

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

CONSULTANCY TO DEVELOP A MANUAL ON REGULATORY COMPLIANCE AND STANDARDIZATION FOR AGRIFOOD MSMEs

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 United Nations in 2002 to tackle the human suffering caused by malnutrition. Working with governments, businesses, and civil society, we aim to transform food systems so that they deliver more nutritious foods for all people, especially the most vulnerable. At GAIN, we believe that everyone in the world should have access to nutritious, safe, and affordable food. Today, one in three people - drawn from nearly every country on the planet - are unable to consume enough nutritious food. We work to develop and deliver solutions to this daily challenge.

Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, GAIN has offices in countries with high levels of malnutrition: Bangladesh, Benin, Ethiopia, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Mozambique, Nigeria, Pakistan, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Uganda. To support work in those countries, we have representative offices in the Netherlands, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

GAIN's mission is to improve the consumption of healthier diets for all, especially the most vulnerable, by improving the availability, affordability, desirability, and sustainability of nutritious and safe foods, and reducing the consumption of unhealthy and unsafe foods. GAIN's 2023-2027 strategy will scale up the impact of its work by designing programmes to amplify impact through government policies, markets, partnerships with business and civil society, and via knowledge sharing.

2. BACKGROUND

The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) is issuing this Request for Proposal (RFP) and will be the administrative lead organisation for this RFP. Through the Nutrition Impact at Scale (NIS) Project, GAIN partners with Enterprise Support Organisations (ESOs) to scale the impact of its work to increase access to safe and nutritious foods, especially for low-income consumers. Funded by The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands over five years (January 2022 – December 2026), the project leverages the extensive experience GAIN has developed over the years of providing quality technical assistance, networking, knowledge sharing, building capacity of partners, and the provision of various tools and resources to MSMEs to attach a 'nutrition lens' to the work of ESOs Nigeria, Benin, Uganda, Ethiopia, Mozambique, and Kenya. At the end of the project, NIS will have partnered with ESOs to support thousands of agrifood MSMEs producing sustainably safe and nutritious foods that are accessible, affordable, and desirable by populations "The partnership".

Many agrifood MSMEs in LMICs struggle with understanding and implementing complex food regulations, certification requirements, and industry best practices. Non-compliance with national and international standards not only poses risks to consumer health and safety but also leads to legal penalties, product recalls, and market access restrictions. Despite the existence of regulatory frameworks, there is a gap in practical guidance and structured training that enables food businesses to effectively navigate compliance requirements. Limited access to standardized training materials and technical expertise further exacerbates the issue, leading to inconsistent application of food safety protocols and weak regulatory adherence. The purpose of this RFP is to engage the services of a Service Provider to develop a comprehensive manual on regulatory compliance and standardization for agrifood MSMEs.

3. OBJECTIVES

The objective is to create a practical guide for agrifood MSMEs to navigate regulatory compliance and standardization, thereby improving their market access and sustainability.

This manual once implemented should specifically:

1. Empower ESOs - Equip ESOs with standardized guidelines to support agrifood MSMEs in achieving regulatory compliance and standardization in project countries.
2. Enhancing regulatory awareness – Educate agrifood MSMEs on national and international food regulations, standards, and policies to ensure compliance.
3. Ensuring food safety and quality – Guide MSMEs in implementing best practices for food safety, hygiene, and quality control to protect consumers.
4. Facilitating compliance with certification requirements by providing step-by-step guidance on obtaining food safety certifications (e.g., HACCP, ISO 22000, Codex Alimentarius).
5. Improving Risk Management by helping companies identify, assess, and mitigate food safety risks through regulatory frameworks.
6. Support market access and trade by enabling agrifood MSMEs to meet export and local market requirements, improving their competitiveness.
7. Strengthen the capacity of food handlers by training staff on food safety practices, legal responsibilities, and ethical business conduct.

4. SCOPE OF WORK

4.1. EXPECTED DELIVERABLES

The consultant will provide the following deliverables:

- A comprehensive and user-friendly manual.
- An engaging PowerPoint presentation with clear visual aids, designed to effectively convey the manual's content.
- A comprehensive guide for trainers, providing instructions, tips, activities, and solutions to facilitate effective delivery of the manual's content.
- Pre-and post-training assessment forms with key questions to evaluate participant knowledge and measure the effectiveness of the training.

4.2. DELIVERABLES

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

| Deliverables | Deadlines |
|--|------------------|
| Deadline to submit questions | 30 March 2025 |
| Proposal submission deadline | 04 April 2025 |
| Communicate evaluation results | 14 April 2025 |
| Interviews with the top 3 applicants | 17 April 2025 |
| Final response regarding the selection of Service Provider | 21 April 2025 |
| Contracting process finalized | 02 May 2025 |
| Submission of the Inception Report | 05 May 2025 |
| Submission of the Draft Manual | 30 May 2025 |
| Submission of Final Manual | 20 June 2025 |

5. QUALIFICATION

The service provider must meet the following criteria:

- Be an individual or a private firm
 1. Demonstrated experience in developing training materials, manuals, or guidelines related to food industry regulations.
- Previous work with government regulatory agencies, food industry associations, or international bodies (e.g., WHO, FAO, Codex Alimentarius, ISO) is preferred.

- Experience working with MSMEs and large food companies in compliance and standardization training.
- Expertise in Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP), HACCP, ISO standards, and risk assessment in the food industry.
- Ability to translate complex regulatory information into explicit, practical, and user-friendly training content.
- Strong research, writing, and editing skills for technical documents and training materials.
- Proven training and facilitation skills, with experience in conducting workshops for diverse audiences.
- Proficiency in English.

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

The key programme and technical staff from GAIN are part of the organisation's selection team 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 NIS@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 the local currency of the applicant's registered country, as well as the equivalent in US dollars. The budget should clearly outline fees and any other direct costs associated with delivering the scope of work. Each line item should include a brief narrative justification, explaining the necessity and relevance of the costs. The budget must be inclusive of all taxes/VAT and indirect costs. The final budget amount will need to be approved by GAIN before the implementation phase begins.

3. FORMAT FOR PROPOSAL

The proposal needs to be formatted as follows:

- **Technical proposal:**
 1. The detailed proposal must capture evidence of previous relevant work, competencies and roles, qualifications and experience of the team, scope of work and work plan, including the methodology, risk and mitigation strategy, and timeline, all within a maximum of 5 pages.
 2. References
- **Financial proposal:**
 1. Budget (a table)
 2. Detailed budget justification (max 2 pages)
- **Offer of services**

4. SUBMISSION

The Original proposals should be submitted in an electronic copy on or before **04 April 2025** and addressed to rpf@gainhealth.org, and nis@gainhealth.org in copy. Please include **Regulatory compliance and standardization manual** as the subject for your submission. Requests for additional information can be directed to the same e-mail addresses.

5. DEADLINE

Completed proposals should be submitted to GAIN **before 5:00 pm CET on 04 April 2025**.

6. 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.

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 the official letterhead of the lead organization or firm and must be signed by a principal or authorized signatory of the lead firm or organization.
- 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.

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 reserves the right, before awarding the contract, 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 contract 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

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.

- The 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.

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 authorize 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 authorized or paid to the applicant unless such change, modification or interpretation has received the express prior written approval of GAIN.

IV. OFFER OF SERVICES

Offer submitted by:

(Print or type business, corporate name and address)

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 authorized representative, the work as described in the Request for Proposal according to the terms and conditions of GAIN for the following prices:

- a. [to be completed]
- b. [to be completed]
- c. [to be completed]
- d. [to be completed]

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) herewith submit the following:

- (a) A proposal to undertake the work in accordance with GAIN's specified requirements.
- (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 [add month and year] in [add location].

_____ [add title]

Signature (applicant)

_____ [add title]

Signature (applicant)