EOI: Machine Learning Datasets for Better Healthcare Outcomes

Questions and Answers

UPDATED – 20 July 2021

1.Q	**Does Lacuna Fund have any preference for projects that seek to extract existing data or for projects that pilot models for collecting new data?**
1.A	Lacuna Fund aims to support dataset collection, aggregation, augmentation, or maintenance efforts that allow for more equitable and accessible machine learning applications. The Fund does not explicitly have a preference between the two approaches noted. Please review the Efficiency and other selection criteria under "Selection Process and Evaluation Criteria" on page 4 of the EOI.
2.Q	**Can collaborations include private sector partners, i.e. equipment manufacturers or software vendors?**
2.A	Yes, collaborations may include private sector organizations.
3.Q	**I have a question about the EOI for Lacuna Fund. Once we submit the EOI, how long we will hear back the invitation for the full proposal? Also if invited, when the full proposal will be due?**
3.A	Applicants should expect to hear whether they have been invited to submit a full proposal approximately 6 weeks following the close of submissions. If invited to participate in the full grant application, full proposals will be due approximately 4 weeks from date of notification.
4.Q	**We are interested in submitting an EOI in relation to the '' Machine Learning Datasets for Better Healthcare Outcomes'' open funding opportunity. Our question is; In LDCs there are challenges with data collection, storage, and utilization for health, and as of such not many health facilities or institutions have properly organized data for ML; Does this opportunity allow for new data collection to create data sets that will be used to generate algorithms to aid decision-making for the management of health conditions?**
4.A	Yes, it does. Please refer to Section 3: Purpose and Need for further details on the scope of allowed projects.
5.Q	**We are the main centre [non-profit entity- research institution] of this project and we would collaborate with [additional research institution]. According to the EOI Lacuna Fund eligibility norms the fund will be transferred to the main study site but based on**

	Foreign contribution regulation Act of India norms it is not possible to transfer the fund to the collaborating site from our side. The FCRA does not allow a subcontract of research grants. I am writing to enquire if the funds can be directly transferred to the collaborating site?
5.A	In exceptional circumstances, such as this one in which the lead institution is prohibited by law from subcontracting for research grants, funds could be directly transferred to the collaborating site. The collaborating site will be required to undergo due diligence review and enter into a contract with the Secretariat.
6.Q	**I am wondering how long the duration of the fund will be? Also, is it possible to have collaborators from outside the US?**
6.A	Yes, projects may have collaborators outside of the United States. See also the evaluation criterion related to participatory approach (page 4 of the solicitation). For project timelines, see Question 17 in this document.
7.Q	**I would like to know if we are required to submit our CVs for both project leader and other partners when we submit the EOI application. If so, where are we supposed to upload them?.**
7.A	Applicants are required to submit CVs for the project leader and key partners. There is a second page of the project information form that includes space to do so. At the top of the page under "Task Instructions", you can access a full copy of the form for reference.
8.Q	Is [local branch of international medical organization] eligible to apply for this fund?
8.A	**Please find eligibility criteria under Section 2 of the EOI solicitation. Recognizing that definitions of different types of organizations vary by jurisdiction, please note that Lacuna Fund aims to extend eligibility to the widest range of organizations possible.**
9.Q	**My team and I are working on the Lacuna EH-EOI and are unsure of the CV format including the page length and if there is suggested template to use (e.g NIH Biosktech). Is there a stipulation for the CV format? Should we upload an NIH-type Biosktech for all the project members and collaborators?**
9.A	There is no required format for CVs. Please use whatever format is most convenient to you.
10.Q	**For the budget, will the funding cover computational infrastructure for Data curation and archiving, such as desktop, a local network attached storage (NAS) device, and support for network access to upload data from distributed healthcare facilities to the designated local NAS and from this NAS to a secure cloud-based repository?**
10.A	Further information on allowed costs will be provided for teams invited to submit full proposals. For past Lacuna Fund calls for proposals, allowed costs have included equipment and computing costs directly linked to the project.
11.Q	**Can you please provide the Fund's indirect rate? We're working on our project budget for the application, and didn't see this information on the website.**

11.A	For this call for proposals, indirect costs are limited to 12.5% for institutions based in the U.S., and 15-20% for institutions in low- and middle-income countries.
12.Q	**Also will the IP of existing datasets (unlabeled) have to be transferred and how would we navigate open sourcing and IP with sensitive data and our own data policies.**
12.A	Datasets and related IP supported by Lacuna Fund are subject to our IP Policy, which is available on our website. For projects that make use of existing datasets, a letter of support from the institution that controls the IP indicating an understanding of Lacuna Fund's IP policy and willingness to make the dataset available under its terms of Lacuna's IP Policy be required. In relation to sensitive data, the Fund recognizes concerns related to health data, privacy, and ethics. The full proposal will include ample space to discuss a proposed licensing plan that maximizes potential for responsible downstream use while protecting privacy and minimizing potential for harm. Legal and licensing costs are allowed costs for Lacuna supported projects.
13.Q	**We are an independent non-profit research institute and global hub developing and deploying AI solutions for social good across domains. We also work closely with public authorities to advise them on AI and ML and help them use the technology for their programs and social good. We have developed AI solutions in Healthcare and Agriculture. Through our own programs and partnerships with organizations such as [public and private sector organizations] we have datasets that have been used for model training, testing and validation. These datasets will be expanded and need additional annotation - would the current call accept proposals for annotation and addition to existing datasets?**
13.A	The current call invites proposals to unlock, expand, annotate, or aggregate datasets as well as to create new datasets. Please see the Need portion of the solicitation, in particular the discussion of existing vs. new datasets on page 7, for more details.
14.Q	**Can you comment on whether a project on inequities in organ donation would be a good fit for this call? We have access to some data that we may be able to make partially public, but we would need to check with the providers first.**
14.A	The intention of this call for proposals is to offer a broad scope for applicants to define projects that they believe will have benefit to the society at large and specific communities in which they work. We are interested in seeing a wide range of ideas, and thus did not want to limit the call to a handful of specific medical conditions.
15.Q	**The page limit is 4 pages, does it count the cover page and the reference page?**
15.A	Please see Section 4 of the solicitation (Expression of Interest Information, page 7): "Please limit your expression of interest to 4 pages not including references, with 2.5 cm margins and a minimum of 11-point font. Appendices or proposal narrative material beyond 4 pages may not be reviewed." A cover page is not required but would not be included in the limit.

16.Q	**Should the budget be part of the main EOI or it can be sent on a separate document?**
16.A	Please see Section 4 of the solicitation (Expression of Interest Information, page 8) for budget and timeline requirements. Please note that the EOI requires only a brief overview of your total budget and timeline.
17.Q	**What is the maximum/minimum time allowed for the project to take place?**
17.A	The maximum duration of projects is 24 months. Respondents should assume a project start date in December 2021 or January 2022.
18.Q	**Is there any preference to the writing of EOI? like the line spacing, font type, and font size?**
18.A	See Question 11.
19.Q	**One question we have is whether an assessment of the health data available across our territory and what needs exist a set of recommendations would be an acceptable proposal.**
19.A	Please review Section 3: Purpose and Need of the EOI solicitation for more details on the scope of supported activities.
20.Q	**Eligibility states that an application "Be either a non-profit entity, research institution, for-profit social enterprise, or a team of such organizations." The [university foundation] is a non-profit for [public research institution]. We would like to know how you define research institution. I realize our non-profit may apply, but it would be in concert with the University.**
20.A	Recognizing that organizational structures vary by national context, Lacuna Fund considers research institutions to include public and private universities as well as other organizations primarily intended to support research activities.
21.Q	**Was wondering if I can send the EOI as an individual and later send it through my institution if we are finally invited to send a full proposal. I am just considering the protocol involved in getting this done considering the limited time before the deadline for the EOI.**
21.A	As noted in Section 2: Eligibility of the EOI solicitation, individuals must be affiliated with an institution to be eligible to apply. However, the EOI submission does not require a formal letter of support from the institution. Please also note that the EOI submission form requires the applicant to certify that you have the ability to obtain required institutional and national approvals required to conduct the research within an expedient timeline, as well as the ability for the affiliated institution to undergo and complete required institutional due diligence. The approval process may be conducted in parallel with grant application, if necessary.
22.Q	**One of the focus area stated is chronic diseases: can a project focus on a specific chronic disease (e.g. diabetes)?; would a project addressing a other health outcome such as**

		maternal and neonatal health outcomes (e.g. preterm birth, birth defect etc) be considered less priority for this grant?
22.A		See Question 14.
23.Q		**It is not clear whether proposed projects should focus only on collecting data (establishing a database) or also evaluation/analysis of this data to provide solutions. Please kindly clarify.**
23.A		Lacuna Fund supports the collection, augmentation, release, and maintenance of datasets for the training and evaluation of machine learning models. Development of machine learning tools beyond sample models or tools with direct relevance to the dataset is generally not supported.
24.Q		**Would establishing an ongoing surveillance database meet the scope of this call?**
24.A		Given the sustainability evaluation criteria (see page 4 of the solicitation) and the project-based nature of Lacuna funding, if an ongoing effort is proposed for Lacuna Fund support, there should be a clear pathway to sustainability following the end of Lacuna support (See Question 17 for more details related to timeline)
25.Q		**Would a proposal be disadvantaged if the project team does not have a data scientist?**
25.A		Please see the "Quality" evaluation criteria (page 4 of the EOI solicitation).
26.Q		**My applicant organisation is a very young NGO with limited tract record of managing grants. Does this reduce our chances of being successful?**
26.A		Only organizational qualifications to conduct the proposed work will be assessed during the selection process. Selected projects will be required to undergo a due diligence check.
27.Q		**Can more clarification be given on the meaning of the term "dataset labeling"?**
27.A		Dataset labeling relates to manually associating specific attributes with data for use in supervised machine learning models.