

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

ENGAGEMENT OF A PUBLIC RELATIONS ORGANIZATION TO DRIVE DEMAND AND AWARENESS FOR BIOFORTIFIED RICE ACROSS PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR AND CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS IN BANGLADESH

Issued by
The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)

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I. PROJECT BACKGROUND AND SCOPE OF WORK

1. ABOUT GAIN AND HARVESTPLUS

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.

At HarvestPlus, we believe that hidden hunger should not be inevitable for the people most at risk. We break down silos between agriculture and nutrition to develop creative solutions to hidden hunger. Our food-based approach targets some of the most vulnerable populations around the world. We use a process called biofortification, which adopts conventional breeding to improve crops. This approach complements other nutrition interventions, and is evidence-based, cost-effective, and sustainable. We work across the entire value chain to develop and deliver nutrient enriched seeds, grains and foods to the people who need it the most via a large collection of innovative and traditional supply chain activities. HarvestPlus is part of the CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH). CGIAR is a global agriculture research partnership for a food secure future. Its science is carried out by its 15 research centres in collaboration with hundreds of partner organizations.

In May 2018, HarvestPlus and GAIN launched a landmark partnership to accelerate progress in improving access to biofortified seeds, grains and foods via commercial channels with the Commercialisation of Biofortified Crops (CBC) programme. The CBC programme works with national partners to catalyse commercial markets for biofortified crops and foods in six countries with pervasive levels of malnutrition: Bangladesh, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Tanzania. Initial funding for this program is from Germany’s Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The partnership brings together two leading actors in the global nutrition space. It combines the deep expertise of HarvestPlus in all aspects of biofortification with GAIN’s proven track record of working with fortification and food companies to create sustainable market models for nutritious food systems.

2. BACKGROUND

As part of this work, GAIN is issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP). GAIN will be the administrative lead organisation for this RFP.

The purpose of this RFP is to engage the services of a Service Provider to establish the strategy, develop and initiate the plan to drive demand and awareness for biofortified rice across public and private sectors and civil society organizations in Bangladesh. The objective of this RFP is to drive awareness through the development and implementation of a public relations strategy and delivery plan to increase the profile of Biofortified Zinc Rice (BZR) as a nutritious and healthy product, raise awareness of the benefits of Biofortified Zinc Rice (BZR) consumption; and influence key decision makers and actors in the supply chain of rice to acquire BZR through institutional and non-institutional purchases. We are looking for a competent agency which has in-depth

understanding on food commodity trade and have strong networking in the field to support to promote both BRR1 dhan74 and BRR1 dhan84 varieties both in the private sector and public procurement.

2.1. BIOFORTIFICATION IN BANGLADESH

Bangladesh is home to some 164 million people, of whom 90.5 million are deficient in zinc. Rice is an essential component of the diet of a typical Bangladeshi and there are limited sources of zinc, such as meat, in the diet. Daily per capita consumption of rice in Bangladesh is 390 to 450 grams, compared to an average of 145g globally, making BZR¹ a potentially ideal food vehicle for increasing zinc intakes in the population.

Currently, over eight varieties of BZR are in production in Bangladesh. One variety (BRR1 dhan74 which is coarse) has demonstrated very promising attributes. It has increased rice production to about 7 tons/hectare, which has led to increase in on-farm consumption of BZR. Another new variety (BRR1 dhan84 which is slender) has also demonstrated higher yields, which may have very good potential for commercialisation. However, farmers have been slower to adopt these new varieties, expressing concerns about their productivity, seed availability and consumer preference for finer grain of rice as opposed to the coarse zinc rice variety that is most widely produced.

In 2020, GAIN and HarvestPlus commissioned EuroMonitor International (EMI) Assessing the Drivers and Barriers of Supply and Demand for Biofortified Zinc Rice Among Value Chain Actors in Bangladesh. The report concluded that there was a good potential for commercializing BRR1 dhan74 and BRR1 dhan84. The report stated that to reach this potential the project would have to (1) ensure consistent supply of seeds, financial support towards production, and incentives for leading producers; (2) potentially mix BRR1 dhan-74 but package and label that rice as 'contains biofortified Zinc Rice', with proportion of Zinc Rice clearly mentioned to augment commercialization; (3) facilitate govt. approval and endorsements that can be used to market BZR and encourage millers to increase production of BZR; and (4) disseminate periodic and consistent messaging and promotion campaigns to consumers to promote BZR and increase the acceptance and penetration levels of BZR.²

3. OBJECTIVES

The main objective is to drive awareness through the development and implementation of a public relations strategy and delivery plan to increase the profile of BZR as a nutritious and healthy product, raise awareness of the benefits of BZR consumption; and influence key decision makers and actors in the supply chain of rice to purchase BZR.

The program and activities developed and executed by the service provider will be focused on stimulating the demand for BZR among institutional and non-institutional buyers, so that it provides a signal to producers about the potential market for BZR in Bangladesh. As production of BZR increases, it will become more widely available in Bangladesh. Increased availability with the demand generation activities will lead to increased consumption of BZR, which will lead to the reduction of Zinc deficiency in Bangladesh.

¹Biofortification enhances the nutritional value of staple food crops by increasing the density of vitamins and minerals in a crop through conventional plant breeding, agronomic practices or biotechnology and is carried out in the agriculture sector.

² Euro-Monitor International report will be made available to interested bidders upon request to <mailto:GAIN.Bangladesh@gainhealth.org> by the deadline outlined in the table of deliverables. Bidders are expected to review and incorporate it into the submitted proposal.

4. SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES

4.1. SCOPE OF WORK

The successful applicant shall provide the following services:

1. Develop strategy to increase awareness of BZR as a nutritious and healthy product (BRR1 dhan84 – slender variety and BRR1 dhan74 – coarse variety); raise awareness for BZR consumption
2. Develop strategy for the inclusion of Zinc rice (BRR1 dhan74 – coarse variety) in public procurement programs and other CSO procurement programs
3. Create a comprehensive implementation plan for executing the strategies, and then execute it
4. Organize and execute outreach events among civil society organizations, public and private sector decision makers about BZR
5. Develop dissemination materials – to stimulate demand nationally and locally
6. Provide direct and indirect support to around 15-20 medium and large rice millers and 2-4 other processors in selected districts to promote the commercialization of BZR.

4.2. DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINE

The timeline for completion of all aspects of the Scope of Work and submission of deliverables is outlined in the following table:

DELIVERABLE	DEADLINE
Deadline to request report and submit any questions	25 October 2021
Proposal submission	31 October 2021
Final response regarding selection of Service Provider	10 November 2021
Contracting process finalized	20 November 2021
Develop public relations strategy to increase awareness among general consumers and inclusion of Zinc rice (BRR1 dhan74 – coarse variety) in public procurement programs and other CSO procurement programs.	31 December 2021
Create a comprehensive implementation plan for executing the strategy	31 December 2021
Roll out demand creation plan and strategy	01 January 2022 – August 2022

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

Key programme and technical staff from GAIN and HarvestPlus are part of the selection team of the organisation and will review the proposals. They will be available via email to respond to clarifications on this solicitation. Please direct all inquiries and other communications to GAIN.Bangladesh@gainhealth.org. Responses will not be confidential except in cases where proprietary information is involved.

2. BUDGET

Applicants are required to provide GAIN with a detailed budget in US Dollars, including fees/travel/accommodation and any other direct costs to be incurred in the delivery of the Scope of Work with payment schedule. Include a brief narrative justification for line items included. The budget must be inclusive of all taxes/VAT. The final budget amount will have to be approved by GAIN prior to starting the project.

3. FORMAT FOR PROPOSAL

The proposal needs to be formatted as two separate documents:

- Demand creation proposal outlining the approach for improving the profile for BZR and influencing key decision makers.
- Financial proposal outlining budget accompanied by a budget narrative.

4. SUBMISSION

Complete proposals should be submitted in electronic copy to: GAIN.Bangladesh@gainhealth.org

5. DEADLINE

Completed proposals should be submitted to GAIN.Bangladesh@gainhealth.org by **5:00 pm Bangladesh Time on 31 October 2021**.

6. UNACCEPTABLE

The following proposals will automatically not be considered or accepted:

- Proposals that are received after the RFP deadline.
- Proposals received by fax or post.
- Incomplete proposals.
- Proposals that are not signed.

7. REVISIONS

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

8. 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.

9. 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 GAIN at GAIN.Bangladesh@gainhealth.org prior to making their submission before the deadline specified in the timeline above.
- While GAIN has used considerable efforts to ensure an accurate representation in this 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.

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 and HarvestPlus reserve 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.

12. RELEASE OF INFORMATION

After awarding the proposal and upon written request to GAIN, only the following information will be released:

- The applicant's own individual ranking/status

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 and HarvestPlus shall each 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.