

Expressions of Interest: Machine Learning Datasets for Language in Sub-Saharan Africa - 2021

Questions and Answers

0.Q	Does the primary institution need to be based in Africa?
0.A	<p>Please find a full list of eligibility criteria on page 3 of the EOI solicitation.</p> <p>To be eligible for funding, organizations must be headquartered in or have a substantial partnership with an organization in sub-Saharan Africa.</p>
1.Q	Can one organization or group of organizations submit more than one application?
1.A	Yes, an organization or team of organizations may submit more than one application.
2.Q	Is an EOI mentor assigned automatically or does an applicant have to initiate?
2.A	In collaboration with Masakhane, Lacuna Fund invites interested applicants to apply to be paired with a mentor. Please apply for the mentorship program here as soon as possible.
3.Q	Are the relationships between project partners expected to be built by the time of writing the EOI? If not, how much time is allocated between submitting the EOI and the proposal to allow for building relationships with potential partners?
3.A	Lacuna Fund recognizes the value of new and innovative collaborations to achieving the goals set out in Section 3 of the EOI document. All project partnerships do not need to be finalized by the time of the EOI submission. If selected, applicants will have 4-6 weeks from the Request for Proposal announcement to submit a full proposal.
4.Q	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. When should we expect feedback after submitting the EOI? 2. Once an EOI is successful, when is the deadline for full proposal submission?
4.A	Applicants can expect to receive an update on their submission in late January. If selected, applicants will have 4-6 weeks from the Request for Proposal announcement to submit a full proposal.
5.Q	Is there an EOI template and proposal template that first-time applicants can follow?
5.A	A detailed description of application questions and formatting instructions is available in Section 4 of the EOI solicitation .

	Applicants do not need to follow a particular template, as long as the submission includes all required information and follows the formatting instructions.
6.Q	Can we innovate around data collection efforts?
6.A	<p>Please review the explanation of purpose and need in Section 3 of the EOI solicitation.</p> <p>This EOI's intent is to develop open and accessible training and evaluation datasets for machine learning applications. EOIs may include collecting new data, and we welcome projects that take innovative approaches.</p>
7.Q	What will be the duration of the project?
7.A	Projects must be completed within 12 months of its start date. Projects should anticipate a start date in April to May 2022. Further guidance will be provided for invited proposals.
8.Q	Where is the CC-BY 4.0 International license per Lacuna Fund's IP Policy?
8.A	Please find the Intellectual Property Policy linked at the bottom of the Lacuna Fund "Governance" page. Also see the CC-BY 4.0 International license.
9.Q	Do we need to have international collaboration with the US or Europe? Or can we do a project only with local collaboration?
9.A	<p>Please find details about organizational eligibility in Section 2 of the EOI solicitation.</p> <p>Organizations that are headquartered in sub-Saharan Africa do not need to have collaboration or partnerships outside the region.</p>
11.Q	<p>Is it appropriate to formulate a project with two objectives: First, developing a web-based platform for data collection; second, developing initial datasets using it?</p> <p>The development of the platform would signify costs in application and infrastructure development, not directly related to the dataset building itself.</p>
11.A	<p>Lacuna Fund principally supports the creation, annotation, augmentation, release, and maintenance of datasets for the training and evaluation of machine learning models. However, the Technical Advisory Panel recognizes the value in creating tools that allow for more efficient data collection and/or annotation as long as the project results in a publicly available dataset. Per the Selection Criteria (see "Efficiency" in Section 2 of the EOI solicitation), projects should not duplicate already openly available resources.</p> <p>Please note that software created using Lacuna support must be licensed subject to Lacuna Fund's IP Policy. For code inventions (software), the Policy specifies a permissive open-source license such as Apache 2.0.</p> <p>Please find the Intellectual Property Policy linked at the bottom of the Lacuna Fund "Governance" page.</p>

12.Q	May I apply as a mentor while also preparing a grant proposal for submission?
12.A	No, mentors should not be preparing an Expression of Interest for submission in this round.
13.Q	Would developing an inter-glossary be an ideal project under this EOI? We intend to develop a terminological resource as part of a financial empowerment program. We hope to fill gaps in local language translations of financial applications.
13.A	<p>Please review the selection criteria in Section 2 and explanation of need in Section 3 of the EOI solicitation.</p> <p>Please note that projects must develop datasets for machine learning applications. Towards this goal, EOIs may include collecting, annotating, and/or releasing new or existing data; increasing the usability of NLP technology in low- and middle-income contexts; and creating small, higher-quality benchmark data for NLP tasks in low-resource African languages. We recognize the importance of datasets that would create significant impact regardless of the number of speakers of the included language.</p>
14.Q	<p>The two questions are regarding the number of pages for the EOI as stated: <i>“Please limit your expression of interest to 4 pages not including references, Appendices or proposal narrative material beyond 4 pages will not be reviewed.”</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In explicit terms does this statement means the total number of EOI should not exceed eight pages (four pages for the proposal narratives and four pages for the Appendices)? 2. Also, is there any penalty like the outright rejection of EOI if it exceeds the maximum number of pages stated?
14.A	No, the Expression of Interest is limited to four pages generally, with an allowance for references. Documents that greatly exceed the allowed length may be deemed ineligible at the discretion of the Secretariat. Applicants are encouraged to concisely convey an overview of their projects. If the applicant is invited to submit a full proposal, that will be the appropriate venue to provide further detail.
15.Q	We intend to submit EOI for a large, complex project. Do the Lacuna Fund support including the cost of publication of the result of the project in academic journals and conferences?
15.A	Lacuna Fund supports reasonable costs for open access publication of results. Lacuna Fund generally does not support costs for conference attendance.