



# REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Bihar India

**Assessing consumer use and attitudes of wheat flour & assessment of miller interest to switch to higher nutrition varieties to fulfil consumer demand**

**Issued by HarvestPlus**

**RFP Issue Date: January 7<sup>th</sup> 2021**

**RFP Response Deadline: January 29<sup>th</sup> 2021**

[COMPANY INFORMATION: ABOUT HARVESTPLUS](#)

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.

In India HarvestPlus supports the National Agricultural Research System to breed, test, and release high zinc wheat developed through our partnership with the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center (CIMMYT). Public and private seed companies play a critical role in commercializing seed for distribution to farmers. We support these companies with market research, nutrition studies, branding, and promotional strategies. Our partnerships also train farmers, retailers, and distributors on the benefits of biofortified wheat.

Public awareness campaigns leverage the power of the media and national public health experts to highlight micronutrient deficiencies and promote adoption of nutritious crops. Our advocacy seeks to strengthen central and state-level ownership of biofortification through effective integration into nutrition and agricultural policies.

### **HarvestPlus in Bihar**

Odisha and Bihar are regions of exceptional importance to our programs. Bihar alone has a population of over 99 million people, India's third most populous state suffers from high levels of poverty and malnutrition. Zinc deficiency has a large effect on not only economic outputs and stability but effects the health, wealth, livelihoods and quality of life for up to 25% of the population. Zinc deficiency is a major cause of stunted brain development and child mortality in countries where rural families cannot afford zinc-rich foods like eggs, meat, fish, or fruits. Diarrhea, malaria, and lower respiratory infections are all exacerbated by lack of zinc. Sufficient zinc in the diet is also needed for strong immune systems—the body's first line of defense against viruses such as COVID-19 and other health threats.

Almost 20 percent of global deaths linked to zinc deficiency occur in India, where HarvestPlus has been supporting partners in the public, private, research, and civil society sectors since 2004 to combat this and other health challenges. Research conducted in India has demonstrated that children who eat bread made with biofortified zinc wheat suffer significantly fewer days of illness. When eaten regularly, zinc wheat can provide up to 50 percent of daily zinc needs.

Zinc wheat is currently grown by 168,000 (farming households in India overall, with an estimated 840,000 household members benefiting. Thanks to partnerships in both the public and private sectors, and a generous investment by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, improved varieties of zinc wheat are being made available to farming communities where they are most needed. In November 2019, two commercially available, truthfully labelled (TL) zinc wheat varieties (BHU-31 and BHU-25) were formally launched by seed companies in Bihar, with the intention of reaching more than 1 million farming households with these varieties over five years.

The Government of Bihar is making a major commitment to scale up production and consumption of zinc-biofortified wheat to help address a serious malnutrition problem and reduce the highest rate of stunting in the country. A critical path to reach 1 million farming households is through consumer acceptance, demand and building sustainable zinc wheat supply chains.

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

The purpose of this RFP is to find the best agency research partner to find the most effective route to expand commercial markets for zinc wheat. Through the establishment of current consumer use and attitudes of wheat consumption.

Our role is not to increase the total wheat market but to replace existing wheat value chains with the more nutritious, high zinc alternative. What are the best ways to encourage consumers to switch to and demand the more nutritious variety and how do we then enable the market to meet the demand?

We are seeking high quality, quantitative research with a representative sample of the population of Bihar.

The results will be used to find the most effective way to promote zinc flour to consumers via the understanding of their current path to purchase and purchase decision hierarchy.

This research project is for the Bihar region only for very low and low income consumers but would seek to understand routes for more premium brands that could drive the market.

Target is the household shopper – the person who buys the flour

### **Part 1. Current consumer use and attitudes toward wheat flour**

#### **Current wheat consumption patterns including;**

- Type of flour (white, brown, wholemeal)
- Loose unbranded vs branded
- What do they do with the flour
- Flour characteristics of most importance – e.g outer packaging, colour, smell, taste, cooking performance
- Type of brands
- Collect, photograph and document packaging samples from the market
- Attitudes to milling – do they prefer stone mill or other ideas like that
- Where do they buy if – mill, market, small local shop, larger store
- How much do they spend
- Who is in their household – differences in household members

#### **Attitudes to nutrition**

- Current opinion on flour – do they think it's healthy – why, why not
- What would they want more of in flour?
- Health concerns of flour – contamination etc
- Do they buy other processed foods made from wheat flour – ready made breads, biscuits, snacks etc

Please note, evidence suggests that the proportion wheat sold packaged in India is quite low (approx. 5% of total production). Including the research question "Loose unbranded vs branded" will allow us to derive the proportion buying grain (and getting it milled). The research could be expanded to assess why those buying grain do not buy flour, and what would motivate those to buy flour. Information about the reach of the PDS in B/O exists, but we would like this question to be included to establish more recent data.

### **Part 2. Potential of consumers switch to zinc wheat and willingness to buy**

We are also interested to know the cost and process of testing consumer concepts of point of sale advertising and food package messages. Please provide options of this in the proposal with a separate cost structure.

In this research project we would also assess the willingness to buy and potential to use price premiums on new brands and different packaging options for zinc wheat and products made from zinc wheat.

### **Part 3. Enabling the market to fulfil consumer demand: assessment of miller interest and capabilities in Bihar**

At the same time of assessing consumer demand HarvestPlus has to establish the viable channels to produce and promote the flour by assessment of millers/ capacities etc in Bihar. Please provide options of this in the proposal with a separate cost structure.

This market analysis will include;

- Statistics on the current number, size and capacities of millers in Bihar. This can be based on current market analysis or estimates from previous research studies. We are not requesting a full market evaluation.
- Interviews with a selection of millers in Bihar who could be potential partners for the HarvestPlus programs. Please provide options on the scale and costs associated. It is envisioned that a telephone or electronic survey of potentially 30 millers and then followed by a detailed interview with the 5 best candidates.
- Provide 2 examples of a successful wheat sourcing and supply chains in Bihar.
  1. large Food Companies sourcing specific wheat varieties in Bihar. The use of contract cultivation versus their own farmers, how they work with last mile aggregators.
  2. A specific example of a small or medium millers supply chain process in Bihar

Alternative options are welcomed to help achieve our ultimate objectives or onboarding millers to process and sell zinc wheat.

Note that early investigation has shown that potentially neighboring states, with more mature markets, such as West Bengal may also be a viable option for production. Anecdotal evidence suggests that some millers prefer to procure grains from neighbouring state like UP (adjoining state) due to the grain quality etc.

The HarvestPlus team will provide more technical information about the high zinc seed, grains and food on commissioning and our existing knowledge regarding the best ways to communicate the benefits.

#### **Specific Deliverables in a response**

<b>DELIVERABLE</b>	<b>DEADLINE</b>
RFP issued	January 7 <sup>th</sup>
Proposal submission	January 29 <sup>th</sup>
Final response regarding selection of Service Provider from HarvestPlus	February 5 <sup>th</sup>
Contracting process finalized	February 19 <sup>th</sup>
Detailed briefing with background information	February 19 <sup>th</sup>
Field work commences	February 19 <sup>th</sup>
Results expected	March 31 <sup>st</sup>

#### *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.
- 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 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.
- Information regarding how the research can be carried out in the Covid-19 environment and ensuring safety of the researchers and the respondents

#### *Instructions for responding and queries*

In the event of any questions please contact [j.walton@cgiar.org](mailto:j.walton@cgiar.org)

Send RFP responses no later than 5 PM ET January 29<sup>th</sup> to [j.walton@cgiar.org](mailto:j.walton@cgiar.org) with the following subject line: **RFP – India Consumers Wheatflour - name of Consultant**

Responses shall 2 documents:

- Full work proposal including the points laid out in the evaluation criteria – file name “**consultant name India 2021 proposal**”
- Budget breakdown (financial proposal). file name “**consultant name India 2021 financial proposal**”

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

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.