like. In addition to a written/bulleted set of key recommendations, the consultant may consider producing **wireframes or flow diagrams** to illustrate how aspects of the Platform may come together.
Once developed, the consultant shall design and perform a test of the prototype to objectively determine its potential efficacy for catalysing co-innovation on nutrition-sensitive social protection. Based on the results of the test, the prototype should be refined and finalised.

The core deliverables under this objective should comprise:

- **A design prototype** illustrating the proposed Platform components
- **A test/pilot of the prototype** conducted with ‘real’ potential users (e.g., public sector social protection administrators, development partners, and GAIN staff)
- **A Platform Sustainability Brief** commenting on the sustainability considerations of the selected prototype. The brief should include any notable sustainability risks, risk mitigation strategies, and any relevant alternative scenarios.
- **A set of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and monitoring protocols** that GAIN could further use to assess user engagement and satisfaction with the proposed Platform, if it were taken forward and operationalised

### 1.2. FINAL REPORTING

The consultant will **prepare a final report** at the end of the project timeframe, reflecting on critical learnings and synthesizing experiential data collected from Platform users in the prototype test/pilot. The report should summarise any notable sustainability risks, risk mitigation strategies, and a sequence of next steps to ensure successful transition to the next phase of the project (e.g., building and implementing the Platform based on the prototype).

### 1.3. INDICATIVE PROJECT TIMELINE

The following table details the project timelines. It is expected that the selected applicants ensure deliverables are submitted in a timely manner at the end of each data collection activity.

**NOTE:** Consultants’ proposed timelines may vary from the timeline depicted here, depending on the nature and intensity of the activities proposed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Indicative project timelines</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>ACTIVITIES</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Appraisal of Co-Innovation Models</td>
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<tr>
<td>Develop Recommendations &amp; Prototype; Testing</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Reporting</td>
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</tbody>
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1.4. DELIVERABLES

Table 2: Scope of Work: Activities and deliverables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Deliverables</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conduct Appraisal of Inter-Governmental Co-Innovation Models</td>
<td>Approved appraisal methodology/protocol</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Approved appraisal report</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identify recommendations for co-innovation platform design</td>
<td>Approved written set of recommendations</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Approved KPIs and monitoring protocols developed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Create and test design prototype</td>
<td>Approved Platform design prototype (wireframes, flow diagrams, etc.)</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Approved prototype testing methodology</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Successfully completed test of prototype</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Approved Sustainability Brief</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Reporting</td>
<td>Approved Final Report</td>
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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.

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. Queries sent by March 8th 2024 at 5:00pm EST will be responded to by March 15th, 2024.

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.

**FORMAT FOR PROPOSAL**

The proposal needs to be formatted and attached as two separate documents:

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.

**SUBMISSION**

Proposals should be in English and submitted in electronic copy to the following e-mail address: rfp@gainhealth.org. Please include CO-INNOVATION PLATFORM FOR NUTRITION-SENSITIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION in the subject line.

**DEADLINE**

Completed proposals should be submitted electronically to GAIN before 5:00 pm Central European Time on March 22nd, 2024.

**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.
- Proposals that are not signed.

**REVISIONS**

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

**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.

**COMPLETION**

- Proposals must be submitted on official letterhead of the lead organisation or firm and must be signed electronically 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 GAIN at rfp@gainhealth.org 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.

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.

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.

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.

SUMMARY OF DEADLINES

1. Queries to be submitted by: March 8th, 2024
2. Response will be disseminated by: March 15th, 2024
3. Proposal submission deadline: March 22nd, 2024
4. Response from GAIN on acceptance or rejection of proposal by: April 12th, 2024
5. Award of contract: May 1st, 2024

III. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THIS SOLICITATION

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.

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.
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.

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:

- Technical quality of proposal 50%
  - Clear articulation of methods
  - Fit of chosen methods and research design to meet stated objectives
  - Explanation of rationale and limitations for selected methods
- Team profiles and experience 30%
  - Experience working in relevant topical areas
  - Organisational capacity to undertake the project outlined in RFP
  - Demonstrated ability to produce work in a timely fashion
- Budget 20%
  - Total budget
  - Value for money

AS PART OF THE SELECTION PROCESS, GAIN RESERVES THE OPTION TO REQUEST CLARIFICATIONS REGARDING BIDS THAT SUBSTANTIALLY QUALIFY.

EXPERTISE REQUIRED

- User Interface/User Experience (UI/UX) knowledge and design experience
- Substantive understanding of the various stakeholders engaged in the development sector, particularly around innovation
- Experience conducting and analysing information from key informant interviews and/or structured surveys
- Substantial knowledge of digital solutions, IT, and web development/hosting is ideal
- Experience working in low-income country contexts in the Global South

REVIEW PROCESS

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

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.

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.
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.

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.

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.

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.