Lacuna Fund Request for Qualifications

Machine Learning Datasets for Sexual and Reproductive Health

8 August 2022

Are you a data scientist interested in collaboration and making machine learning more equitable and accessible to underserved communities? Are you a facilitator with an interest in data science, machine learning, and how AI can be used for social good? A little bit of both? We want to work with you!

Lacuna Fund is a collaborative effort to provide data scientists, researchers, and social entrepreneurs in low- and middle-income contexts globally with the resources they need to produce datasets for machine learning that address urgent problems in their communities. Meridian Institute, a non-profit organization, serves as secretariat and fiscal sponsor for Lacuna Fund.

Following five successful calls for proposals in the areas of agriculture, languages, and health, we are preparing to issue a call for proposals to support African data scientists and researchers to create, expand, and maintain machine learning datasets to improve sexual and reproductive health.

Scope of Work

Meridian seeks an individual with experience in collaborative problem-solving and an interest in equity in data science to provide support for an upcoming Lacuna Fund call for proposals. The level of effort will average 20 hours/month between September 2022 – August 2023, with as few as 5 hours in some months and as many as 40 hours during peak periods. This person will work with a team of professionals and be responsible for the following deliverables:

- A summary of research on key issues, opportunities, and needs for machine learning-ready datasets in the field of sexual and reproductive health (SRH).
- A report highlighting themes from interviews with experts and key stakeholders on the SRH and machine learning landscape; and gaps and needs in ML datasets in this space.
- A list of proposed Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) members.
- Agenda and materials for TAP meetings.
- A Request for Proposals (RFP).
- Webinar introducing the RFP to prospective applicants.
- Question and answer file for the RFP.
- A list of proposals eligible for partner and TAP review.
- List of projects selected for funding.
- Text for notification to all applicants, both those selected for funding and those not selected

Subcontractor Requirements

REQUIRED CHARACTERISTICS—Successful applicants must have:

- Academic or work experience in one or more of the following domains: facilitation and collaborative problem-solving, machine learning, sexual and reproductive health.
- Ability to facilitate discussion of different perspectives towards a common objective.
- Strong written and oral communication skills. Ability to synthesize information efficiently and accurately and produce high-quality documents, including memos, meeting summaries, reports, etc.
- Ability to synthesize and communicate technical concepts to non-technical audiences.
- Ability to work independently by setting priorities within own work stream, identify and proactively address problems and work to deadlines.
- Experience creating effective relationships with new partners or stakeholders and ability to work in different cultural contexts
- Fluency in English. Professional fluency in a foreign language is also highly valued, including but not limited to French, Spanish, and Kiswahili.
- Enthusiasm for effectively working as part of a team.
- Proficiency with Microsoft O365 (Word, Excel, Outlook, Teams, SharePoint, OneNote, PowerPoint), Google, and other commonly used computer programs and technology, as well as the ability to learn and deploy new and evolving technologies and tools.
- Provide own equipment (e.g., computer, phone, and any other tools necessary to complete the scope of work).

DESIRED CHARACTERISTICS- Preference will be given to candidates with the following characteristics:

- Bachelor's degree or higher with a strong data science or engineering component (computer science, engineering, mathematics) or health component or advanced degree in a related field with a quantitative component.
- Experience with machine learning methods in low-resource contexts and understanding of practical constraints.
- Experience assessing ethical and fairness concerns.
- Understanding of policy, regulatory, and ethical constraints related to dataset privacy and licensing in sub-Saharan Africa and in low- and middle-income contexts globally.
- Strong technical networks among machine learning, data governance, and health actors.

Proposal

Proposals should include the following:

- Narrative (2-3 pages) - Describe your approach and budget for completing the scope of work described above and 1-3 examples of experience with similar or related projects. Please include your rate for services and an estimate of the total cost of completing the scope of work. Level of effort will average 20 hours/month between September 2022 – August 2023, with as few as 5 hours in some months and as many as 40 hours during peak periods.

- Qualifications – CV for team lead and team members who will be doing 50% or more of the work (if any)

Submit proposals via [this link](#) by End of Day anywhere on earth on 29 August 2022.