



## **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)**

### **India**

Implementing partner for commercialization activities (aggregation, segregation, demand creation, user training and advocacy) for Iron Pearl Millet in India

For the states of Rajasthan, and Maharashtra (IPM)

**Issued by HarvestPlus and The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN)**

**RFP Issue Date: April 29<sup>th</sup> 2021**

**RFP Response Deadline: May 11<sup>th</sup> 2021**

### **COMPANY INFORMATION: ABOUT HARVESTPLUS AND GAIN – THE COMMERCIALIZATION OF BIOFORTIFIED CROPS PROGRAMME**

**At HarvestPlus**, we believe that hidden hunger should not be inevitable for the people most at risk. We break down silos between agriculture and nutrition to develop creative solutions to hidden hunger. Our food-based approach targets some of the most vulnerable populations around the world. We use a process called biofortification, which adopts conventional breeding to improve crops. This approach complements other nutrition interventions, and is evidence-based, cost-effective, and sustainable. We work across the entire value chain to develop and deliver nutrient enriched seeds, grains and foods to the people who need it the most via a large collection of innovative and traditional supply chain activities. HarvestPlus is part of the CGIAR Research Program on Agriculture for Nutrition and Health (A4NH). CGIAR is a global agriculture research partnership for a food secure future. Its science is carried out by its 15 research centres in collaboration with hundreds of partner organizations.

**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. HarvestPlus improves nutrition and public health by developing and promoting biofortified food crops that are rich in vitamins and minerals while providing global leadership on evidence and technology.

In May 2018, HarvestPlus and GAIN launched a landmark partnership to accelerate progress in improving access to biofortified seeds, grains and foods via commercial channels with the Commercialisation of Biofortified Crops (CBC) programme. The CBC programme works with national partners to catalyse commercial markets for biofortified crops and foods in six countries with pervasive levels of malnutrition: Bangladesh, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Tanzania. Initial funding for this program is from Germany's Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

The partnership brings together two leading actors in the global nutrition space. It combines the deep expertise of HarvestPlus in all aspects of biofortification with GAIN's proven track record of working with fortification and food companies to create sustainable market models for nutritious food systems.

The Commercialization of Biofortified Crops Programme (CBC) is designed to scale up the commercialization of biofortified foods. The activities of the programme aim to achieve the following three goals with a sound evidence-based footing:

- i. Improve access to inputs and markets for biofortified seeds and food products by: identifying and overcoming barriers to access and acquisition of biofortified seeds; accelerating business development along the supply chains; and ensuring iterative research and development services are opened to link consumer and processor needs for continued crop and product modification.
- ii. Generate demand for these nutrient-rich staple crops using a demand creation approach that taps into the rational and emotional drivers of consumer choices for nutrient rich staples.
- iii. Improve the enabling environment for biofortified seeds and food products through advocacy, catalytic financing, and technology licensing services.

### **Biofortification programme in India**

The programme in India focuses on two biofortified crops, Iron Pearl Millet (IPM) and Zinc Wheat (ZW) with implementation activities in 6 states – Iron Pearl Millet (Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Karnataka); Zinc Wheat (Punjab, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar). In line with HarvestPlus partnership strategy, the CBC programme is engaging state level partners/consultants to deliver key activities at the local government levels that will contribute to achieving the afore-stated goals.

**Iron deficiency in India** is a substantial problem, not only for the economy but also the debilitating effects of women and children across the country. Iron-deficiency anaemia remains the top cause of disability in India. According to the World Health Organisation, iron-deficiency anaemia "reduces the work capacity of individuals and entire populations, bringing serious economic consequences and obstacles to national development." It is estimated that one in three Indians have anaemia. At 447 million cases, this number makes up a quarter of cases worldwide. Anaemia has several consequences for an individual's productivity. In 2019 The Global Burden of Diseases (GBD) study found that dietary iron deficiency caused the most disability in India. An India Spend report found that anaemia cost India Rs 1.5 lakh crore in GDP losses in

2016. Similar estimates from the World Bank in 2016 calculate that India loses 0.9 percent of its gross domestic product (GDP) due to iron-deficiency anaemia,

Growing and consuming iron pearl millet (IPM) is a proven intervention that improves the health of those that consume. Studies consistently show that when consumed, IMP has a demonstrable impact on iron status and health outcomes including cognitive and physical performance. For this reason, there is a high degree of acknowledgement and support from the Government to build iron into crop breeding standards and enable the scale-up of IPM in food systems. Using the biofortification priority index [BPI - HarvestPlus](#), India ranks number 10 out of 117 countries suitable for investing in iron pearl millet. Pearl millet is one of the staple foods in arid and semi-arid regions of India, so when it is consumed in the usual quantities, IPM can provide up to 80% of daily iron needs.

Public and private seed companies play a critical role in commercializing IPM seed for distribution to farmers. HarvestPlus supports these companies with market research, nutrition studies, branding, and promotional strategies. Our work also involves the training of farmers, seed retailers, and distributors on the benefits of biofortified pearl millet and wheat. There are currently 2 varieties of IPM for farmers, ICTP 8203-Fe-10-2 (Dhanashakti), ICMH 1201 (Shakti-1201) which also have the added benefits of being high yielding, mildew resistant, short duration, and drought tolerant.

#### [DETAILS OF THIS REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS: STATEMENT OF PURPOSE & SCOPE OF WORK](#)

As part of the greater CBC programme, HarvestPlus and GAIN are jointly issuing this Request for Proposals (RFP). HarvestPlus will be the administrative lead organisation for this RFP.

#### **Objectives of the Assignment**

The programme is seeking the services of an agency or consultancy with experience in market systems development and commercialization of crops (ideally biofortified) to implement activities in line with the programme work plan that will accelerate business development along with the supply and demand chains as well as scale-up commercialization of biofortified foods in India.

#### **Scope of Work and Methodology**

##### *Scope of Work*

#### **Task 1: Engagement of Farmers**

- a) Engage to map farmers who will be interested (list of existing Harvest Plus farmers will be shared for each state) to pilot with the identified varieties of IPM.
- b) Conduct farmer meetings and group discussions to increase awareness about biofortification and the varieties developed by HarvestPlus; and to formulate strategies for grain production, aggregation hub creation, primary processing, and timely coordination with millers in the local vicinity or as identified by GAIN and Harvest Plus.
- c) Maintain database of farmers who will be engaging with the CBC program based on the formats shared by HarvestPlus.
- d) Facilitate the payments to farmers from the millers engaged with the CBC program.

## **Task 2: Training and Capacity Building of Value Chain Actors**

- a) In partnership with HarvestPlus, produce high quality digital training materials and print for users without digital access.
- b) Train aggregators on food safety with some focus on Good Storage Practices (GSP).
- c) Train local grain merchants, commodity brokers & commission agents on IPM sourcing and marketing.
- d) Train processors/aggregation personnel on contract farming to support aggregators in field monitoring.
- e) Ensure participation of farmers, seed companies, agro-dealers, service providers, extension agents, policy makers etc. in exhibitions, fairs and the National Agricultural Show.
- f) Utilize HarvestPlus tools for commercialization including B2B sales brochures, commercial standards for procurement and labelling and marketing guidelines.
- g) Train farmers on QA, QC process and grain aggregation process and linkages

## **Task 3: Coordination of Farmer Demand Creation Activities**

- a) Set-up demonstration plots and organize field days in target LGAs.
- b) Identify/create farmer clusters to facilitate the process of aggregation and value addition for IPM.

## **Task 4: Data Collection from Value Chain Actors**

- a) Collect the data in a modern, digital format that could link to monitoring and evaluation activities, marketing, and digital marketplaces.
- b) Identify pilots and or models for good quantity grain productions with product traceability mechanisms.

## **Task 5: State and Local Government Level Advocacy**

- a) Work with the state and local governments to advocate for the inclusion of biofortification in programs.
- b) Work with the state and local governments to reduce barriers hindering the development of value chains.
- c) Work with the government and authorities to embed the new Publicly Available Standards for IPM into government procurement systems.
- d) Conduct Stakeholder meetings with industry, startups, last mile aggregators for segregation and aggregations,
- e) Conduct Stakeholder meetings with FPO and Ag Ministry, Food Consumer Affairs - Food and Nutrition.
- f) Engage with Industry, FSSAI for food standards, labeling seed companies, and program linkages.
- g) Conduct Roundtable discussions on Policy and Advocacy.

## *Methodology*

The chosen consultant/agency will adopt effective project management and market systems development principles to deliver assigned tasks. To ensure more efficient data collection and analysis, HarvestPlus will provide mobile data collection and reporting platforms, as this allows the capturing of geo-coordinates, real-time data analysis and timely submission of reports. Using mobile data collection and reporting platforms will also ensure that both HarvestPlus and the consultant will have access to the data extension agents/enumerators collect.

#### 4. Deliverables

- a) Monthly report showing progress of activities in line with tasks outlined in this document using HarvestPlus recommended activity reporting template.

#### 5. Skills and Experience

- a) The organization/consulting firm should possess a good knowledge and experience carrying out similar assignments in the target state. Experience in *biofortification business/enterprise development* will be an added advantage.
- b) Physical, on ground presence in the mentioned geographies is a must have.
- c) Convergence and liaising experience with Private Sector and Government is non-negotiable.

#### 6. Application Procedures

Interested organizations/consulting firm are expected to submit the following:

- a. An expression of interest detailing the technical approach for completion of this assignment broken down by the tasks laid out above, including a detailed timeline/Gantt chart.
- b. A financial proposal, inclusive of all consultancy fees and expenses to cover the assignment in the State, with a clear distinction between the two categories of costs.

The deadline for this RFP is close of business on **May 11<sup>th</sup> 2021**. Complete proposals (technical and financial) should be submitted in electronic copy to [k.foley@cgiar.org](mailto:k.foley@cgiar.org)

#### **Information HarvestPlus will provide**

HarvestPlus will provide the chosen agency/consultant with a list of existing reports and data and full details of the project.

Full product information will be provided about IPM basic food stuffs and examples of flour and processed foods made from IPM. The chosen agency/consultant will meet the GAIN and HarvestPlus team and receive training on biofortification.

#### **Timeline of project**

<b>Deliverable</b>	<b>Deadline</b>
Post requests for proposals	April 29 <sup>th</sup>
Close receipt of proposals	May 11 <sup>th</sup>
Agency identification and Contracting	May 17 <sup>th</sup>
Project commences (following inception meeting & contracting process)	May 21 <sup>st</sup>
Monthly progress reports	25 <sup>th</sup> of every month
Project close	March 31 <sup>st</sup> 2022

### *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.
  - Understanding of the target audience and consider all cultural and literacy requirements and sensitivities.
  - Proposal shall demonstrate a clear understanding of the project objective and deliverables as outlined in Section I.
- Understanding of the target audience and consider all cultural and literacy requirements and sensitivities.
- Proposal shall demonstrate a clear understanding of the project objective.
- Evidence of past experience developing and delivering a campaign of this type to a specific audience.
- Demonstrate a clear understanding of the technical requirements of this RFP.
- 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.
- Detailed budget and cost-effectiveness and return on investment of proposed approach.
- 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. HarvestPlus shall each have one main contact person clearly identified in the proposal.

### *TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF THIS REQUEST FOR PROPSALS*

Upon selection of Consultant, a detailed contract will be agreed by both parties.

NOTE: HarvestPlus retain the right not to pursue this project if enough proposals are not submitted or funding for the project is no longer available.

### **NOTICE OF NON-BINDING SOLICITATION**

HarvestPlus 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. HarvestPlus 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.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

All information provided as part of this solicitation is considered confidential. In the event that any information is inappropriately released, HarvestPlus will seek appropriate remedies as allowed. Proposals, discussions, and all information received in response to this solicitation will be held as strictly confidential.

## **RIGHT TO FINAL NEGOTIATIONS ON THE PROPOSAL**

HarvestPlus reserves the right to negotiate on the final costs, and the final scope of work of the proposal. HarvestPlus reserve the right to limit or include third parties at HarvestPlus sole and full discretion in such negotiations.

## **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY**

Subject to the terms of the contract to be concluded between HarvestPlus 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 HarvestPlus.