

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

CONSULTANT – INDIA – STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS ON UNDERREPRESENTED FOOD SYSTEM METRICS (METHODOLOGY, DATA COLLECTION)

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. We build alliances between governments, local and global businesses, and civil society to deliver sustainable improvements at scale. Through alliances, we provide technical, financial and policy support to strengthen food systems and use research and evidence to shape our own programmes as well as influence the actions of others.

Headquartered in Geneva, Switzerland, GAIN has representative offices in 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

Addressing the interlinked challenges of malnutrition, climate change, equity and inclusion, and resilience requires integrated approaches that work across all aspects of food systems, as opposed to in sectoral silos. The 2021 United Nations Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) crystallized widespread agreement on the need for this kind of “food system transformation” to accelerate progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals and other development goals.

To this, GAIN has implemented the multi-donor-funded, five-year Nourishing Food Pathways (NFP) program, with activities spanning the global level and across all its country offices, including India. The goal of NFP is to strengthen and support the implementation of country food system pathways (i.e., strategies for improving the functioning of local food systems) so they can accelerate improvements in the consumption of safe nutritious food for all, especially the most vulnerable, produced in a sustainable way. The main focus of the program is at the policy level, as opposed to implementation of on-the-ground interventions.

Understanding and supporting such changes, however, will require greater knowledge about these transformations, particularly in areas where indicators and metrics are still underrepresented across the food system. GAIN is thus identifying new indicator and metric areas for possible development, based on stakeholder priorities and perspectives across 10 countries, including India. This requires local qualitative research capacities (including co-development of methodology, data collection, and initial interpretations).

GAIN seeks a research organization or team of researchers (consultant) in India to carry out the qualitative research activities, comprised of 6-8 key informant interviews, in collaboration with in-country and global GAIN staff.

3. SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES

Under the direction of GAIN staff in the India country office and the US country office, the broad objectives of the work to be undertaken by the Consultant are:

- Develop data collection protocol and subsequent materials (interview guides and relevant consent forms), and finalize it based on input from GAIN
- Conduct data collection (6-8 interviews), ensuring printed and audio materials are professionally and confidentially processed and stored in accordance with ethical research standards

- Establish and maintain a data pipeline for all activities from planning and data collection throughout preliminary data analyses, including: data organization and formatting, QA/QC, safely storing and transmitting collected data, metadata, and data collection tools to GAIN
- Develop an outline for the final report, including a comprehensive collection of materials developed and used, for GAIN review and approval
- Revise and finalize report based on GAIN input

For all activities, the overall design of the research methodology and tools will be led by GAIN, with expert input from the Consultant. The Consultant will then take the lead on logistical planning for data collection, training of data collectors, data collection, and data cleaning and management—with regular input and participation from GAIN.

To meet these broad objectives listed above, the Consultant shall provide the following specific services:

- Provide expert input into the design of data collection materials and tools, and recommend adjustments based on local political and cultural contexts;
- Identify list of suitable participants for interview, submit and revise based on GAIN input, and lead invitations (via email and phone) with guidance and in accordance with GAIN India procedures, coordinating interview schedule and logistics as required. Manage communications with study participants, e.g. to timely answer questions through a dedicated call number and/or email address;
- Provide expertise on the local language, culture and customs, as it pertains to the study activities and objectives (ie. translate questionnaires into local language(s), maintain updated data collection tools in both English and local languages;
- Ensure interviewers are thoroughly trained using approved data collection materials, including coverage of research ethics;
- Organize all logistics for field data collection, including Consultant team members, transport, and necessary allowances;
- Verify contact information and names of case study participants, and update rosters accordingly;
- Conduct 6-8 interviews, with attention to both adherence to study protocols & resource efficiency;
- Regularly update GAIN on the progress at each step, including discussing initial interviews and using those to adapt approach for the next interviews if necessary;
- Carefully document all steps of the data collection process, including enumerator training, data management and QA/QC, transcription and translation;
- Safely and confidentially collect, store, annotate, and back-up the collected data and metadata using appropriate hardware and software as directed by GAIN;
- Maintain communications with GAIN, local study site representatives, or other key stakeholders, in order to ensure smooth and timely data collection activities, maintain good relations with groups and individuals involved in the activities directly or indirectly;
- Securely transfer QA/QC-ed data to GAIN at agreed-upon intervals throughout the contract;
- Be available for ad-hoc communications with GAIN, e.g. via email or Teams calls or chat, as needed to advance study objectives;
- Produce interim and final deliverables according to the workplan;

DELIVERABLES

- A draft report
- A finalized version of this report, revised based on GAIN feedback

The table below provides an illustrative example of deliverable types and dates for the work:

Deliverable	Deadline
Contract signing	July 15, 2024

Prepare and Submit based on prior GAIN input: research protocol, participant list, and approximate schedule for interviews & GAIN updates	July 20, 2024
Share finalized data collection materials (interview guides, consent forms) reflecting GAIN input prior	Aug 1, 2024
Complete first 2 interviews and begin process of QA/QC, update to GAIN	Aug 16, 2024
Submit QA/QC of first 2 interviews & outline of final report for GAIN input	Aug 23, 2024
Finish remaining interviews using revised interview materials	Sept 13, 2024
Share drafted final report including all QA/QC data from interviews	Sept 27, 2024
Submit revised final report reflecting GAIN input	Oct 7, 2024

3.1. 3.2 EXPECTED EXPERTISE

The Consultant, possibly comprising multiple individuals within a single organization, must have significant (at least 10 years) of prior experience with:

- Organizing and managing research projects that include rigorous field data collection of human behavioural and KAPs (knowledge, attitudes, and practices) data in scientific disciplines such as public health, social and behavioural sciences, applied economics, anthropology, sociology, food safety and nutrition, human dimensions of water and sanitation, human or veterinary medicine, or community development;
- Developing and implementing qualitative data collection methods, such as structured or semi-structured surveys, with knowledge of the techniques needed to ask context-appropriate potentially sensitive questions and shift interview style as needed during interviews;
- Working and interfacing with study participants in informal settlements or low-income communities in a culturally appropriate and gender-sensitive manner;
- Familiarity with informal food sector, markets, or the study populations in the region is a strong asset.

The Consultant must have a track record of successful collaboration with national, regional, and international research organizations.

In terms of logistics and familiarity with the study context, Consultant must be based in India and/or have easy access to study sites for day visits. Consultant team needs to be culturally knowledgeable and oriented to understand study participants and their context in a nuanced way, and to be well received by study participants and residents of the surrounding areas as respected organization and individuals.

The Consultant will be responsible for directly collecting data, or recruiting field data collectors and therefore should have a network of experienced data collectors to draw on. Field data collectors need to be fluent in English and any other language widely spoken in the study areas. Field data collectors should be able to use electronic data collection devices to collect data. It is preferable that a large proportion of data collectors are women.

The Consultant must have experience in rigorous data management, such as properly recording data and metadata in the field using appropriate technology, transcribing them if needed, annotating, cleaning, storing and backing up, formatting, de-identifying, and safely transferring. Experience performing exploratory data analyses, synthesis, and visualization is a strong asset. Must be familiar with protocols for ethical clearance (IRB) at institutional, state and national levels. GAIN expects that data be collected electronically (i.e., tablet or smartphone); the partner must thus have the expertise to programme questionnaires into such a format.

The Consultant and/or the field data collectors must have appropriate tablets and/or smartphones for such data collection; GAIN will not be able to provide this equipment.

Team leaders must possess excellent project management, planning, organizational and time management skills, excellent writing and communication skills, and must be able to communicate very well across diverse audiences. A track record of results published in peer-review journals is a strong asset.

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.

4. CONTACT

Please direct all inquiries and other communications to rfp@gainhealth.org

5. BUDGET

Applicants are required to provide GAIN with a detailed fee proposal, including the daily rate of all staff working on the project and overhead costs. Since the number of working days needed is not yet fully defined, applicants should provide a detailed example budget for all costs associated with the main activities. This proposed budget should include planning, fieldwork, supervision, data management, translation and transcription (including QA/QC), for the following expected parameters:

- Expected 3 months duration of contract (ie. starting mid-July until early Oct, reflected in suggested deliverable table above)
- 6-8 key informant interviews
- Each interview duration is estimated at 60 minutes

The final fee will have to be approved by the organisation prior to starting the project.

6. SUBMISSION

Interested consultants should prepare: (a) a **maximum 5-page** expression of interest including: relevant qualifications, prior experience with qualitative data collection and case study development, composition of the team (key staff) and available supporting organizational structures/ resources, preliminary workplan with estimated days and daily rate; (b) a brief (up to 2 pages) CV for each key staff member, highlighting recent relevant experience and publications; and (c) a completed 'Offer of Services' form (see end of document).

These documents should be sent to GAIN (rfp@gainhealth.org) **by 9th July, 2024** Please use the **subject line** 'CONSULTANT – INDIA – STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS ON UNDERREPRESENTED FOOD SYSTEM METRICS (METHODOLOGY, DATA COLLECTION)' when responding.

7. DEADLINE

Completed proposals should be submitted to rfp@gainhealth.org **before 9th July, 2024, 23:39 Central European Time.**

8. 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 or mail other than the email provided above
- Incomplete proposals.

9. 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.

10. COMPLETION

- 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.

11. 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.

12. REFERENCES

GAIN reserves the right, before awarding the consultancy, 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.

13. RELEASE OF INFORMATION

After awarding the consultancy and upon written request to GAIN, only the following information will be released: Name of the successful applicant.

III. TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THIS SOLICITATION

14. 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.

15. 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.

16. 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.

17. EVALUATION CRITERIA

Proposals will be reviewed by the Selection Team using the following criteria. This list is not exhaustive or 100% inclusive and is provided to enhance the applicants' ability to respond with substance.

- Understanding of the scope of work:
- Past experience undertaking similar work
- Rate

GAIN reserves the right to contact the individual in order to verify the information provided as part of the Proposal.

18. REVIEW PROCESS

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

19. 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.

20. 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.

21. 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.

22. 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.

23. 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.

24. 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 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 estimated fee:
- a. ___ Days
 - b. At _____ USD per day
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)