
President's report on a proposed grant under the global/regional window to the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) for the Mainstreaming Nutrition: Improving the Impact of IFAD Investments on the Nutritional Quality of Diets Project

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Action: The Executive Board is invited to approve the recommendation contained in paragraph 12.

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I. Background and compliance with the IFAD Regular Grants Policy

1. The Mainstreaming Nutrition: Improving the Impact of IFAD Investments on the Nutritional Quality of Diets Project addresses a critical challenge in agricultural and rural development, namely local food systems that cannot provide nutritious and healthy diets to the most vulnerable people. Poor diets and inadequate access to nutritious foods limit the effectiveness of broader development efforts, hindering health, productivity and economic growth. While IFAD invests in projects to improve livelihoods and agricultural systems in these countries, ensuring that these investments translate into tangible improvements in nutrition requires a dedicated and coordinated effort. This grant will tailor interventions to the specific needs of each host project and country context (Bangladesh, Benin, Pakistan and Rwanda), allowing them to enhance the nutrition outcomes.
2. The project is in line with the goal and objectives of the IFAD Regular Grants Policy (2021).¹ It aligns with strategic objective 1 of the policy by leveraging better impact on the ground for IFAD's programme of work, including through improvement of in-country capacity for greater sustainability of benefits. While IFAD-funded projects offer a platform to support governments in leveraging investments for positive nutrition impact, intentional integration of nutrition-focused strategies is essential for sustainable results. Poverty reduction alone does not guarantee improved nutrition. Increased income does not translate automatically into better nutrition if nutritious foods are unavailable, unaffordable or unsafe, or if people lack knowledge about nutritious food choices, storage and preparation. This grant addresses the gap by prioritizing a shift in understanding and commitment among government and private sector stakeholders. It aims to encourage these stakeholders to design and demand action to produce and promote nutritious foods, committing their own resources in investment plans.
3. The recipient was identified through direct selection and approved on 2 July 2025 by the Operational Strategy and Policy Guidance Committee (OSC). The Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition (GAIN) was selected for its strong leadership and position in the global partnership on nutrition. GAIN's mission is to increase access to healthier diets, especially for the most vulnerable populations.

II. The proposed project

4. The overall goal of the project is to enable greater access to and consumption of more nutritious and safe foods for rural people affected by or at risk of malnutrition, contributing to improved nutrition outcomes in the targeted countries. This will be achieved through three key objectives, each designed to tackle key challenges: (i) governments must understand the complexities of food systems to prioritize and sequence actions, aligning policies and investments across sectors for nutrition benefits; (ii) public and private sector actors need alignment, capacity and incentives to deliver healthier diets; (iii) securing sufficient national and international resources to support nutrition-focused actions remains a persistent

¹ [EB 2021/132/R.3.](#)

challenge. Ultimately, the work will contribute to transforming food systems for healthier and sustainable diets.

5. The proposed project will focus on four selected countries from the Asia and the Pacific, East and Southern Africa and West and Central Africa regions: Bangladesh, Benin, Pakistan and Rwanda. These countries were chosen based on their potential for impact, a validated national food system pathway and a clear need to strengthen capacity to deliver better nutrition outcomes for vulnerable small-scale producers through the food system.
6. The project will complement and build on existing efforts in the targeted countries. It will be hosted by selected nutrition-sensitive projects in each country and the targeting strategy will be aligned to those of the hosted project.
7. The project will be implemented over 30 months and will have the following components: (i) policy engagement, which aims to collaborate with governments to strengthen food system pathways by aligning policies, analysing budgets, developing costed action plans, creating data solutions and tracking mechanisms, and improving rural development projects; (ii) support for micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) focused on connecting farmers and MSMEs to resources like technology and finance to boost nutritious food supply; (iii) schools and social protection, centered on co-designing sustainable programmes that link local farmers and MSMEs to demand while building demand for safe, nutritious foods; and (iv) knowledge product co-development, involving stakeholder collaboration to create and disseminate evidence-based approaches and models for broader application in food system transformation.

III. Expected outcomes/outputs

8. The project is expected to have the following outcomes/outputs: (i) stronger implementation of IFAD-funded nutrition-sensitive projects through prioritized actions and investments; (ii) improved access to business and finance for smallholders and MSMEs to expand the supply of nutritious foods; (iii) increased value of planned public procurement from local agrifood systems for safe and nutritious foods; and (iv) improved access to healthier diets for beneficiaries through government design and investment, private sector support and linkage strengthening between local farmers/MSMEs and social protection programmes.

IV. Implementation arrangements

9. GAIN will be responsible for the implementation of the project. A GAIN team comprising staff in global and country offices will lead the inception processes of engagement, diagnosis and country level work planning. During the main phase of implementation, teams will be established in each country under the overall coordination and oversight of GAIN's global policy team. IFAD country teams will play a supporting role by ensuring alignment with country strategies and operations, facilitating access to national-level stakeholders. They will also facilitate coordination to ensure that the grant's activities complement existing IFAD projects and initiatives (more details to be provided after the inception phase during implementation).
10. There are no deviations from the standard procedures for financial reporting and audits.

V. Indicative project costs and financing

11. The total project cost is US\$2,400,000. The project will be financed by IFAD (80 per cent) with GAIN cofinancing (20 per cent). The cofinancing will consist of in-kind contributions, primarily in GAIN staff time. This work uses tools and expertise from GAIN's Nourishing Food Pathways programme and Food Systems Transformation Accelerator. In Bangladesh and Rwanda, in particular, the

collaboration with IFAD will be embedded in existing programmes – the Diversified Resilient Agriculture Programme for Improved Food and Nutrition Security (RAINS) and the Growth for Climate Resilient and Environmental Entrepreneurship and Nutrition (GREEN) and GAIN's Combating Malnutrition in Rwanda Through Sustainable Food Systems Programme. These complementarities will provide efficiencies and contributions to IFAD's work in these countries.

Table 1

Costs by component and financier
(Thousands of United States dollars)

| <i>Activities/components</i> | <i>IFAD</i> | <i>GAIN</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|----------------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| Inception phase | 256 | 40 | 296 |
| 1. Policy engagement | 506 | 114 | 620 |
| 2. MSME support | 386 | 133 | 519 |
| 3. Schools and social protection | 310 | 50 | 360 |
| 4. Dissemination | 190 | 3 | 193 |
| Project coordination | 352 | 60 | 412 |
| Total | 2 000 | 400 | 2 400 |

Table 2

Costs by expenditure category and financier
(Thousands of United States dollars)

| <i>Expenditure category</i> | <i>IFAD</i> | <i>GAIN</i> | <i>Total</i> |
|-----------------------------|--------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1. Salaries and allowances | 711 | 230 | 941 |
| 2. Consultancies | 602 | 99 | 701 |
| 3. Travel and allowances | 108 | - | 108 |
| 4. Workshops | 194 | - | 194 |
| 5. Operational costs | 239 | 19 | 258 |
| 6. Indirect | 146 | 52 | 198 |
| Total | 2 000 | 400 | 2 400 |

VI. Recommendation

12. I recommend that the Executive Board approve the proposed grant in terms of the following resolution:

RESOLVED: that the Fund, in order to finance, in part, the Mainstreaming Nutrition: Improving the Impact of IFAD Investments on the Nutritional Quality of Diets Project, shall provide a grant of two million United States dollars (US\$2,000,000) to GAIN for thirty months upon such terms and conditions as shall be substantially in accordance with the terms and conditions presented to the Executive Board herein.

Alvaro Lario
President

Results-based logical framework

| Results hierarchy | Indicators | | | Means of verification | | | Assumptions |
|---|---|----------|---|---|-------------------|-----------|---|
| | Name | Baseline | End target | Source | Freq. | Response. | |
| Goal: improved nutrition outcomes in the targeted countries | N/A not measured | | | | | | |
| Development objective: Greater access to and consumption of more nutritious and safe foods for rural people affected by or at risk of malnutrition in the targeted countries | N/A not measured | | | | | | |
| Outcome Component 1: Public policy and investment decisions strengthened | i) number of action plans for food system transformation adopted ii) number of budget allocation changes made or officially planned iii) number of changes made to governance structures in support of more coherent approaches | 0 | In each country at least one for i, ii, and iii (jointly) | Document review (of policies, budgets, etc) | At end of project | GAIN | Provision of tools, information, and technical support will be sufficient to result in at least one these changes being made, despite competing demands on resources and political economy concerns. |
| Outputs Component 1 | Number of tools applied to diagnose strengths and weaknesses of current policies/approaches | 0 | In each country, at least 2 | Document review (of completed tools) | Annually | GAIN | Tools prove relevant and applicable in the four countries, data needed to apply them are available, stakeholders are sufficiently engaged in process to ensure high-quality results |
| | Number of stakeholders reached with the results of above tool applications | 0 | In each country, at least 30 | Project monitoring data (e.g., attendance sheets at trainings and events) | Annually | GAIN | Stakeholders interested in engaging with the results of the tool applications and using them to improve their food system approaches |
| Outcome Component 2: Capacity of smallholders and/or agri-food SMEs increased | Share of MSMEs/farmers that report either increased capacity or increased access to resources (including networks / collaborations), or both | N/A | At least 40% of participating MSMEs/farmers | MSME / farmer survey | At end of project | IFAD | Capacity building and link-forming activities are well designed and executed such that they reach MSMEs/ farmers with appropriate, understandable content and/or increase access to resources (including networks/collaborations) |

| Results hierarchy | Indicators | | | Means of verification | | | Assumptions |
|--|---|----------|--------------------|---|-------------------|-----------|--|
| | Name | Baseline | End target | Source | Freq. | Response. | |
| Outputs Component 2 | Number of MSMEs/ farmers directly reached with project capacity building of link-forming activities | 0 | 200 | Project monitoring data (e.g., attendance sheets at trainings and events) | Annually | GAIN | Farmers/ MSMEs interested in engaging with the projects and available to participate in activities |
| | Number of financing and capacity building ecosystem players (e.g., banks, enterprise support organisations) engaged in the work and connected with local MSMEs | 0 | 10 in each country | Project monitoring data (e.g., attendance sheets at trainings and events) | Annually | GAIN | Financing / capacity building players interested in engaging with the projects and available to participate in activities |
| Outcome Component 3: Public procurement better able to sustainably support local supply and demand for safe, nutritious foods | Number of countries in which at least one public procurement program has improved its sourcing of nutritious, safe, locally produced food | 0 | Four countries | Procurement data | At end of project | IFAD | Capacity building and planning activities are well designed and executed such that they reach procurement decision-makers with appropriate, understandable content; decision-makers able to act on that content to make changes amid their existing constraints |
| | Number of schools/ social protection providers reached with capacity building and planning services | 0 | 40 | Project monitoring data (e.g., attendance sheets at trainings and events) | Annually | GAIN | Procurement decision-makers interested in engaging with the project and available to attend events |
| | Number of best practices for and/or case studies of strengthening local supply and demand for safe, nutritious foods through public procurement identified, documented, and translated into actionable guidance | 0 | 10 | Review of documents | Annually | GAIN | Best practices for and/or case studies of strengthening local supply and demand for safe, nutritious foods through public procurement exist within the target countries or similar contexts; they can be identified, documented, and translated into actionable guidance |
| Outcome Component 4: Enhanced learning on supporting food system transformation | Number of people reached with publications / events related to how to support food system transformation | 0 | 500 | Project monitoring data (e.g., attendance sheets at trainings and events) | Annually | GAIN | Events are well attended, publications are read |
| Outputs Component 4 | Number of publications and/or events produced | 0 | 30 | Project monitoring data (e.g., | Annually | GAIN | Partners are able to identify relevant topics on which learnings can be |

| Results hierarchy | Indicators | | | Means of verification | | | Assumptions |
|--|---|----------|--------------------------|---|----------|-----------|---|
| | Name | Baseline | End target | Source | Freq. | Response. | |
| | | | | publications review, events records) | | | shared; relevant forums for organising events emerge; events go forward as planned. |
| Outputs contributing to multiple outcomes | Number of local level multi-stakeholder platforms strengthened or initiated | 0 | 1 (in each country) one | Project monitoring data (meeting records, etc.) | Annually | GAIN | Existing platforms open and receptive to strengthening, with opportunities for improvement; stakeholders willing to participate in new platforms where needed |
| | Number of feedback and learning frameworks in place | 0 | 1 | Document review | Annually | GAIN | Stakeholders able to achieve consensus on appropriate approach for feedback and learning |