Our voice on data

Why Lacuna Fund?

- A lack of unbiased, labeled datasets that address real-world problems is putting the benefits of ML out of reach for many.
- Often, labeled data required to build AI systems don’t exist outside North America and Europe.
- The result: systematic inaccuracies or harmful outcomes for people of color, women, and other marginalized populations.

A lacuna is a gap, or a missing portion of a manuscript.

Mobilizing labeled datasets that solve urgent problems in low- and middle-income contexts globally.

The Fund

- Lacuna Fund is the world's first collaborative effort in this space
- We support the creation, expansion, and maintenance of datasets that allow ML tools to better tackle urgent problems.
- Though our focus is on datasets, we recognize that improving equitable outcomes requires more, including diversifying the data science talent pool, de-biasing existing data, and addressing power imbalances in the field

Datasets

Datasets will:

- Be open source (with very limited exceptions)
- Follow ethics and privacy best practices
- Be locally developed and owned
- Be of interest to ML communities broadly (address multiple problems)

Principles

- Accessibility
- Equity
- Ethics
- Participatory Approach
- Quality
- Transformational Impact

Funding

The Fund uses an open solicitation process: Requests for Proposals in different domain areas

Lacuna Fund only funds dataset creation, expansion, or maintenance.

Process

The **Steering Committee**, with the support of the **Secretariat** and the input of data science communities, determines domain areas for funding.

Within each domain, the **Technical Advisory Pa**nel determines priority needs and authors the Purpose and Needs section of the RFP.

Applicants make a compelling case for a dataset and what applications it will enable.

What's Next?

- **Agriculture Q&A posted 3 August**
- **Agriculture RFP closes 3 September**
- **Language RFP opens in September (exact date TBA)**

Fall – Steering Committee meets, assesses lessons learned

Future RFPs in Spring 2021 TBA

Founding Funders

The ROCKEFELLER FOUNDATION

Google.org

IDRC | CRDI

International Development Research Centre

Centre de recherches pour le développement international

Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development

FAIR FORWARD

Artificial Intelligence for all.

Thank You!