

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

CONSULTANT TO SUPPORT THE DEVELOPMENT OF A CASE STUDY ON THE SCHOOL MILK PROGRAM, UGANDA

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

School feeding programs constitute a multisectoral transformative factor that improves educational outcomes, child health and nutrition, as well as gender equity. In a broader sense, these programs support the entire community by providing an important safety net and strengthening local food systems and economies (WFP, 2024).

As part of the School Meals Coalition, GAIN is dedicated to supporting governments in improving and establishing sustainable national school feeding programs, with the goal of ensuring every child has access to healthy and nutritious food at school by 2030. In collaboration with its intellectual partner, the Global Child Nutrition Foundation (GCNF), GAIN seeks to document successful implementation experiences of multi-component school programs, with emphasis on learning about experiences that address nutrition quality through fortified and biofortified foods while supporting local procurement from small-scale suppliers.

2.1. THE HIDDEN MIDDLE IN SCHOOL FEEDING RESEARCH

While most research and policy attention to the agrifood sector in settings such as Africa has been directed to either producers or consumers, we will give explicit attention to the full length of the milk value chain—inclusive of what’s known as the “hidden middle” in the midstream. This includes the aggregation, wholesale, transport, processing, and retail nodes of these value chains. This vibrant “midstream” of value chains has been growing and transforming rapidly, a shift that has been driven in part by urbanization, income growth, and market deregulation, and has been facilitated by enormous aggregate investment by millions of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in value chains, as well as substantial foreign direct investment and domestic investment by large enterprises.

Midstream value chain actors play a central role in: (1) food availability and stability by assuring the functioning of food value chains; (2) inclusive food access by ensuring the affordability of foods in retail markets, by employing workers, and by generating income for business owners; and (3) food utilization of consumers, as

this is conditioned by the investments and behaviour of midstream and downstream value chain actors in assuring (or undermining) food quality and safety. These midstream nodes are also relevant for the newly introduced food security dimensions of agency and sustainability, as they are the most proximate and accessible value chain actors with whom farmers and consumers interact when they seek to engage in processes that shape the food system; and the behaviours of midstream actors at least partly determine the environmental impact (hence, the sustainability) of the food system.

This case study will focus on the entirety of the value chain for school milk in and around Kampala. This includes the producers, aggregators, processors, and transporters that move the milk from where it is produced to where it is eventually consumed (i.e., the classroom).

2.2. SNV SCHOOL MILK PROGRAM IN KAMPALA CONTEXT

The School Milk Project in Uganda began in 2016 through The Inclusive Dairy Enterprise (TIDE) project, which has been funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and implemented by SNV, a nonprofit international development organization. This initiative aims to alleviate malnutrition, reduce hunger, increase school enrolment and attendance, and develop the dairy sector by cultivating greater demand for milk and increasing milk sales. Because school-based feeding is considered the responsibility of parents under the Education Act of Uganda, the program was implemented within this framework, with parents/guardians paying for their children to receive the milk. The program itself does not fund the provision of milk; it instead focuses on mobilizing, educating, and training schools and parents to effectively manage and sustain the initiative.

While the first phase of the project was focused on developing geographically short value chains for school milk in Southwestern Uganda, Phase 2 began in 2018 and introduced a processor-driven model piloted in the Kampala metropolitan area, covering the capital and two surrounding districts. It is this phase of the project that is the focus on this request for proposals. Unlike the activities in Southwestern Uganda, this phase emphasized the use of processed and packaged milk, expanding access to school milk in urban and peri-urban settings and refashioning the program into a more scalable and standardized model. To pilot this model, the program partnered with three of Uganda's largest milk processors, Powell Dairy, Brookside, and GESA. By 2024, more than 150,000 learners in the metropolitan area were receiving milk and yogurt.

The School Milk Project is intended for pre-primary and primary schoolchildren. Participating schools in the Kampala metropolitan area serve processed milk in 200 mL and 250 mL packs. The project has also provided yogurt in similar sizes. Though the SNV-led project has now concluded, the program will be continuing under the leadership of the Government of Uganda.

2.3. CASE STUDY AS FILLING CRITICAL KNOWLEDGE GAP

This case study will investigate the midstream operations that translate program specifications into actual supply. It is not a value chain analysis. Traditional value chain studies map actors, flows, costs, and margins to optimize market efficiency and value addition. This study instead investigates the operational mechanisms of institutional procurement, specifically, how midstream actors operationalize program specifications for milk.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THIS CASE STUDY

The overall objective is to document and analyse how the School Milk Program operationalizes the procurement of milk, with emphasis on identifying the role of midstream actors, the scale of suppliers, and the factors that enable or constrain successful procurement. We are also interested in documenting the transition of this program, with SNV's support phasing out this year.

Specific Objectives:

This case study will: (1) Document the extent to which milk is included in the program as intended; (2) Document the geography and structure of the milk value chain that feeds into Kampala's schools; (3) Map the sources of milk with attention to the scale of producers, and processors, and other value chain actors, taking note of who is included and excluded; (4) Gather actors' perspectives on how the school milk value chain functions, what are the successes and what can be improved; (5) Gather actors' perspectives on how the shape of the school milk value chain affects the program's nutrition (including food safety), socioeconomic, and environmental impacts; (6) Note any value chain differences that emerge among schools that are urban versus peri-urban; (7) Produce recommendations to facilitate successful inclusion of milk in schools.

The study addresses seven research questions in three streams:

STREAM 1: Program Specifications (System-Level) documents WHAT the program specifies and WHY:

- RQ1 (Specifications): What are the milk properties/characteristics specified by the program, what are intended suppliers, and how does local procurement preference shape the supplier landscape?
- RQ2 (Mechanisms): What mechanisms, processes, and coordination structures exist to procure, verify quality, and deliver milk?
- RQ3 (Shaping Factors): What factors and actors have shaped the program's approach, and what has been learned about what works and what doesn't?

STREAM 2: Operational Reality (Midstream Level) documents WHO actually supplies and HOW:

- RQ4 (Supplier Landscape): Who supplies milk, at what scale, with what capabilities and constraints, and to what extent is milk delivered as specified?
- RQ5 (Enablers & Constraints): What factors enable or constrain successful procurement, and what innovations have emerged to address midstream barriers?
- RQ6 (Nutrition, Socioeconomic, and Environmental implications): What are the implications of the structure of the school milk value chain for children's nutrition, for food safety, for the inclusivity of typically marginalized players in the value chain; and for the environmental impact of the value chain?

STREAM 3: Stakeholder engagement

- RQ7 (Transition and sustainability): What type of stakeholder support and engagement is required for the successful implementation of the program? What factors have hindered or facilitated the program transition to be fully government led?

These streams are interconnected. Stream 1 establishes what the program specifies, while Stream 2 reveals who actually supplies and how. Stream 3 focuses on understanding program sustainability. Together, these explain procurement outcomes (whether milk reaches schools as intended).

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 engage services of a Service Provider to support the planning and development of the case study on School Milk Program. GAIN seeks a consultant who, under the leadership of GCNF and in collaboration with GAIN, will execute essential components of the case study. The consultant will contribute across three key phases: 1) pre-fieldwork, including methodology refinement and planning; 2) fieldwork, collecting primary data through interviews and observations; and 3) analysis and reporting, synthesizing findings into actionable insights and recommendations. This work will document the supplier landscape,

identify middle-chain constraints, and provide evidence-based recommendations for both local program improvement and global learning.

PRE-FIELDWORK PHASE

Methodology Refinement and Planning

- Participate in coordination calls with the GCNF-GAIN-SNV research team (approximately 6-8 calls)
- Review and provide input on the draft research framework and data collection instruments
- Contribute to sampling strategy development, ensuring representation of different supplier types
- Review detailed interview guides for different informant types based on research questions
- Prepare fieldwork logistics plan including travel schedule (if appropriate), informant recruitment strategy, and contingency plans

Documentation Review

- Conduct a comprehensive review of existing program documentation, including policy frameworks, procurement guidelines, monitoring reports, and previous evaluations
- Analyse available quantitative data on program coverage, food procurement patterns, and supplier information
- Prepare a preliminary report (5-10 pages) identifying information gaps to be addressed during fieldwork and initial hypotheses about supplier landscape

Stakeholder Engagement and Coordination

- In coordination with GAIN, establish initial contact with SNV/government
- Identify and begin recruitment of key informants across all categories
- Obtain necessary permissions and clearances for school visits and data collection
- Coordinate with local authorities as needed for fieldwork authorization

FIELDWORK PHASE

The fieldwork will take place in and around Kampala and will include approximately 10-15 days of data collection.

Conduct approximately 25-35 semi-structured interviews with the following informant types:

- SNV/Government Program Leadership (2-3 interviews): National/regional program managers to understand strategic vision, program design rationale, coordination with partners, lessons learned
- Program Technical Staff (2-3 interviews): Nutrition officers, procurement officers, M&E staff to document detailed mechanisms, supplier management, quality control procedures, monitoring findings
- School-Level Staff (4-5 interviews): Head teachers to document ground truth on milk products received, challenges, adaptations
- Suppliers/Distributors/Processors (12-15 interviews): Commercial suppliers of milk to understand distribution logistics all along the school milk value chain, quality assurance, contract terms, challenges
- Support Staff (2-3 interviews): SNV staff or other technical support providers to document support mechanisms, capacity building efforts, observed constraints, innovation attempts

School Observations

- Visit 4-5 schools representing diversity of contexts
- Document infrastructure (kitchens, storage facilities, equipment) through visual observation and photography (with permission)
- Observe milk provision at school when possible
- Review procurement records, receipts, and delivery documentation
- Photograph foods received, stored, and prepared (with permission)

Food Sample and Receipt Documentation

1. Throughout fieldwork, systematically document milk products present in schools through photographs, labels, receipts, delivery records
2. Document supplier names, locations, and other identifying information from receipts

All interviews will be recorded (with informed consent), transcribed in the original language, and translated to English where needed. Detailed field notes will be maintained throughout.

ANALYSIS AND REPORTING PHASE

Data Processing and Organization

- Transcribe all interviews in original language
- Translate transcripts to English where needed
- In coordination with GAIN and GCNF, organize and code qualitative data using thematic analysis approach
- Compile and organize all documentation (photos, receipts, delivery records, program documents)
- Create comprehensive supplier database with information on supplier names/types, scale of operation, products supplied, locations, relationships with program

Deliverable Development

- Support GCNF in the preparation of a comprehensive case study report
- Prepare supplementary materials: Supplier database (Excel format), photo documentation (organized digital files), methodological appendix with interview guides and sampling approach, transcriptions and audio recordings

Knowledge Dissemination Support

- Participate in virtual validation workshop with key stakeholders to present and verify findings
- Support the preparation of knowledge products derived from the case study (policy briefs, presentations)
- Be available for follow-up questions and clarifications during dissemination phase

3. SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES

3.1. DELIVERABLES

Deliverable	Estimated date
Deliverable 1 Brief inception report with refined methodology and fieldwork plan and desk review	Two weeks from contract date
Deliverable 2 Database structured for interview transcripts, observations, and documentation	12 January
Deliverable 3 Comments to draft case study	16 February

Note: Final timeline will be agreed upon with the selected consultant based on school calendar and seasonal considerations.

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.

0. CONTACT

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

- rfp@gainhealth.org

1. BUDGET

Applicants are required to provide GAIN with a detailed fee percentage proposal. The final budget amount will have to be approved by the organisation prior to starting the project. Budget should not exceed 8,000 USD.

2. FORMAT FOR PROPOSAL

The proposal needs to be formatted as follows:

Interested applicants should prepare a proposal (maximum 8 pages excluding CVs and attachments) in English that includes:

Technical Approach (3 pages maximum):

- Understanding of the case study objectives, research questions, and program context
- Proposed methodological approach including any refinements or enhancements to the suggested approach
- (If applicable) Plan to secure any permissions needed to conduct interviews in Uganda
- Sampling strategy ensuring diversity of informants and contexts

- Approach to ensuring data quality and validity
- Ethical considerations and approach to obtaining informed consent
- Risk mitigation plan
- Language considerations and plan for translation if needed

Work Plan and Timeline (1-2 pages):

- Detailed Gantt chart or timeline showing key activities across all three phases
- Clear milestones and deliverables
- Contingency plans for potential delays

Team Composition (1 page):

- Lead consultant's qualifications and relevant experience
- Role and qualifications of any research assistants, translators, or other team members
- Division of responsibilities among team members
- Time allocation for lead consultant and team members

Budget (1-2 pages):

- Detailed budget in USD broken down by cost categories and project phases
- Brief narrative justification for line items
- Budget should be inclusive of all taxes/VAT and indirect costs
- Clear statement of any assumptions underlying the budget

Relevant Experience (1 page):

- Summary of lead consultant's most relevant prior work
- Experience with school feeding programs or similar initiatives
- Experience conducting research in Uganda, particularly in similar contexts
- Experience with qualitative research methods
- Languages spoken and cultural competencies relevant (if applicable)

Attachments (not counted in page limit):

- CVs of proposed team members (maximum 2 pages each)
- Completed 'Offer of Services' form (see end of RFP for template)

Originals should be submitted as follows: an electronic copy containing the documents preferably in MS Word along with all the required information including the fee proposal should reach GAIN at rfp@gainhealth.org

3. DEADLINE

Completed proposals should be submitted to Head of Human Resources, by email at rfp@gainhealth.org by 12 December, 2025 **subject 'UGANDA – PIFP case study'**

4. 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.

5. REVISIONS

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

6. 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.

7. 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.

8. 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.

9. 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.

10. 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

11. 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.

12. 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.

13. 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.

14. 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.

15. REVIEW PROCESS

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

16. 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.

17. 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.

18. 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.

19. 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.

20. 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.

21. 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:

(Print or type business, corporate name and address)

2. 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.
3. 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.
4. 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)