

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

ENGAGING CONSUMERS AND OTHER KEY STAKEHOLDERS FOR SAFE & ADEQUATELY FORTIFIED EDIBLE OIL 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

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.

2. BACKGROUND

Large-scale fortification of staple foods and condiments is a cost-effective strategy to help address micronutrient deficiencies when it is implemented through centralized food industries and adequately enforced (Bhutta et al., 2013; Horton, 2006). Unfortunately, fortification compliance with national standards is often low, thereby limiting its potential for impact (Aaron et al., 2017). This trend is apparent in the Bangladesh edible oil fortification program, as evidenced by recent findings.

GAIN is working with governmental and non-governmental partners to support the fortification of edible oil with vitamin A to address the high prevalence of deficiency (20.59% of children of school age were Vitamin A deficient, according to the Bangladesh Micronutrient Survey of 2011-2012).

2.1. FORTIFICATION OF EDIBLE OILS IN BANGLADESH

The subclinical deficiency of vitamin A is one of the major public health risks in Bangladesh. About one in five children in Bangladesh suffers from subclinical vitamin A deficiency, which may cause pre-term birth defects, maternal and child mortality, immune deficiency of under-5 children and anaemia. In the face of such severe public health risks, Bangladesh is implementing a programme on “Fortification of Edible Oil” to improve access to safe and affordable fortified foods across Bangladesh to reduce the prevalence of micronutrient deficiencies; especially among women of reproductive age, adolescent girls and children under-five.

Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) and UNICEF along with Ministry of Industries (MoInd) started work on oil fortification with vitamin A in Bangladesh in 2010. The mandatory law for fortification of edible oil with vitamin A was enacted in 2013. The legislation requires that all edible oils in Bangladesh must be fortified with vitamin A, whether it is produced locally, refined or imported. Additionally, GAIN along with the Ministry of Industries supported the creation of the rules for the enforcement of the law. The “Oil Fortification Rules 2015” were published in Bangladesh Gazette on 16th November 2015. Currently 44 refineries and packers operating in Bangladesh have signed MoU with MoInd and fortifying edible oil with Vitamin A (soybean, palm and rice bran oil).

2.2 STATUS OF OIL FORTIFICATION IN BANGLADESH

In Bangladesh, edible oil can be obtained as either branded and packaged oil or bulk, unpackaged oil. Packaged oil represents 35% while bulk oil accounts for 65% of the total edible oil market volume (2,600,000 MT), respectively. A market assessment conducted in 553 retail outlets in the eight divisions of Bangladesh to record the available oil brands and collect samples in order to analyze for nutrient content of vitamin A and assess conformity with national fortification

standards found that over half (59%) of oil available in Bangladesh is fortified, and of this proportion 27% is fortified above the standard minimum. This is higher for packaged oil (which has a lower market share) of which 95% was fortified (69% above minimum standard), compared with bulk oil 41% of which was fortified (7% above minimum standard).

Overall, the main locally produced and imported packaged brands are fortified, but fortification of smaller locally produced as well as oil sold in bulk needs to be improved. In addition, there are several concerns regarding the distribution of bulk oil, not least hygiene and food safety considerations, use of non-food grade drums, no labelling and inability to trace source of oil supply. Against this background, the government of Bangladesh working with industry and other stakeholders intends to phase out the supply of drum oil on the Bangladesh market.

3. PURPOSE OF THE ASSIGNMENT

Bulk edible oil is often sold in non-food grade containers which are reused without adequate sanitation and stored in unsanitary conditions. There is limited data regarding the food safety characteristics and risks associated with bulk edible oil sold in drums. GAIN is currently conducting a study exploring contamination risks, level of contamination, rancidity, and oxidation in bulk as compared to bottled oil, types of packaging used for bulk fortified edible oil in the market, prevailing handling conditions of drum oil from producer to market and their impact, oil-package interactions, relevant cleaning processes and adherence to food safety standards and source, handling, storage, collection, and transportation of the drums used to transport and store bulk oil. Simultaneously, GAIN is conducting a market analysis to find alternate packaging solutions for edible oil.

GAIN is seeking a partner organization to:

- **support use of** complete and ongoing studies **to build and coordinate a working group** that unites stakeholders with an interest in the success of fortification in Bangladesh. This working group will be a mechanism to engage new individuals and organizations in activities to raise the visibility of fortification challenges and to mobilize consumers to advocate for their right to safe, healthy food (for example by filing a petition to the Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection).
- facilitate and support the rollout by government of the new salt law, and the readiness of key stakeholders to the implementation frameworks affected by the legislative revisions. This can be achieved through the focused engagement of key stakeholders, for example salt millers, distributors, retailers, consumers, bazar committee, district authorities, national and sub-national salt committees.

4. SCOPE OF WORK

The successful applicant will use the range of available and forthcoming reports on food safety status of packaging and bulk edible oil sold in drums in Bangladesh through outreach to accomplish the following:

4.1 COORDINATE A WORKING GROUP TO IMPROVE ACCESS TO SAFE, AFFORDABLE, FORTIFIED EDIBLE OIL

- Conduct an analysis to identify potential stakeholders with an interest in improving the quality of fortified staple foods in Bangladesh and/or an interest in improving food safety in Bangladesh. The goal here is to cast a wide net and identify new stakeholder groups and individuals who have not engaged on these issues before, in addition to the “usual suspects.” The stakeholder analysis should include consumer organizations, professional associations, sympathetic academics/thought leaders, and organizations concerned with governance, rights, and accountability.
- In cooperation with GAIN, organize a series of discussions with stakeholder organizations to share and discuss the study results, explore areas of mutual concern, and invite participation in the working group.

- In cooperation with GAIN, organize an inaugural working group meeting to discuss the central issues the group will address and explore possible solutions, tactics, activities, and ways of working together (including regular meetings). Activities could include a national event to increase visibility for the issue and engaging and mobilizing consumers to advocate for their right to safe, healthy food (for example by filing a petition to the Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection).

4.2 COORDINATE A COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY STRATEGY IN COOPERATION WITH GAIN AND THE WORKING GROUP

- Identify thought leaders, journalists and outlets to popularize the results of the safe oil study and give it national visibility, including television, radio, bloggers, and online platforms
- Create materials and a plan to package and pitch study findings to generate coverage from the desired journalists/thought leaders (contracting a communications specialist if necessary). This could include organizing a press conference or national press roundtable.
- Create a strategy and collateral to promote study findings and relevant coverage via social media (contracting a communications specialist if necessary).

4.3 LIAISE WITH THE DIRECTORATE OF NATIONAL CONSUMER RIGHTS PROTECTION

- In cooperation with GAIN create a plan to constructively engage with the Bangladesh Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection on the issue of food safety/fortification quality vis a vis edible oil

4.4 ENGAGE THE PRIVATE SECTOR

- In cooperation with GAIN create a plan to create a constructive dialogue between the working group and key private sector actors. For example, working group members might create a presentation to be shared at CEO roundtables on food safety or edible oil packaging solutions.

5. DELIVERABLES

- stakeholder analysis for edible oil food safety working group
- At least 5 tripartite relationship-building/strategy discussions with GAIN & a key stakeholder organization
- Inaugural working group meeting and strategy for ongoing engagement/collaboration
- Communications advocacy analysis and strategy
- Communications materials and social media collateral for target audiences
- At least one meeting and a plan for ongoing engagement with the Directorate of National Consumer Rights Protection
- At least one meeting, event or dialogue bringing together working group members and key private sector stakeholders and a plan for ongoing private sector engagement

4.3. TIMELINE

The timeline for completion of all aspects of the Scope of Work and submission of deliverables is by end of June 2021 as outlined in the following table:

DELIVERABLE	DEADLINE
Proposal submission	7th February 2021
Final response regarding selection of Service Provider	22 nd February 2021
Contracting process finalized	1 st March 2021
Methodology and tools finalized and presented to GAIN; approvals obtained	15 th March 2021
Draft report submitted	1 st October 2021
Final report submitted and Dissemination (Reports will comprise an overall word document, PowerPoint presentation)	20 th October 2021

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 program and technical staff from GAIN 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 Bangladeshi Taka and/or US Dollars, including fees/travel/accommodation and any other direct costs to be incurred in the delivery of the Scope of Work. Include a brief narrative justification for line items included. The budget will be inclusive of all taxes/VAT and indirect costs. 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:

- Technical proposal outlining the research objectives and methods;
- Financial proposal outlining budget accompanied by a budget narrative.

4. SUBMISSION

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

Required components for proposal submission (see also evaluation criteria for additional guidance) are:

- i. Description of previous relevant work (maximum 1 page)
- ii. Composition of team with names and brief (maximum 3 page) bio of all key staff
- iii. Detailed proposal explaining how the areas of work mentioned in Scope of Work will be addressed (maximum 15 pages)
- iv. Budget
- v. Detailed budget justification
- vi. Risk and mitigation strategy
- vii. Timeline
- viii. References

5. DEADLINE

Completed proposals should be submitted to GAIN.Bangladesh@gainhealth.org by **5:00 pm CET on 7th February 2021**

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 or post.
- Incomplete proposals.
- Proposals that are not signed.

7. REVISIONS

Proposals may be revised by electronic mail 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.
- 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 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.

12. 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

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.
- 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.

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:
3. [to be completed]
4. [to be completed]
5. [to be completed]
6. [to be completed]
7. 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.

8. 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 [add month and year] in [add location].

_____ [add title]

Signature (applicant)

_____ [add title]

Signature (applicant)