



REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS (RFP)

Evaluation of use and adoption of nutrient standards in grain trade

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

RFP Issue Date: April 1st 2021

RFP Response Deadline: April 16th 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.

Background information

Rigorous scientific standards for biofortified crops have guided the release of more than 240 certified varieties promoted by HarvestPlus. Its partners within the CGIAR, and partners among national agricultural research systems (NARS), only release varieties with micronutrient density based on target levels that have been scientifically shown to have a demonstrable effect on consumers' health. The lack of standards for grain has been identified as a binding constraint to the scale up and commercialization of biofortified seeds, grains, and foods. Reviews such as *Improving Nutrition through Biofortification: From Strategy to Implementation and Commercialization* assessments of biofortified crops further articulated and explored this important barrier. The unanimous conclusion of these reviews found that grain is a pivotal point for major trade in the value chain and this gap in standards will inhibit scale up. Users or buyers of grain do not have a reference point or a benchmark for what makes a grain nutrient enriched compared to the standard grain.

Lack of standards prevents trade at more-organized levels in the food system, such as among medium- to large-scale millers, food processors, and retailers. In addition, public procurers of food deal at the grain level—for example, the Public Distribution System in India, the World Food Programme, and procurement for institutions such as schools and hospitals; these are all examples of buyers who will demand grain that conforms to a specific standard. For the private sector and agribusinesses, they currently find it difficult if not impossible to be part of the biofortification system because there are no standards specifically built to aid procurement. Leading global food and agribusinesses have stated that establishing standards for biofortification will provide assurances for all those in the value chain that crop varieties conform to agreed specifications,

After careful scenario analysis with the CBC, HarvestPlus will develop an internationally relevant, Publicly Available Specification (PAS) through the British Standards Institution (BSI). This first standard

will cover zinc maize, rice, and wheat, followed by two more standards for iron (beans, pearl millet) and vitamin A (maize, casava, sweet potato). Zinc was given priority because it has the potential for the largest consumer impact, given that countries producing zinc crops are high-population India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan. It would be more efficient to develop global standards based on nutrient rather than going by crop and country.

The PAS is an internationally developed standard created for and in partnership with end users. It is not a regulation that requires enforcement. Manufacturers may use the new standard to demonstrate best practice and compliance. The published PAS will be taken to countries where the CBC Programme is currently present (Bangladesh, Kenya, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Tanzania) and entered into local databases of standards. All CBC Programme countries are part of the Commonwealth Standards Group that shares the adoption and dissemination of standards. At the time of publication and dissemination, CBC experts will reach out to the standards bodies and the governments of each country to create awareness and promote adoption. Importantly, it is intended that standard will be used in public procurement—for example, by the public distribution system in India—which can specifically refer to the standards when procuring nutrient enriched/biofortified grains. The standard will also be widely disseminated within the private seed, food, and grain industries globally to increase the demand for grain that conforms to these standards.

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.

The main objective is procure the services of a food regulatory specialist to map stakeholders for the iron and vitamin A PAS and interview key users as to the use and value of the PAS.

1. Map the experts

In partnership with HarvestPlus and using our existing database of experts, complete a database similar to the outline below of stakeholder experts in each of the countries which are the primary users of the the 3 PAS. Each expert will either be invited to a steering group, invited to the extended steering group, invited to consult on the open consultation and or provided regular written updates. For the zinc PAS where the steering groups are complete the work will cover notification and training on the new PAS.

	Nigeria	Kenya	Tanzania	India	Pakistan	Bangladesh
Nutrient of interest	Vitamin A	Iron	Iron. Vitamin A	Zinc Iron	Zinc	Zinc
Government public health/nutrition						
Government Agriculture						
Government / public food procurement						
Standards and regulatory bodies						

Analytical experts / laboratories						
Public health nutritionists						
Nurition experts						
Millers						
Grain traders						
Primary food processors						
Food processors						
Retailers						

2. Assist HarvetsPlus in writing notifications to stakeholders. Manage and document the correspondance, create a line of events for communications on each of the 3 standards.
3. In Partnership with the HP team, create a questionnaire and interview a selection (10-15) of the named stakeholders and PAS users to establish their views and intended use of the PAS.
4. Develop a summary report of the PAS process and research for presentation to CBC committee.
5. Contribute to an acadademic publication that details the PAS process and use for publication in a relevant journal.

Points to note

We are not looking for a large, systematic, exhausted stakeholder mapping exercise. A consultant could have expertise in one or more of the counties of interest and interview HarvetsPlus or GAIN staff to establish key stakeholder in other countries.

HarvestPlus will provide all background information on the decision process of the PAS, current progress, engagement and objectives.

TIMELINE OF THIS PROJECT

DELIVERABLE	DEADLINE
RFP issued	April 1st
Proposal submission	April 16 th
Final response regarding selection of Service Provider	April 23 rd
Contracting process finalized	May 7 th
Inductions and project brief	May 7 th
Final project report and deliverables	June 10 th

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 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.

Instructions for responding and queries

In the event of any questions please contact Jenny walton j.walton@cgiar.org Senior Specialist, Demand Creation and Business Development

Send RFP responses no later than 5 PM ET April 16th to Jenny Walton j.walton@cgiar.org with the following subject line: RFP Standards adoption

Responses shall 2 documents:

- Full work proposal including the points laid out in the evaluation criteria
- Budget breakdown (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.