INVEST: Mobilizing Private Investment for Development
Statement of Objectives for Request for Proposal (RFP) INVEST-075:
USAID Bureau for Resilience and Food Security:
GAIN's Nutritious Foods Financing Facility (N3F) Database and Dashboard Tools

INTRODUCTION:
The United States Agency for International Development (USAID) recognizes that as the world's development challenges become more complex, many can only be solved through market-based solutions. USAID's Private Sector Engagement team is working to expand collaboration with private sector and pioneering approaches that catalyze investments into emerging markets.

Increasingly, private investors and businesses are looking at emerging markets for new opportunities. However, investing in these markets is complex, and USAID has an important role to play in mobilizing investment into high-impact areas.

Encouraging these investments requires new forms of collaboration. In September of 2017 through a contract awarded to DAI, USAID set up the INVEST mechanism to build and engage a network of partner organizations with valuable investment and finance expertise, including those that have not worked extensively with USAID in the past.

INVEST enables USAID Missions, Bureaus, and Independent Offices to quickly access niche expertise from this diverse network of partner organizations. These partners work alongside USAID to deliver customized financing solutions that address investment constraints, mobilize additional private capital, and produce development results for a variety of sectors and geographies.

INVEST pairs innovative technical approaches with streamlined and user-friendly procurement and subcontracting processes. These simplified processes level the playing field, ensuring that USAID can work with the best firm for the job, regardless of that firm's size, locality, or previous experience with government contracting.

BACKGROUND:
USAID's Bureau for Resilience and Food Security (RFS) was formed on March 9, 2020 as a successor to its predecessor, the Bureau for Food Security (BFS).[1] RFS seeks to strengthen and support USAID Missions to build resilient communities and countries, enhance their well-being, and improve food and water security to reduce hunger, poverty, and malnutrition. RFS recognizes that mobilizing finance through partnerships with multilateral development institutions, investors, banks, and the private sector will improve the reach, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability of USAID's food and water security development efforts. Opportunities for collaboration include using development assistance strategically to catalyze domestic resource mobilization and private sector-driven trade and economic development.

In Africa, the food environment is dominated by small and medium-sized enterprises (SME's), especially in retail and distribution. Small and medium-sized input suppliers, off-takers, processors, and distributors within the food system are key drivers of job creation and regional economic growth, while contributing to the availability of safe, nutritious diets. But the growth of these SMEs is highly constrained by lack of access to finance, caused by obstacles related to the companies themselves, such

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[1] USAID, "The Bureau for Resilience and Food Security (RFS) Fact Sheet." 2019. https://www.usaid.gov/what-we-do/transformation-at-usaid/fact-sheets/bureau-resilience-and-food-security-rfs

as lack of managerial skills and lack of equity, and obstacles related to the financial services industry, such as unfamiliarity with nutrition value chains as an investable sector. Across the continent, these constraints are significantly more pronounced for women-owned and -led SMEs who operate in a context of discriminatory gender norms and practices.

The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition's (GAIN) Nutritious Foods Financing Facility (N3F, or the Facility) program along with USAID and Incofin Investment Management's (Incofin IM, an impact-first fund management organization) support aims to create a new investment fund, which will target businesses that support the flow of nutritious foods across the food system, to improve diet quality, particularly for vulnerable populations. USAID's RFS Bureau seeks to use its funding to support the fund in its setup and design.

OBJECTIVES:
The N3F is being constructed as an evidence-led facility, where the tracking, analyzing and documenting of evidence and metrics will be key to its success. With respect to this, the formation of a database and dashboard tools will be central to the Facility's impact monitoring efforts. The N3F is looking to gather data from SMEs for different types of analytics, monitoring, and reporting. This includes data on the financials and operating structure of SMEs, technical assistance needs and monitoring of what is provided, and data on output indicators for monitoring progress to impact. Developing a tailored database alongside high-quality dashboards that track key performance indicators (KPIs), metrics, and other key data relevant to the N3F will be essential to enable good data use for decision-making.

Database. N3F is aiming to construct the database before the first investments are made in the SMEs and be updated and operated throughout the lifetime of the Facility. In order to achieve this aim, the following components should be considered for the formation and maintenance of the database:

- **Server and storage**. To facilitate rapid data uptake and use to adapt implementation, the majority of data analysis (e.g., calculation of sums across companies or percentage changes over time) will be automated and take place through the cloud-based data server, which will provide simple, automatically updated dashboards tracking key indicators. The objective is to reduce the time lag between data collection and use, as well as free up GAIN's Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) staff time to be used for higher-level analysis.
- **Software**. The database will either need to be an integrated solution allowing easy data input from different users (e.g. GAIN and Incofin staff, investee SMEs staff) or will need to pull data together from different data input sources. There is no preference for a specific software at present, but there is a preference for open-source options, if feasible. There will likely be both set-up and customization costs, including possible developer costs, as well as annual maintenance and/or renewal fees.
- **Staff**. The database will need to be used by GAIN and Incofin staff jointly. Given the various uses of the database (as described in the section below), a few staff members will be needed throughout the duration of the Facility to collect and upload the different data. Staff will also be needed to maintain the database and carry out data analysis. Both GAIN and Incofin staff will be associated with these efforts. The database design should be such that simple changes to it can be made by GAIN/Incofin staff following some basic training and not be reliant on a third-party provider.
    - o <u>GAIN</u> will have the main responsibility for the monitoring and reporting on impact-related outputs (e.g., changes in production) and Technical Assistance (TA), including reporting to TA- or MEL-only donors as needed.

- o <u>Incofin</u> will have the responsibility for the collection and monitoring of financial indicators, as well as the conduct of the initial and annual 'impact audit' (though GAIN will lead the nutrition dimension of the impact audit).

Dashboard. There are three different types of monitoring that the dashboard tools will facilitate. All three components will be updated throughout the life of the Facility, given that the pipeline and metrics development will be a dynamic process that will be updated on a regular basis.

1. **SME (investee) financial and operational monitoring**
   - Documentation regarding the financial and operational status of each SME (investee) is crucial in order to select those SMEs that are aligned with the N3F's nutritional and social impact focus, and therefore maximize the Facility's stated impact.
   - The information for each SME will need to be accurate and updated on a regular (annual or bi-annual) basis, particularly with regards to changes to business practices, product line, suppliers, markets in which SMEs operate, etc.
   - A comprehensive input monitoring system will allow GAIN to identify problems in implementation, facilitate adaptation, and inform changes.
   - The SME information dashboard should document key information on the business operations and financials. It should include, but not be limited to:
     - o Country of operations
     - o Description of main business activities
     - o Financial information (including audited financial statements for the previous 3 fiscal years, as well as preliminary quarterly financials, and financial projections)
     - o Foods value-chain segments
     - o Food products it produces, processes, or distributes
     - o Key products or services
     - o Shareholder status
     - o Current financing status & historical financing history
     - o Number of employees
     - o Food production volume
     - o Market and product breakdown

2. **Activity (input) monitoring**
   - Once an SME has been selected, close monitoring of the resources provided to the investee must be documented. This, together with the output monitoring (third component) will allow the N3F to estimate the impact of different activities and help identify the most impactful ones. This will help improve the N3F's financing and TA offering throughout the life of the facility, as well as inform future activities external to the N3F.
   - The resources offered to each SME run along the N3F's two main activities: Financing and Technical Assistance (TA):
     - o <u>Capital financing</u> – N3F Fund
       - ▪ Amount of financing provided to SME
       - ▪ Type of funding:
         - • Short-term debt
         - • Medium-term debt
         - • Long-term debt
         - • Mezzanine
       - ▪ Tenor (years)

- ▪ Conditions of funding, including rate of interest and collateral requirements
- ▪ Conditions of the loan and purpose/directed usage
  - o Technical Assistance – N3F's TA Component
    - ▪ Total cost of TA provided (as a component of the funding provided)
    - ▪ Business development TA provided
    - ▪ Nutritional impact TA provided
    - ▪ Status tracking of TA provided
    - ▪ Individuals involved

3. **Impact-related (output) monitoring**
   - At the heart of the Facility's MEL component will be the monitoring of output indicators as aligned with the N3F priorities. This crucial component will allow GAIN to track and quantify the effect of its activities on SME actions and track progress towards goals.
   - The immediate monitoring and tracking will be carried out at the output level. There are multiple outputs expected to result from various of the N3F's activities. Each output will be tracked by an output indicator, collected quarterly or annually. It will also inform on the N3F's subsequent portfolio allocation and resource-mobilization decisions, in order to maximize the nutritional and non-nutritional impact of the Facility.
   - As this information will be provided by SMEs directly, it would be desirable for the database to be integrated with an online form or similar that would allow them to input data themselves (without GAIN/Incofin needing to do so).
   - The SME monitoring will also include information to determine their impact based on the following 5 components of the N3F Impact Matrix, which will be updated annually for each investee:
     - o Nutrition. What is the nutritional impact of the investee based on the produce it currently produces and sells?
     - o Consumers & Suppliers. What is the social impact of the investee in relation to the socio-economic status of its end consumers and suppliers?
     - o Employment. What are the employment practices and policies of the investee?
     - o Environment & Conservation. What is the environmental impact of the investee?
     - o Gender. Does the investee advance, harm or not affect equality progress?

In conclusion, the software identified should have the following characteristics:
- ● Customizable, ensuring it meets the needs and objectives as stated above;
- ● Ability to be regularly updated with new information (e.g. SMEs and other information points);
- ● Secure given sensitive information (i.e. company financials) that GAIN/Incofin would look to collect; and
- ● Low maintenance costs so that GAIN/Incofin can use it for several years.

ACTIVITIES:
INVEST is seeking a partner to assist in the design and setup of N3F's database and dashboard tools to ensure this is an evidence-led Facility during its implementation. The selected offeror will be responsible for identifying and suggesting software options (between 2 and 4) that can be used by members of the GAIN and Incofin teams to track and store information regarding the different businesses with which they work. Specifically, the selected offeror will be expected to implement the following activities:

- ● Conduct research on potential software solutions that meet N3F's objectives for the database and dashboard tools as detailed above. Factors to consider include, but are not limited to cost,

maintenance, user-friendliness/ease of use, ability to easily update information, suitability given the needs outlined above, and the ability to not only collect data but also to visualize data analysis and produce useful, metrics, graphs, etc. (i.e. a dashboard);
- Present findings to the GAIN and Incofin teams and provide summary recommendations on the top 2-4 options;
- Once the top solution has been selected, work on customizing and adapting the tool to fit the needs of the Facility, as well as design a tool (i.e., a database and visualization dashboard) that features efficient and secure storage of N3F data and a useful, user-friendly display of such information, alongside the capacity to export raw data to excel or in a CSV format; and
- Train relevant GAIN and Incofin staff members on the use of the tool and provide written training materials, PowerPoint, and/or video tutorials for future GAIN/Incofin use.

DELIVERABLES AND TIMELINE:
The engagement is expected to commence in February/March 2021 and is anticipated to be completed by May/June 2021. There will be significant interaction with USAID staff based in Washington, D.C., GAIN staff based in London and Geneva, and Incofin IM headquartered in Antwerp, Belgium with offices overseas, including Bogota, Colombia, but all the work of the selected partner for this activity can be done remotely. Below are illustrative deliverables and timeframes for both activities:

Deliverable	Illustrative Timeframe
Research findings and presentation of recommendations for a minimum of 2 potential software options (ideally 2-4) for the database/dashboard that can achieve the objectives set out above, with a list of strengths and weaknesses.	3-4 weeks
The design, customization, and creation of a database/dashboard based on the three information categories outlined above, that can be used as the template for future work.	3-4 weeks
Training conducted for members of GAIN N3F and Incofin teams on how to use, update, and maintain the chosen software.	2-3 weeks
Draft a manual and other training tools on how to use the chosen software for GAIN and Incofin staff.	1-2 weeks

ROLE OF INVEST PROJECT:
INVEST will work closely with USAID, Incofin IM, GAIN, and the selected partner(s) during all stages of this work. DAI will subcontract the selected partner(s) directly and provide review and oversight throughout the life of the activity in accordance with INVEST's lean management approach. DAI will administer weekly check-ins (as needed), reporting, deliverable review prior to client presentation and approval, and manage an ongoing ME&L framework.

- Partner Onboarding: DAI will work closely with USAID, Incofin IM, and GAIN to provide the successful offeror(s) with all necessary content, avoid duplication of efforts, and work with the successful offeror(s) to develop a workplan.

- Project Implementation: The selected offeror(s) will implement the work as prescribed by the workplan. DAI will provide management support and ensure regular check-ins/reporting.

- Ongoing Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning: DAI will define indicators in the subcontract, collect and review M&E data from subcontractors for requisite reporting to USAID. DAI will conduct data quality assessments as necessary.

QUALIFICATIONS:
Offerors are expected to have experience setting up database and dashboard tools to track activities and company information. Preference will be given to firms who have done so within a MEL (Measurement and Evaluation) context and/or who have worked with investment funds in a similar capacity.

To: Offerors

Date: January 29, 2021

From: Procurement and Partnerships Team, INVEST Project; Implemented by DAI Global LLC

Subject: Request for Proposals (RFP) INVEST-075: USAID Bureau for Resilience and Food Security: GAIN's Nutritious Foods Financing Facility (N3F) Database and Dashboard Tools

Due: **1:00PM EST on February 11, 2021**

Dear Offerors:

Enclosed is a Request for Proposals (RFP) to support the implementation of DAI's INVEST project funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). DAI invites firms to submit a proposal for work as part of the USAID Bureau for Resilience and Food Security buy-in.

I.   **RFP Process and deadlines:** This solicitation will result in the award of one Firm Fixed Price subcontract. We anticipate issuing a single subcontract with an award value no greater than USD $70,000 resulting from the implementation of this agreement.
    a. Submission of Questions – Questions must be submitted no later than **1:00 pm EST on January 14, 2021** via email to **INVEST_Procurement@dai.com**.
    b. Submission of Proposals – Proposals must be submitted no later than **1:00 pm EST on February 11, 2021** via email to **INVEST_Procurement@dai.com,** copying Katherine_Tilahun@dai.com and Carly_Gorelick@dai.com. The subject line of the email should be your organization name, followed by "Submission under RFP INVEST-075: RFS Gain N3F, Database and Dashboard Tools" Please certify in your submission email a validity period of 60 days for the price(s) provided and include your organization's DUNS number. Please limit file submissions to 10 megabytes or less.

II.   **Composition of Proposal:** Your organization's proposal should comprise the following submission documents. The Technical Proposal and Cost Proposal should be prepared as separate files for independent evaluation, as follows below. Technical proposals should be submitted as a slide deck presentation of no more than ten (10) slides with a minimum font size of 12, and graphics with a minimum font size of 10. Submissions in PowerPoint or in PDF are acceptable, although PDF is preferred along with an accompanying PowerPoint document. Please provide a copy of your cost proposal in Excel format.

Part 1 – Technical Proposal

Please limit your technical proposal to no more than ten (10) slides. The technical proposal is composed of the following three (3) sections:

1. **Technical Approach –** Offerors will detail their approach to fulfill the accompanying Statement of Objectives (SOO). The approach will clearly indicate how the proposed activities will result in the successful completion of all deliverables and milestones, specifically the research and presentation of findings for solutions, customization and design of the selected software, and development and presentation of training materials for GAIN and Incofin staff as detailed in the SOO. Offerors should detail their approach to supporting N3F's objective of selecting and developing a database and dashboard tools that enable an evidence-led Facility throughout its implementation.

2. **Institutional Capacity** - Offerors should provide details about the experience, expertise, or capacity of their firm (or firms if a partnering arrangement is proposed) to recommend the proposed approach and complete the work as described. This should also include past performance information for similar contexts. Offerors should demonstrate their experience and knowledge of developing and working within databases, as well as working within Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) teams, or other similar entities.

3. **Management Plan/Staffing Structure –** Offerors should include details of personnel who would be assigned to the activities described in each of the technical approaches, as well as a clear management plan in narrative form for the development, review, and submission of all associated deliverables, including a milestone schedule. Offerors are permitted to engage in partnering arrangements if it will aid in providing best value to USAID. If a partnering arrangement is being proposed, please describe the nature of the arrangement, the specific technical value being contributed by each member of the team, and the appropriate management controls to ensure successful delivery. Firms may consider partnering with other firms that bring in complementary skill sets and experience.

   In addition to the above, please include the following. These inputs will not be counted as part of the 10-slide limit and the format may be PDF or Word:

● One (1) to two (2) examples of past performance relevant to this activity (limited to two (2) pages per example)
● CV(s) of any individuals proposed in the staffing plan to conduct this activity (limited to two (2) pages per individual)

A cover slide will be considered a non-counting slide, should offerors choose to include one. No additional annexes or documentation are requested now.

Part 2 – Price Proposal

The contract type for the presumptive contract will be Fixed Price, awarded by DAI Global, LLC. Please include your total proposed fixed price along with details for specific deliverable pricing. Offerors should also include a cost breakdown of the hourly

rates for proposed personnel, if applicable, with a build-up to their total proposed price or include substantiating price reasonableness documentation/justification. Offerors can use the attached cost/budget template; please limit file submissions to 10 megabytes or less.

III. **Evaluation of Proposal:** DAI will use best value determination for the award of this Request for Proposals. A best value determination means that, in DAI's estimation, the selected offer(s) will provide the greatest overall benefit to USAID in response to the requirements stated in this RFP. DAI may also exclude an offer from consideration if it determines that an Offeror is "not responsible", i.e., that it does not have the management and financial capabilities required to perform the work required. Proposals will be evaluated against a stated number of factors, including the overall proposed approach, past performance, specific qualifications in the identified sectors and other evidence substantiating the bidder's ability to deliver, including budget and timeframe considerations. Specific preference will be shown for firms with a demonstrated track record working on advising investment funds or other similar organizations in their data analytics needs.

1. **Technical Proposal:** The Technical Proposal will be scored and evaluated separately from the price proposal. Technical panel reviewers will evaluate offerors on the following factors, consistent with the offerors' technical proposal.

   a. **Technical Approach (40 points)** – Points for this section will be awarded based on the information presented in the technical approach. Points will be awarded to firms describing their thoughtful approach to addressing the Statement of Objectives (SOO). The offeror will be scored based on its presentation of a clear approach that reflects the requirements of this specific activity and incorporates the offeror's competencies. The technical approach should clearly demonstrate the offeror's strategy in conducting research and presenting findings on the top solutions that meet the criteria for the proposed database and dashboard tools as laid out in the SOO. The technical approach should also demonstrate how the team will work to customize, design, and create the database and dashboard tools within the selected software. And lastly, the technical approach should describe the offeror's approach to developing training materials and conducting trainings for the staff that will take over the maintenance of the database and dashboard tools.

   b. **Institutional Capacity (30 points)** – Points for this section will be based on information presented in the corresponding section and any submitted case studies. Points will be awarded to firms who demonstrate their experience in:
      i. Working with organizations/entities in addressing and providing solutions for data needs, such as setting up a database and dashboard tools;
      ii. Designing, customizing, and creating database and dashboard solutions that fit the needs of the organization/entity; and
      iii. Developing training materials, as well as conducting trainings for staff who will be responsible for the maintenance of the database.
   Emphasis will be placed on firms who have experience working within a MEL context and/or who have worked with investment funds in a similar capacity.

   c. **Management Plan/Staffing Structure (30 points)** – Points for this section will be based on the qualifications of proposed staff, clear delineation of the roles and

responsibilities of each proposed staff and each proposed firm (if firms are partnering), and the demonstrated efficacy and clarity of the management and staffing plan to ensure quality deliverables on time and effective coordination and communication with INVEST and USAID. Proposals should provide a clear management plan in narrative form for the development, review, and submission of all associated deliverables, including a proposed milestone schedule, which outlines a basic framework of expected deliverables and a timeline for submission of each, including time for regular meetings, review and feedback on drafts as appropriate should be included. If the offeror is submitting a proposal along with partners, the proposal should describe the nature of the arrangement (i.e. added technical value), the division of labor among the partners, and the appropriate management controls to ensure successful delivery. The offeror should demonstrate their proposed staff's knowledge and experience working with data and data-related tools providing customized solutions to clients.

2. **Price Proposal:** Price will be evaluated separately from the technical approach, with due consideration for realism, price reasonableness, and allowability consistent with US government cost principles. Evaluation for this section will be dependent upon all information presented by the Offeror in their deliverable table, budget with cost breakdowns, and any relevant supporting cost information, as well as its alignment with the proposed technical approach. Budgets will be analyzed for cost reasonableness of the deliverable prices as well as the cost build-up.

IV. **Offeror's Agreement with Terms and Conditions: Please visit the [INVEST Procurement Forecast](#) website for RFP Terms and Conditions.**

The completion of all RFP requirements in accordance with the instructions in this RFP and submission to DAI of the technical and price proposals will constitute an offer and indicate the Offeror's agreement to the terms and conditions in this RFP and any attachments hereto. DAI is not required to accept and/or evaluate proposals that do not conform to the instructions of the RFP, and additionally, DAI may reject all proposals and not award a subcontract for this RFP. DAI reserves the right to award a subcontract without discussion and/or negotiation; however, DAI also reserves the right to conduct discussions and/or negotiations, which among other things may require an Offeror(s) to revise its proposal (technical and/or price). By submitting an offer, Offerors agree to comply with the general terms and conditions for an award, including Representations and Certifications compliance. Offerors must provide full, accurate, and complete information in response to this solicitation. By submitting an offer, Offerors certify that they have not/will not attempt to bribe or make any payment to DAI employees in return for preference. Issuance of this RFP in no way obligates DAI to award a subcontract, nor does it commit DAI to pay any costs incurred by the Offeror in preparing and submitting the proposal. DAI reserves the right to award a subcontract to one organization or to issue multiple awards to different organizations based on the results of our evaluation.

Thank you,
DAI INVEST Procurement and Partnerships Team
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