

GLOBAL ALLIANCE FOR IMPROVED NUTRITION

TERMS OF REFERENCE (TOR): SCOPING REVIEW OF EXISTING LITERATURE ON LOCALIZATION INDICES IN FOOD SYSTEMS AND RELATED SECTORS

APRIL 2026

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, Benin, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. Programmes and projects are carried out in a variety of other countries, particularly in Africa and Asia.

2. Background and Rationale

GAIN supports large-scale food fortification (LSFF) at global, regional and country levels. Since 2002, GAIN has supported the roll-out or strengthening of food fortification directly in approximately 54 low- and middle-income countries and dozens more indirectly, investing approximately USD 300 million in grants and technical assistance. GAIN’s LSFF programmes nudge populations towards micronutrient adequacy (i.e., increased intake of essential micronutrients). In collaboration with our Nutritious Foods Enterprises programme, we aim to

empower fortified foods producers with a whole-of-business approach to fortification, combining fortification quality assurance and control with business support services such as supply chain management, product development, and marketing to incentivise fortified foods producers. We also facilitate development or strengthening of policies, legislation, governance and institutions to deliver quality fortified foods. As a result of these efforts, GAIN has contributed to mandatory fortification legislation in numerous countries. Over one billion individuals have sustained access to fortified foods in current GAIN supported programmes, including the GAIN Premix Facility (GPF).

Efforts to enhance the sustainability and long-term effectiveness of Large-Scale Food Fortification (LSFF) and broader nutrition programmes as part of the food systems, depend on strong local ownership, national leadership and governance, institutional capacity, sustainable financing, and local monitoring. As funders and implementing organizations increasingly seek to “localize” programmes, there is growing interest in tools and frameworks to conceptualize and measure national ownership, sustainability, and system transformation.

A range of conceptual frameworks, indices and measurement approaches may already exist, for example those addressing localization, institutional capacity, sustainability readiness, governance strength, and country ownership. However, definitions of localization vary, and existing methods, metrics and tools have not been systematically mapped, compared, or synthesized for consistent analysis, implementation and monitoring.

To support the development of a Localization / Local Ownership Index (LOI) for LSFF, a structured scoping review is required. The review will identify existing knowledge, definitions, frameworks, indices, indicators, and methodological approaches relevant to embedding and assessing localization and sustainability in food systems and related sectors.

3. Scope and purpose of assignment

The scope and purpose of this assignment is to conduct a scoping review to systematically identify, harmonize definitions, categorize and synthesize existing literature and tools related to localization, sustainability, country ownership, capacity, or institutional maturity indices in food systems and related sectors.

Findings will directly inform the conceptualization, structure, and methodological choices for developing a LOI for nutrition programs, including LSFF. The literature review is one activity contributing to the approach development.

4. Objectives

We are looking for a qualified organization or team to provide a rigorous review of academic (and possibly grey) literature to map and synthesize existing indices, frameworks, metrics, or methodologies that assess localization, sustainability, country ownership, or institutional capacity relevant to food systems, with application in developing contexts. The review will be conducted in close collaboration with GAIN including in the development of the inclusion and exclusion criteria, screening, extraction and potentially in the analysis.

5. Specific objectives

The literature review will address the following specific research questions:

- Which indices and frameworks related to localization, sustainability, institutional capacity, or ownership exist globally, with particular focus of application in developing or emerging contexts?
- What are the existing index dimensions or categories, frameworks, methods, metrics, indicators, monitoring and measurement approaches that are or can be used to assess localization?
- What are the strengths, limitations, transferability, and applicability to food systems and LSFF?
- What gaps and opportunities emerge that could inform the design of a LOI for food systems?
- What risks exist in localization and what mitigation strategies are reported and how are they described?
- What examples of successful localization exist, what lessons can be drawn from them - including the roles of key stakeholders - and what prerequisites enable success in food systems?
- Based on the review findings, what is a generic pathway/roadmap for localization for food systems and LSFF?

6. Expected outputs

The outputs include:

- i. An inception report, including refined research questions, methodology, timeline, and integration plan
- ii. A full report and synthesis upon completion, accompanied by a slide deck summarizing key findings
- iii. Co-authorship a peer-reviewed manuscript and submission for publication

- iv. A dissemination and validation workshop for GAIN staff

This work is expected to be completed by the end of July 2026.

7. Milestones and timelines

Deliverable / Milestone	Description	Key Activities	Timeline	Output
Kick-off and inception report	Confirm scope, methodology, and workplan	Kick-off meeting, refine research questions, agree search strategy, finalize timeline	Mid-April 2026	Inception report with methodology, timeline, and integration plan
Literature search	Systematic identification and selection of relevant literature	Database search, grey literature identification,	Mid-April - Early May 2026	Literature database
Articles screening	Screening of identified literature	Screening of studies for eligibility	Early May	Screening summary
Data extraction and mapping	Extract and categorize frameworks, indices, and methodologies	Data extraction, framework mapping, categorization of dimensions and indicators	Early May 2026	Evidence matrix and preliminary synthesis
Draft synthesis report	Preliminary analysis and synthesis of findings	Comparative analysis, identify strengths, gaps, risks, lessons, and pathways	Early -May 2026	Draft manuscript and report
GAIN internal review and validation	Incorporate feedback and refine findings	Internal review, revisions	Mid-May 2026	Revised report and report

Final report and slide deck	Final synthesis and presentation of findings	Final edits, prepare executive summary and slides	Early June 2026	Final report + slide deck summarizing key results
Dissemination workshop with GAIN staff	Knowledge sharing and validation with GAIN staff	Presentation and discussion session	Mid June - Late July 2026	Presentation delivered
Peer-reviewed manuscript	Preparation and submission for publication	Draft manuscript, co-author review, journal submission	End of July 2026	Final manuscript submitted

8. Required Expertise

The consultant/team is expected to have:

- Proven experience conducting scoping or systematic reviews.
- Demonstrated experience in developing a search strategy and conducting database searching
- Expertise in food systems, sustainability, LSFF, governance
- Familiarity with index development methodologies.
- Ability to synthesize complex frameworks into practical recommendations.
- Experience working with LMIC contexts and global development institutions.

9. Assignment duration

Start date: Late April 2026

End date: End of July 2026

10. Management and coordination

The consultant will work closely with the GAIN staff in the Knowledge Leadership team

11. Ethical consideration

The consultant will need to adhere to all ethical considerations including:

- Respect for confidentiality of institutional performance data
- Adherence to national approval processes

- Validation of findings with national partners before dissemination

12. 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

Please direct all inquiries to the contacts below with the subject line: *TOR: Localization Index Scoping Review*. Responses will not be confidential except in cases where proprietary information is involved.

TO: Annette Nyangaresi, Technical Specialist, Knowledge, Leadership (nyangaresi@gainhealth.org)

CC: Svenja Jungjohann, Senior Technical Specialist, Knowledge Leadership (sjungjohann@gainhealth.org)

Budget

Applicants are required to provide GAIN with a detailed fee for the proposal. Bidders are encouraged to propose efficient and realistic budgets that maximise value for money. The final selection will prioritise the quality of the proposed approach and deliverables.

Contract Governance

The contract will be issued for four months, with an option of early termination related to performance. Regular update meetings will be held with GAIN staff.

Payment Profile

Partial payments will be made related to key deliverables.

Format for proposal

The proposal needs to be formatted as follows:

- Technical proposal (one PDF, maximum 10 pages) including:
 - Description of previous relevant work and two professional references (maximum 1 page)
 - Detailed proposal explaining how the areas of work will be addressed, including risk and mitigation strategy and timeline (maximum 10 pages)
 - Approach and methodology, including timescales and milestones
 - Understanding of the assignment and relevant experience, including two examples of comparable work
 - Composition of team with names and brief biographies of all key staff (maximum 3 pages)

- Financial proposal (one PDF, maximum 2 pages) outlining the detailed fee proposal and breakdown A submission, of no more than 10 PowerPoint slides or 10 sides of A4, including
 - Approach and methodology, including timescales and milestones
 - Understanding of the assignment and relevant experience, including two examples of comparable work

Writing sample

- As the quality of writing and synthesis is critical to this assignment, bidders must include a writing sample (published, or unpublished work) demonstrating their ability to present information in a clear, well-structured manner. The sample should be solely or primarily authored by the proposed lead consultant for this assignment

Submission

The Proposal and any accompanying documents must be in English

All proposals should be submitted by email to rfp@gainhealth.org with the subject line: *TOR: Localization Index Scoping Review*.

Deadline

Completed proposals should be submitted by email to rfp@gainhealth.org on or before **17 April 2026** at 11:59 Central European Time.

Unacceptable

The following proposals will automatically not be considered or accepted:

- Proposals that are received after the TOR deadline.
- Proposals received in formats other than by email.
- Incomplete proposals.
- Proposals that are not signed.

Queries and clarifications

- Bidders are to direct any questions regarding the TOR to the GAIN contact in writing via email.
- It is the Bidder's responsibility to ensure safe receipt of communication.
- No other member of GAIN staff should be contacted in relation to this TOR unless directed to do so by the GAIN contact.
- GAIN may choose to convey responses to submitted questions and queries to all Bidders so that each is equally informed.
- GAIN may amend the TOR documents by issuing notices to that effect to all Bidders and may extend the closing date and time if deemed appropriate.

Preparing your response

- Bidders must obtain, at their own responsibility and expense, all information necessary for the preparation of Bids.
- Bidders should notify GAIN promptly of any perceived inconsistency, or omission in this TOR, or any of its associated documents.

Notes on submissions

- Bidders should not include in their submission any extra information which has not been specifically requested in the TOR for example, any sales literature etc.
- No Proposal may be modified after the deadline for receipt.
- GAIN may request additional information from Bidders to assist further evaluation of Proposals.

Notes on budget

- As a donor funded organisation, GAIN is committed to achieving value for money in all our procurements.
- Submitted rates and prices are to be deemed include all costs, insurances, taxes, fees, expenses, and other things necessary for the performance of the requirement.
- Any charge not stated in the Proposal as being additional, will not be allowed in any resultant contract.
- We are looking for full cost disclosure: there must be an appropriate breakdown of costs to allow for price visibility.
- All rates and prices submitted must be in United States Dollars, and any contract arising from this TOR will be in United States Dollars.

Notes on evaluations

- GAIN may choose to shortlist Bidders at any stage of the process.
- 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.
- Bidders should note that GAIN may award a Contract on the basis of the original Bid received and may, at its absolute discretion, undertake any or all of the following processes:
 - shortlisting
 - taking up references
 - undertaking presentations or meetings
 - entering into a dialogue with one or more Bidders.

Evaluation criteria

The following indicates a list of the significant criteria against which proposals will be assessed. This list is not exhaustive and is provided to enhance the applicants' ability to respond to this Opportunity.

Understanding of the scope of work

- Proposal shall demonstrate a clear understanding of the project objective and deliverables as outlined above
- Demonstrate a clear understanding of the technical requirements of this TOR
- Evidence of experience with rigorous literature reviews
- Demonstrate a good understanding of evidence and approaches for localization approaches
- Demonstrate experience in food systems

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.

Terms and conditions

This section constitutes the full conditions of this TOR and participation in the process automatically signals that the Bidder accepts the conditions.

Jurisdiction

Any Contract resulting from this TOR shall be governed by Swiss law.

Late Proposals

Any bid received after the deadline may be rejected at GAIN's absolute discretion.

Disclaimers

Bidders will not be compensated for costs incurred in preparing proposals, submitting revised proposals or in participation in any meeting or presentation.

This TOR does not commit GAIN to any course of action, it is not an offer or a contract and does not commit GAIN to contract for any of the services detailed within the TOR.

GAIN reserves the absolute right to:

- accept or reject any or all Proposals with or without notice or reason
- accept or reject any proposal in whole or in part
- accept a proposal other than the lowest priced
- negotiate with any, all or none of the Bidders
- modify or cancel this TOR

Acceptance of Proposals

GAIN is under no obligation to accept the lowest priced Proposal, or any Proposal, and reserves the right to reject any Proposal which is incomplete, conditional, or not complying with the TOR documents.

A Proposal may be for all or part of the Requirement and may be accepted by GAIN either wholly or in part.

A Proposal will not be accepted, in whole or in part, unless and until GAIN has signed a Contract in writing to the successful Bidder. GAIN reserves the right to:

- amend the terms and conditions of the procurement process
- cancel the evaluation and award process at any stage

require the Bidder to clarify its Proposal in writing and/or provide additional information. Failure to respond adequately may result in the Bidder not being selected.

Amendments

Prior to the final date for submission of Proposal, GAIN may issue amendments to clarify, modify or add to the procurement documents. A copy of each amendment will be issued to each Bidder and shall become part of the TOR.

Validity of Proposals

Proposals submitted in response to this TOR are to remain valid for a period of not less than 90 days from the TOR closing date.

Withdrawals

Proposals may be withdrawn at any time prior to the TOR closing date and time by written notice to the Company.

Interpretation of Requirements

Bidders are responsible for ensuring that they have all the information required for the preparation of their tenders and that they satisfy themselves about the information and correct interpretation of terminology used in the tender documentation.

Bidders must also ensure that they are fully conversant with the nature and extent of the obligations to be accepted by them if their tender is accepted.

Assumptions

Any assumptions that have been made in responding to this TOR should be outlined in the Bidders response documents.

Confidentiality

Except as required for the preparation of this Proposal, Bidders must not, without GAIN's prior written consent, disclose to any third party any of the contents of the TOR documents. Bidders must ensure that their employees, consultants, and agents also are bound and comply with this condition of confidentiality.

Feedback to unsuccessful Bidders

GAIN appreciates that significant time and resource goes in to preparing a tender response, and we try to ensure that feedback is provided to all unsuccessful Bidders.

Please note however that GAIN does not share detailed scoring information with unsuccessful Bidders.

Inconsistencies and omissions

Bidders must promptly advise the Company in writing of any inconsistencies and omissions they discover in the TOR.

TOR documents

Bidders must destroy all copies of the TOR document if unsuccessful within 30 days of being notified they have not been successful (either issued by GAIN or created by the Bidder).

Disclaimers

Whilst the material in this TOR and the Information has been prepared in good faith, it does not purport to be comprehensive, nor has it been independently verified.

Neither GAIN nor their advisors, their respective directors, officers, members, partners, employees, other staff or agents makes any representation or warranty (express or implied) as to the accuracy, reasonableness or completeness of the Information; or accepts any responsibility for the information contained in the Information or for their fairness, accuracy or completeness of that Information nor shall any of them be liable for any loss or damage (other than in respect of fraudulent misrepresentation) arising as a result of reliance on such Information or any subsequent communication.

Collusive behaviour

Any Bidder who:

- fixes or adjusts the amount of their Response by or in accordance with any agreement or arrangement with any other party; or

- communicates to any party other than GAIN the amount or approximate amount of its Responses or information which would enable the amount or approximate amount to be calculated (except where such disclosure is made in confidence to obtain quotations necessary for the preparation of the Response or insurance or any necessary security); or
- enters into any agreement or arrangement with any other party that such other party shall refrain from submitting a Response; or
- enters into any agreement or arrangement with any other party as to the amount of any Response submitted; or
- offers or agrees to pay or give or does pay or give any sum or sums of money, inducement, or valuable consideration directly or indirectly to any party for doing or having done or causing or having caused to be done in relation to any Response, any act or omission.

shall (without prejudice to any other civil remedies available to GAIN and without prejudice to any criminal liability which such conduct by a Bidder may attract) be disqualified.

Offer of services

I/we agree to supply the required services described within this Request for Proposal, for the sum of:

Sum in figures:

Sum in words.....

I/we the undersigned confirm that I/we are able to furnish all expertise, supervision, materials, and any other things necessary to complete, to the entire satisfaction of the Executive Director or authorised representative, required services described within this Request for Proposal, according to GAIN’s terms and conditions.

I/we agree that any obvious errors in pricing or errors in arithmetic that may be discovered by GAIN in examination of the priced Specification submitted by me/us shall have no effect on the amount of this offer unless GAIN shall otherwise decide.

I/we understand that the lowest or any tender will not necessarily be accepted.

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.

I/we confirm that I/we have read the [GAIN Code of Conduct](#) and understand my/our duties under the Code.

I/We confirm that I/we have no actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest which apply to this procurement OR that I have notified GAIN in writing of any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest which apply to this procurement.

I/We confirm that we will use the following organisational and payment details, if our Bid is successful:

Company name (including any trading names)	
Registered Company address, including postal code and country	
Company Registration Number	
Tax Identification Number (TIN) - if not applicable, please put N/A	
Business Identification Number (TIN) - if not applicable, please put N/A	
Company contact phone number	
Company contact email address	

Bank where account is held (name of the bank)	
Name on the payment bank account (individual/company name)	
Bank Account Number	
Swift/BIC Number - if not applicable, please put N/A IBAN Number - if not applicable please put N/A	

Signed by:	
Print Name:	
Job Title:	
For and on behalf of (Company name):	
Date:	