

EOI: Agricultural Datasets in Sub-Saharan Africa

Questions and Answers

Updated on 23rd August (0.Q and 0.A)

0.Q	1. We are a non-governmental organization that is advocating for the transformation of rural agriculture globally, how can we share this vision with your organization?
0.A	1. Lacuna Fund aims to support training and evaluation data that allow for robust machine learning applications, from personalized information on fertilizers and regenerative agriculture practices for farmers, to better information about crop yields and food security to inform decision-makers worldwide. Proposals aligned to this objective are welcome. Please note that Lacuna Fund’s support focuses on the collection, augmentation, or maintenance of machine learning data.
1.Q	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Can we solely rely on secondary datasets (which are not public yet), or must we collect primary data for the purpose of this call? 2. If we collect primary data, should this be focused solely on supporting the generation and labelling of datasets or can this be expanded to cover the collection of more quantitative data (e.g., through expert interviews)? 3. What do you mean by "be sufficiently stable to ensure the sustainability of the dataset" as part of the eligibility criteria? 4. The link to "how to create an account and access the portal via SurveyMonkey" doesn't seem to be working. Is this something that can be rectified quickly? 5. When will the portal be open for us to submit our EOI? 6. Should ideas be focused to addressing one or multiple sub-themes within soil, water, crop, livestock management, or other? 7. Would it be possible to share the templates that we should use to complete our ideas at EOI stage?
1.A	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lacuna Fund supports both primary and secondary datasets. Where release of existing data represents the most cost-effective way to provide training or evaluation data for machine learning applications of high social value, secondary datasets are welcome. Please note that datasets supported by Lacuna Fund must be made publicly accessible and discoverable and refer to Lacuna Fund’s IP Policy for details. Tools that enable data sharing while protecting proprietary data such as FarmStack may be used to meet these requirements. 2. Launa Fund currently supports the generation, labelling and expansion of datasets with clear machine learning use cases. However, creativity and innovation is encouraged within the focus areas. 3. The organization making the application should be able to prove its strength and

	<p>stability aimed at ensuring sustainability of the datasets long after lapse of the grant support. This should be demonstrated through a proposed model, which can be community based, for the maintenance and long term sustainability of the datasets. Additionally, where appropriate, team composition, infrastructural establishment, partnerships and/or previous similar projects could also be important indicators of sustainability of the proposed dataset.</p> <p>4. The link is currently functional. Please contact the Secretariat if you continue to experience challenges.</p> <p>5. The portal is already open at https://meridian.smapply.io/prog/lacuna_ag_2021/</p> <p>6. It is up to applicants to determine whether to address one or multiple sub-themes. The most important consideration is to produce a quality machine-learning ready dataset that will add value for end users.</p> <p>7. We do not have a specific template however, the relevant sections required in the application are highlighted in the call for expression of Interest.</p>
2.Q	I am an agribusiness Entrepreneur who is into crop and seed crop production in Ghana. I am seeking an honored assistance in this regard to your funding program whether I could be eligible for funding by your organization.
2.A	Kindly visit https://lacunafund.org/apply/ for detailed eligibility criteria for this call for expression of interest. We will be guided with the listed criteria at the selection stage.
3.Q	Are Farmers' Cooperatives also catered for in relation to the above quotation by your fund
3.A	Our eligibility requires that you be either a non-profit entity, research institution, for-profit social enterprise, or a team of such organizations. Farmers cooperatives should fall under for-profit social enterprise and hence should be eligible.
4.Q	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is the expected size of an agricultural plot that will be considered viable for a reliable data set? 2. Is this a project to establish a data standard for future datasets? 3. Is this a project to confirm feasibility of obtaining datasets? 4. What countries in sub-Saharan Africa are out of scope? 5. Is the method of data capture in a proposal evaluated? 6. Finally, is the project limited to English speaking countries only? 7. Is a project written and completed in French an option?
4.A	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The focus of the call is on smallholder farming in sub-Saharan Africa, typically farms below five hectares. However, proposals are expected to justify the reliability of the proposed dataset and collection methods within the context of use cases and the ability to create path for future research. 2. No. 3. No. 4. All sub-Saharan Africa countries are eligible. 5. The method is evaluated in the context of the evaluation criteria listed in the EOI solicitation document. 6. No, the call is open to English and French. The geographic scope of work conducted is

	<p>limited to sub-Saharan Africa. 7. Yes</p>
<p>5.Q</p>	<p>1. I just wanted to confirm that an organization can apply for the 2nd round of funding in agriculture, even though we received funding through the 1st round? 2. Are there any restrictions we should be aware of as a former recipient? 3. Also, our organization is currently registered in Africa. Our entire team is in Africa. However, in September we will be looking to register the organization in the US for fundraising purposes. Will that make the organization ineligible?</p>
<p>5.A</p>	<p>1. Applicants that received funding in the 1st round are eligible to apply again in this round. 2. EOIs from former recipients will be evaluated based on the criteria outlined in this call for expressions of interest. 3. Please refer to the organizational eligibility criteria in the call for EOIs. Applicants must be an organization headquartered in Africa or have a substantial partnership with an organization(s) headquartered in Africa. Regional presence in Africa is not a sufficient condition, but a substantial partnership with those headquartered in Africa is.</p>