

# Request for Proposals: Sexual, Reproductive, and Maternal Health and Rights Datasets for AI - 2023

## Questions and Answers

<b>General</b>	
0.Q	Do submitted proposals have to take into account all the aspects of SRMHR or is it possible to take into account only one or more aspects of the field?
0.A	Proposals may focus on one or more SRMHR topics, as long as the proposed dataset will address a gap in representation in machine learning data. Focusing on more than one SRMHR topics is welcome where relevant. The decision about how many and which topics to address in your dataset should be driven by what question you are trying to answer or what problem you are trying to solve. The Technical Advisory Panel will evaluate the proposals based on the evaluation criteria (see page 3 of the RFP), not on the number of topics addressed in the proposal.
1.Q	What is the difference between Round 1 and Round 2 submission deadlines?
1.A	The only difference between Round 1 and Round 2 is the deadline. The deadline for Round 1 is April 19 <sup>th</sup> , and the deadline for Round 2 is June 20 <sup>th</sup> . We encourage teams that already have an idea and partners to apply for Round 1, as projects awarded funds in Round 1 will have more time to work on the datasets. If you need more time to develop your proposal, you are welcome to apply for Round 2.
2.Q	Do we have any application that we can use to make dataset?
2.A	Lacuna Fund does not provide applications or use cases for datasets. We invite applicants to outline the problem or question you wish to address, the dataset(s) or additional data needed to answer the question, and the specific use cases and/or applications relevant to the datasets proposed.  Teams may include costs associated with development of a baseline model or an application, in addition to dataset creation, expansion, or aggregation in the budget.
3.Q	Can we have access to a successful Lacuna Fund application for a project that finished already?

3.A	Information on the datasets funded by Lacuna Fund is available on our website ( <a href="#">‘Datasets’</a> ). You can read about the recently awarded projects on Climate & Energy and Climate & Health on the <a href="#">news section</a> of our website.
4.Q	Can we have access to the recording and slides from the webinar?
4.A	The webinar recording (in English and in French) and slides (English only) are available on our <a href="#">website</a> .
5.Q	Is it possible to submit more than one proposal?
5.A	Yes, an organization or team of organizations may submit more than one application. There is no limit to the number of proposals.
6.Q	Can you provide an estimate of how many proposals you're expecting and how many proposals will be funded?
6.A	We do not know how many proposals we will receive. We anticipate funding 4-6 projects with budgets between \$25-100k USD and 1-2 larger projects with budgets of \$100-150k USD in the target region (Africa). However, this will depend on the budgets of the proposals evaluated by the TAP.
7.Q	What is the maximum number of partners that can be included in the application?
7.A	There is no maximum number of partners that can be included in the application. We encourage teams to consider what skills or expertise are needed for the project and how many and which partners would be most appropriate to create/expand/link the proposed dataset(s).
8.Q	Our organization requests the framework for proposals in the field of sexual reproductive health to apply to the call for proposals for Lacuna Fund.  Kindly clarify if there is a specific format or template on how to write the proposal.
8.A	See all information in the Request for Proposals (RFP) document ( <a href="#">English</a> and <a href="#">French</a> ). Specifically, see the section Proposal Information on pages 6-10 of the RFP. Proposal submissions will only be accepted through the SurveyMonkey Apply application portal available <a href="#">here</a> .
<b>Eligibility</b>	
9.Q	Is it possible to implement a project idea related to reproductive health in Jordan?  Can an SRH organization apply for a regional application for South Asia?  Is an organization based in D.R.C. eligible for this call for proposals?

9.A	<p>Please see the Purpose and Need section on pages 5-6 of the RFP for information on the regional and thematic focus, and pages 2-3 for full details on eligibility for this call for proposals.</p> <p>The focus region of this RFP is Africa. Unfortunately, projects focused outside the African continent are not eligible for this call for proposals.</p>
10.Q	<p>Our organization works to document low resource languages by collecting whatever limited literature is available. We do not necessarily focus on health or climate. Is it a requirement to partner with a health institution or could we apply independently and reach out to health institutions as part of the work?</p>
10.A	<p>Please see full details on Organizational Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria on pages 2-4 of the RFP.</p> <p>In order to be eligible to apply for funding, teams must have the technical capacity or the ability to build this capacity through a partnership to conduct the project. Lacuna Fund encourages teams to develop partnerships before submitting proposals. In addition, Lacuna Fund seeks proposals from multidisciplinary teams with Data Science expertise and domain expertise on one or more SRMHR topics.</p>
11.Q	<p>If members from the in-country organization are members of the proposal and the lead PI is originally African as well but working in Canada and we will collaborate together on data collection, does this qualify?</p> <p>We have our intervention in Africa but our headquarter is in Australia with full-fledged office in India, UK, China, and USA. Are we eligible to apply in such a scenario?</p> <p>Is our organization eligible since it is an international NGO with a local registration in Zambia and we have been able to conduct health research in the country. Our board sits in Boston USA even though we have this local registration here in Zambia. Are we eligible to apply?</p>
11.A	<p>Please see full details on Organizational Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria on pages 2-4 of the RFP.</p> <p>Lacuna Fund focuses on providing resources to teams that have traditionally been underserved and under resourced, based in low and middle-income settings (for this RFP, in Africa). Therefore, Lacuna Fund prefers that the lead applicant is based in the geography where the data will be collected/curated/aggregated, , but it's possible for some members of the team to be located elsewhere as long as the primary institution is in the data collection geography or has a substantial partner in that geography.</p> <p>An organization is headquartered in a geography when its headquarters (center of managerial and administrative functions) – not just a country or regional office - are located in the geography. We do not have a numeric definition of what “substantial” means; however, the Secretariat and TAP will consider the budget distribution among partners, roles of team members, and types of tasks assigned, etc.</p>

12.Q	Can two organizations jointly apply for this RFP? The first organization has expertise in maternal health and the other in Data science, AI.
12.A	<p>Please see full details on Organizational Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria on pages 2-4 of the RFP.</p> <p>Yes. We encourage multi-disciplinary partnerships of more than one organization. Please note that only the lead applicant will receive funds. It is critical that teams have both data science <i>and</i> domain expertise of one or more topics within SRMHR.</p>
13.Q	Non-government Organizations can partner with universities, correct?
13.A	<p>Please see full details on Organizational Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria on pages 2-4 of the RFP.</p> <p>Yes. We encourage multi-disciplinary and multi-sectoral partnerships. Please note that only the lead applicant will receive funds.</p>
14.Q	Can the local partnerships be volunteer organizations without legal entities?
14.A	<p>Please see full details on Organizational Eligibility and Evaluation Criteria on pages 2-4 of the RFP.</p> <p>To be eligible for funding, organizations must be either a non-profit entity, research institution, for-profit social enterprise, or a team of such organizations, among other eligibility requirements. The lead applicant/organization receiving funds must be a legal entity and pass a due diligence process, but partners may include volunteer organizations without legal entities.</p>
15.Q	Are teams that have received grants from Lacuna Fund eligible to apply?
15.A	Yes, team that have received Lacuna Fund grants in the past are eligible to apply.
16.Q	Dalberg Research is a for profit firm with a focus on social impact research, do we qualify to respond to the RFP?
16.A	<p>Please see full details on Organizational Eligibility on pages 2-3 of the RFP.</p> <p>To be eligible for funding, organizations must be either a non-profit entity, research institution, for-profit social enterprise, or a team of such organizations. Organizations must also have a mission supporting societal good, broadly defined. Please note geographical requirements as well.</p>
17.Q	Are there specific African countries that we should target as we structure our approach?
17.A	<p>Please see full details on Purpose &amp; Needs on pages 5-6 of the RFP.</p> <p>This call for proposals is open to projects to create/expand/link/aggregate/maintain datasets in any African country. Proposals may focus on one or more countries.</p>

18.Q	Although we plan to make the dataset open access, the partners who have been involved in the data collection would prefer the data to remain closed until field validations of the tools have been completed. This will fall outside the current timeline of the project (December 2024). Would (a) a description of the open data sharing plan, once the validation has been completed, and (b) open sourcing and deploying the Artificial Intelligence model be sufficient for the current RFP?
18.A	Please see information on Selection Process and Evaluation Criteria on pages 3-4 of the RFP. While Lacuna Fund requires that datasets are made widely accessible under open-source licensing by the deadline of December 2024, the TAP may consider extensions to this timeline or may allow for later release of datasets in order to complete validation if a clear plan and timeline for open data sharing is provided and the AI model is open source. If the project is awarded a grant, a follow-up mechanism will be put in place to ensure the data is published under an open access license.
<h2 style="color: green;">Proposal Narrative</h2>	
19.Q	<p>Are these projects encouraging datasets in local languages only or in also in larger (multinational) languages which could then be used in developing countries?</p> <p>Is the dataset collected only in English? Is it possible to use local languages?</p>
19.A	Datasets may be in any language, as long as the project and the language(s) chosen addresses a gap in representation in machine learning data. Proposals for this RFP may be submitted in French or English.
20.Q	How do you measure the size of a project? Is it by the amount of text, say, number of words?
20.A	<p>Please see pages 7-9 in the Request for Proposals (RFP) document for all details on the proposal submission, including maximum length.</p> <p>Proposals should be maximum 10 pages long not including references, with 2.5 cm margins and a minimum of 11-point font. Appendices or proposal narrative material beyond 10 pages will not be reviewed.</p> <p>The goal is to fund datasets that can be used for machine learning use cases focused on SRMRH in the African continent. The project size should be determined by the type of proposed dataset and potential use cases, , and be reasonable with the proposed budget. We encourage teams to consider what size is fit for the purpose and the problem you wish to address.</p> <p>This is an area that the Indaba Mentorship Programme could provide valuable guidance on. In addition, there are numerous resources available that can help teams estimate the appropriate dataset size.</p>
21.Q	Is there a maximum of the proposal length?

21.A	<p>Please see pages 7-9 in the Request for Proposals (RFP) document for all details on the proposal submission, including maximum length.</p> <p>Proposals should be maximum 10 pages long not including references, with 2.5 cm margins and a minimum of 11-point font. Appendices or proposal narrative material beyond 10 pages will not be reviewed.</p>
22.Q	Would qualitative data be of interest?
22.A	<p>Yes. Qualitative datasets may be appropriate as long as this type of data will address a gap in representation in machine learning data. It is up to the teams to determine what type of data is fit for the problem and use case(s) a team wishes to address, and to ensure that these data can be used in ML models. One example of where qualitative data could be appropriate is Q&amp;A datasets.</p>
23.Q	What data formats are preferable?
23.A	<p>Please see full details on Selection Process and Evaluation Criteria on pages 3-4 of the RFP, as well as Proposal Information on pages 6-10 of the RFP.</p> <p>Projects do not need to use a specific format. It is up to each team to decide which format is appropriate for the problem you are trying to address. The format needs to be open and widely available, unless you provide a compelling reason that the dataset needs to be more restrictive.</p> <p>In addition, we ask to include specifications and deliverables for proposed data and documentation in the proposal narrative, including types and format of data and/or labels.</p>
<b>Budget</b>	
24.Q	Where is the budget template provided?
24.A	The budget template is available in the <a href="#">SurveyMonkey Apply portal</a> .
25.Q	What is the maximum funding?
25.A	<p>The total pool available is approximately 500,000 USD. We anticipate funding 4-6 projects with budgets between 25-100k USD and 1-2 larger projects with budgets of \$100-150k USD in the target region (Africa). It is the teams' responsibility to determine an appropriate budget for their project.</p> <p>We recognize that health datasets can be expensive. Therefore, we encourage teams to consider whether impact can be achieved by expanding, linking or making available existing data. We encourage proposals in the 100k range or less.</p>
26.Q	Please could Lacuna Fund elaborate on the cost basis considered as 'research costs' in relation to the guidance on an indirect of 13%? Are all allowable costs eligible per the

	budget guidelines considered part of the research costs?
26.A	Research costs include costs outlined in the budget guidelines. Indirect project costs consists of administrative costs not directly related to the research. Indirect cost items can only include: salaries and benefits of personnel which support and administer the project, such as secretaries, clerks, and accountants; stationery and other office supplies; telecommunication cost (unless the nature of the project has warranted a specific budget line item for that purpose; and computer equipment used for the administration or accounting of the grant disbursements.
<b>Mentorship</b>	
27.Q	Is the Deep Learning Indaba Mentorship Opportunity independent of the Lacuna application process ?
27.A	Yes. Teams do not need to apply for the mentorship opportunity to submit an application to Lacuna Fund. The Deep Learning Indaba will not disclose details of applicants and their mentoring sessions to Lacuna Fund, apart from the number of applicants.  You can read more information on the Mentorship Opportunity on page 11 of the RFP document.
28.Q	Do we have to wait until we have put our proposal together in full before asking for mentorship?
28.A	No. Teams are encouraged to apply at the stage where they have a first draft, or a detailed outline, and as early as possible before the deadline. The proposal needs to be complete enough that your mentor can see your vision and understand what you are trying to achieve.  You can read more information on the Mentorship Opportunity on page 11 of the RFP document.
29.Q	Do you have a minimum level of capability/education to get into the mentorship program?
29.A	No. The Indaba Mentorship Programme is open to all regardless of level of education. Non-native English speakers are warmly welcome to apply. However, there is a capacity limit and mentors will be assigned on a first-come, first-served basis. We encourage teams to apply for mentoring as soon as possible.  You can read more information on the Mentorship Opportunity on page 11 of the RFP document.  Please see full details of eligibility for this Lacuna Fund call for proposals on pages 2-3 of the RFP, which teams must meet in order to be considered eligible to apply for this call. Specifically, teams must have the technical capacity to conduct the proposed project, or

	to build such capacity.
30.Q	Is the mentorship program free?
30.A	Yes. The Indaba Mentorship Programme is open to all free of charge. You can read more information on the Mentorship Opportunity on page 11 of the RFP document.