

## REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

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# CONSULTANT – UNDERTAKING CASE STUDIES ON THE PROCESS OF FOOD SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION

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**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 support the design and delivery of national food systems transformation pathways, GAIN is implementing the Nourishing Food Pathways programme: an ambitious attempt to accelerate progress towards The Sustainable Development Goals (particularly SDG2) by supporting inclusive and coherent food systems transformation.

One part of this work seeks to better understand the process of food system transformation (FST), including facilitating factors and how they can be fostered and barriers and how they can be overcome. To inform and inspire others seeking to transform food systems, GAIN seeks to document a set of 15 case studies of how food systems transformation happens. The case studies should be diverse in topic and context. We define FST broadly and would include efforts led by individuals, civil society, the private sector, and international organisations as well as government, and across all aspects of food systems, but at least some case studies should include policy-related changes. We expect most case studies would relate to increasing access to or consumption of healthy diets, perhaps with a focus on those coming from sustainable food systems, but recognize a wide diversity of paths to achieve such changes. Some case studies can be negative cases (i.e., of efforts to achieve FST that were not successful).

The methods to identify and document the case studies must align to the norms of rigorous, analytical research (i.e., include critical analysis to understand processes and real outcomes, not simply be documenting human interest ‘success stories’). It is expected that the cases studies will involve a mix of research methods, with primary and potentially secondary data collection, but the specific approaches are up to the consultant to propose.

GAIN will provide a framework for the analysis, including suggestions of overarching research questions to be answered by the case studies (individually and jointly), and expects the consultant to follow this framework but welcomes creativity within it. GAIN will provide active input and feedback on the case study selection, methods, and results, but the consultant will be responsible for identifying the case studies, relevant stakeholders and data sources for each, and undertaking all data collection, analysis, and reporting.

Case studies should focus on process (as well as outcomes), e.g. understanding where the idea/effort initiated, why, how it was advanced over time, and how it developed along the way. A key focus will be identifying the factors that facilitated success, plus any barriers encountered and how these were overcome (or their impact if they were not). The consultant should engage in critical analysis (i.e., questioning and verifying the case details, not just taking them at face value from key informants) and document shortcomings / hurdles along the way as well as positive outcomes. Finally, each case should make a connection to shaping policy and/or otherwise having wider influence (e.g., through secondary data).

### 3. SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES

The consultant shall provide the following services:

- Identify the 15 cases to be studied, subject to GAIN approval.
- Develop the methods for each case, as well as a protocol and data collection tools for each
- Submit the protocol and guides to a research ethics committee/ IRB for approval (either the consultant's own IRB, if the consultant is affiliated with a research institution, or a relevant global third-party IRB); follow-up with the IRB to ensure review and approval, as needed. If any local permissions are required for any cases, obtain these.
- Develop and follow workplans for each case.
- Undertake data collection for each case, following standards for rigorous and ethical research. Ensure appropriate recruitment, training, and supervision of any staff working on data collection. If any travel is required, arrange this.
  - For qualitative data, ensure recording and English-language transcription of all interviews and/or focus groups (or appropriate documentation for other types of qualitative data collection)
  - For quantitative data, ensure high quality data collection and cleaning, resulting in accurate, clean and well labelled datasets.
  - For all primary data, ensure informed consent is provided and documented.
  - For secondary data, verify the quality and accuracy of the data source.
- Analyse the data, using appropriate methods, to answer the study research questions and document the results in a clear, comprehensive report for each case study
- Provide clear, well-documented and comprehensive data (quantitative and/or qualitative) for each case
- Respond to any GAIN feedback on all interim documents and final outputs and revise accordingly
- Maintain regular communication with GAIN to coordinate and obtain feedback on the work, including proactively advising GAIN or any issues that arise

If AI technologies are used for any aspect of the work, this must be agreed in advance, transparently declared in the methods, and the consultant must take full responsibility for verifying the quality of the work.

#### 3.1. DELIVERABLES

The consultant shall provide the following for each of the 15 case studies:

- Basic, brief initial description of the case study, research questions, and methods to be used (for discussion and agreement before a full protocol is developed)
- Study protocol, IRB approved (which could combine multiple cases, where relevant)
- Data collection tools (approved by GAIN)
- Preliminary report, for GAIN review and feedback
- Final report, incorporating GAIN feedback
- All data (qualitative and quantitative), well documented and cleaned

In addition, the consultant should provide a final report that brings together all case studies to provide overarching insights and reflections.

The timing of the work is expected to begin in May 2025 and be completed by end December 2026. It is expected that the case studies will be staggered over time throughout this period. The table below provides illustrative dates for the work.

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Contract signing	10 May, 2025
First set of case studies (at least 5) agreed to	31 May 2025
First set of protocols and interview guides completed and submitted to IRB	25 June, 2025
First case studies completed (with all deliverables); second set of case studies initiated	30 November 2025
At least 8 draft case study reports submitted	20 March 2026
All 15 case studies completed, all 15 draft reports submitted	31 October 2026
Final reports and all data received	10 December, 2026

### 3.2 EXPECTED EXPERTISE

The consultant organization should have:

- Extensive prior experience leading rigorous research across all stages of the research cycle, including undertaking case studies and using qualitative and mixed methods. Peer-reviewed publication record desirable.
- Deep expertise in food systems required; expertise in diverse aspects of food systems and in policy change processes and methods for studying them desired.
- Experience across multiple country contexts, including low- and middle-income countries.
- Relevant networks and contacts in the contexts chosen for study and ability to ensure high-quality data collection (in line with study methods) across those contexts.
- Excellent project management, planning, organizational, and communication skills.
- Proven experience in conducting similar consultancy assignments.
- A track record of successful collaboration with NGOs and/or research organizations.
- English language fluency.

**Note this call is open for proposals only from organizations registered in the European Union, European Economic Area, Switzerland, or Low- and Middle-Income countries. For more details on which countries these are, please refer to the [EU PRAG Rules](#) and [Annexes](#).**

## 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

Please direct all inquiries and other communications to [rfp@gainhealth.org](mailto:rfp@gainhealth.org)

## 2. BUDGET

Applicants are required to provide GAIN with a detailed fee proposal, including all costs associated with the work, in USD. The final fee will have to be approved by the organisation prior to starting the project.

## 3. SUBMISSION

Interested consultants should prepare:

1. A brief technical proposal (no more than 8 pages), including relevant qualifications and prior experience as well as the planned approach to the work, which should include:
  - a. How case studies will be selected, including any initial examples the consultant has already identified (non binding, to be confirmed later)
  - b. The research methods to be used, demonstrating critical analysis of the cases
  - c. How the consultant will ensure inclusive engagement of diverse stakeholders in each case
  - d. How the consultant will ensure research ethics is respected throughout the process
  - e. Roles and responsibilities of the team involved
  - f. An indicative timeline for the work
2. In annex, CVs (up to 4 pages each) of team members can be included, highlighting relevant experience. These do not count towards the word limit.
3. In a separate document, a brief financial proposal giving the overall cost for the work, as well as a cost breakdown.
4. A completed 'Offer of Services' form (see end of document).

These documents should be sent to GAIN ([rfp@gainhealth.org](mailto:rfp@gainhealth.org)) **by 21 April 2025**. Please use the subject line '**Global FST Case Studies**' when responding.

## 4. DEADLINE

Completed proposals should be submitted to [rfp@gainhealth.org](mailto:rfp@gainhealth.org) **before 21 April 2025, 23:39 Central European Time**.

## 5. UNACCEPTABLE

The following proposals will automatically not be considered or accepted:

- Proposals that are received after the RFP deadline.
- Proposals received by fax or mail.
- Incomplete proposals.

## 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

- 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 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.

## **10. 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**

## **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 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
- Cost

**GAIN reserves the right to contact the individual 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:

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(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)