Request for Proposals: Inclusive Climate Datasets for AI - 2022

Questions and Answers

General	
0.Q	Do you have equal proposal chances for the two dataset categories, climate & energy and climate & health? Are organizations able to apply to both the Health and Energy RFPs? Alternatively, is it possible to merge these two areas together in one proposal? What is the expected maximum number of teams of researchers?
0.A	Proposal chances depend on how many people apply to each RFP. There is no maximum number of teams that will receive funding. Each RFP has a separate Technical Advisory Panel that will review proposals and make its decisions independently. Currently, we have approximately USD$2 million USD for Climate & Energy and USD$1 million for Climate & Health. Organizations may apply to both the Climate & Energy and Climate & Health RFPs but may not submit the same application to both. While your application may cross over both domains, a proposal may only be submitted to one as the two tracks have separate Technical Advisory Panels.
1.Q	Will this call for proposals be open next year?
1.A	Lacuna Fund is currently planning a third climate call focused on climate, biodiversity, agriculture, and forests. We are not sure if there will be another call for the climate & energy and climate & health domains next year.
2.Q	How should teams consider the climate impacts of the projects themselves?
2.A	We encourage applicants to consider the risk that high demand for computing power in the development of AI technology can lead to high power consumption and increased CO_2 emissions. Applicants should explain how they will mitigate power consumption by being as efficient as possible with their computation and storage.
3.Q	As someone who is from the Global South, my NGO and I wish to cover a topic that can provide inside info on the implementation of European measures to reduce climate change, while doing so we believe that it's barely impossible to avoid covering the colonial past of my African country to provide an adequate answer to the identified

	problem. Have you considered that aspect while formulating your criteria on which you will select the projects that will be funded?
3.A	Lacuna Fund's evaluation criteria are built directly from our Guiding Principles. Our Equity principle ensures that the funded datasets improve representation for the Global South and underserved communities globally, and our Participatory Approach principle promotes community ownership of data creation and governance. Datasets must be locally developed and owned. Applicants may describe historical context, including colonial history, to explain the problem that your proposed dataset will be designed to solve.
4.Q	Is the webinar recording available?
4.A	The webinar recording (in English) and slides are available on our website.
5.Q	Do you have to be a data scientist to join the platform or is it open to other colleagues?
5.A	The partnership and mentorship platform hosted by Climate Change AI is open to all; you do not need to be a data scientist. Join the platform to find experts in different areas (e.g., climate change, energy, health, data science, etc.).
6.Q	Is it possible to fund projects about the effect of raising cattle on the land and the climate? For example, measuring data about greenhouse gas emissions? Can a proposal focus on collecting data on gender dimensions on climate risk insurance for crops and livestock among the small-scale farmers using mobile based applications? Is it possible to apply with a project in Climate & Agriculture, or do you think it is off topic?
6.A	This request for proposals focuses on human health or energy. We anticipate releasing another RFP focused on climate, biodiversity, agriculture, and forests later this year or early next year. Proposals around agriculture and climate would be a better fit for that RFP, unless they have a clear connection to human health or energy.
7.Q	Can an organization submit more than one proposal? Is there a limit to the number of proposals an organization can submit?
7.A	Yes, an organization or team of organizations may submit more than one application. There is no limit to the number of proposals.
8.Q	Do we have a sense as to who are going to be the most likely users of the datasets?
8.A	We ask applicants to identify the most likely users of the datasets. The datasets will be publicly available. We hope that datasets will be used by researchers, policy makers, not-for-profit organizations, businesses, and others based in the local geography, as well as entities around the globe who are working toward more equitable outcomes for climate & energy and climate & health.

Eligibility

9.Q	What organizations can apply?
9.A	Please see a full list of eligibility criteria on page 3 of the Request for Proposals (Climate & Energy or Climate & Health).
10.Q	1. Are consultancies eligible to be part of a project team if working in a partnership with an NGO (with the NGO acting as lead applicant)? 2. We are a for-profit research and consulting firm and have a project we would like to submit. We would like to partner with a non-profit AI research organization to assist with community outreach, as well as ML modelling. Is it possible to apply? Both are locally based. 3. We are a for-profit energy research and consulting firm, and we are partnering with a for-profit social impact organization. Both organizations are based in an African country. Please advise on the eligibility of the partnership. Although I am a for-profit organization, my mission is well aligned with doing good globally for social reasons. Would I have the chance to respond to this opportunity? 4. Is a private startup company registered under DPIIT (India) eligible for funding? 5. Can an organization that is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization and a research institution, housed within and process sponsored research grants through a public or state-controlled institution of higher education, respond to this RFP?
10.A	Please find a full list of eligibility criteria on page 3 of the RFP (Climate & Energy or Climate & Health). 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.
11.Q	Does the main applicant have to have a substantial presence in the region or does one of the consortium partners need to have that?
11.A	Please find a full list of eligibility criteria on page 3 of the RFP (Climate & Energy or Climate & Health). To be eligible to apply for funding, organizations must be headquartered in or have a substantial partnership in the country or region where data will be collected.
12.Q	Can the data science team doing the data curation be located in another country to where the data is being collected?

12.A	Yes. We prefer that the data curation team is located in-country, but it's possible for 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.
13.Q	Is it possible to include multi-hazards datasets, for example, flash floods and landslides? Would datasets that include language data as a part of the larger dataset encompassing socioeconomic, climate, health or energy data be considered for this funding opportunity? Do you accept proposals on urban air quality?
13.A	Multi-hazards, language, and air quality datasets (and more) are eligible for funding, as long as there are clear links to climate change and health or energy impacts.
14.Q	Please define what it means for an organization to be "headquartered" in a geography.
14.A	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.
15.Q	What if the primary applicant is a locally registered NGO in a given country, but is part of a larger INGO that is also registered in the Global North? Can an international organization be the principal applicant?
15.A	Lacuna Fund prefers organizations that are headquartered in the geography. The biggest impacts of climate change are on communities in the Global South. Thus, making datasets for machine learning more representative of and accessible to those communities requires support for local teams working on locally identified needs. If you are an international organization with an office in the local geography, you need a partner with a lead role that is headquartered in the region.
16.Q	We have potential partners and/or lead organizations for our consortium in South Africa and Senegal. Each has roughly similar capacity. Given the Fund's emphasis on low- and middle-income contexts, would it be to the consortium's advantage to base the project in Senegal, as it is a lower-income context than South Africa? Or, for proposal review purposes are they equivalent? Is an applicant from a Chinese institution or an upper-middle income country like Colombia eligible to apply? Or only low- and middle-income countries? Are NGOs based in African countries eligible to apply?
16.A	Lacuna Fund prefers that the lead applicant is based in the geography where the data is being collected. We suggest that you determine where you base your project based on which location has the best contextual understanding of the problem you are

	addressing. Applicants in upper-middle income countries are eligible to apply, as long as they are addressing a gap in representation in machine learning data. NGOs in African countries are encouraged to apply.
17.Q	I recently graduated with a postgraduate degree and am not part of an organization. Am I eligible to apply by myself? Or do I need to find project partners?
17.A	Individuals must apply through an institutional sponsor. You may be able to find a team through the partnership platform hosted by Climate Change AI.
18.Q	Can you please provide clarification on what a "for-profit social enterprise" is? Can you clarify if there are any specific rules that limit for-profit companies from applying – or is alignment with our corporate purpose and mission good enough to qualify as a "social enterprise"?
18.A	We define for-profit social enterprises as for-profit institutions that have a mission for societal good, broadly defined.

Proposal Narrative

19.Q	Do we need to include any agreement with the local partners?
19.A	Letters of support or agreements with local partners are encouraged and may be submitted with the proposal but are not required. Please do describe what aspects of the project the local partners will be responsible for. If selected, only the lead organization will receive funding, and they will be responsible for managing agreements with partners.
20.Q	What is the duration of the projects? Is there an upper limit for the project timeline? The RFP states that "Proposed projects must be completed, datasets published, and final reports submitted within 18 months from execution of agreements". Does the time limit apply independently of the complexity of the proposal?
20.A	Proposed projects must be completed, datasets published, and final reports submitted by June 2024. For planning purposes, you can expect that agreements will be completed and work may begin in January 2023. This timeline is determined by Lacuna Fund's agreements with our funding partners.
21.Q	What is the appropriate geographic coverage for the health focus? For example, would data covering one city be adequate for a small grant and several cities for a larger grant? Are there specific requirements for projects that would be considered large (i.e., projects applying for 200-300k) vs small (i.e., projects applying for $50-100k)? Are we allowed to present a proposal only for a given territory to circumscribe the geographic area of the study or project?

21.A	We defer to applicants to determine the appropriate geographic focus. The geographic focus and project size should be determined by the needs of the dataset, potential use cases, and your team's expertise, and be reasonable with the proposed budget.
22.Q	Can one project explore more than one geographic region? For example, including South Asia and Africa under one project? Can we have multiple communities in one single proposal?
22.A	Yes, one project can explore multiple geographic regions or communities.
23.Q	a. Do the datasets have a specific format or platform? b. The RFP specifies that "the dataset and any related IP, such as collection methods, datasheets, how to load or read datasets, or other information to ensure usability should be made available under an open source, by-attribution license (CC-BY 4.0 or similar)." The license "Creative Commons — Atribución-NoComercial-CompartirIgual 4.0 Internacional — CC BY-NC-SA 4.0" would be accepted or it will exclude us from the grant? c. As an organization, we follow an approach where we manage the data on behalf of the contributors who are the "true" owners. Any commercial use is prohibited unless compensation goes back to the data-generators. Is it necessary for all datasets generated through this funding to be fully open-sources, and would it be possible to limit the availability of these data sets for only non-commercial purposes?
23.A	a. Projects do not need to use a specific format or platform. The chosen platform should be commonly used and accessible. The format needs to be open and widely available, unless you provide a compelling reason that the dataset needs to be more restrictive. Lacuna Fund will prioritize releasing the intellectual property under a permissive open-source licensing structure, such as Apache 2.0 for any code or other inventions, or CC-BY 4.0 International for any other intellectual property (e.g. creative works that are not code, or patentable). b. CC BY-NC-SA 4.0 will not be accepted unless the project team gives a compelling reason for using that license instead of CC-BY 4.0. Similarly, licenses limited to non-commercial purposes may be suitable in specific circumstances, but Lacuna Fund will prioritize datasets that will be fully open. Please also consider platforms and formats that are most suitable and follow any existing guidance for your specific domain. c. Lacuna Fund recognizes evolving practice related to data sovereignty and the need for data contributors to be appropriately compensated for their contributions. Applicants may propose an exception to Lacuna Fund's IP Policy in the appropriate section in the proposal narrative, including licensing for commercial and non-commercial use to maximize the accessibility and impact of the dataset.
24.Q	Does the project proposal have to be presented in English or it can be in Spanish?
24.A	Proposals may be submitted in English, Spanish, or French.

25.Q	Apart from collecting data, must the proposal include procedures, algorithms, coding, etc. in order to apply AI / ML methods to the data? Can the proposal also include a test case where ML/AI can also be used in addition to creating missing data sets for climate and health issues or proposal should only stick to the creation of data sets? Does this RFP only fund the generation, enhancement or augmentation of a dataset or can applications also request funding for projects and interventions that propose to use the generated dataset?
25.A	Lacuna Fund principally supports the creation, annotation, augmentation, release, and maintenance of datasets for the training and evaluation of machine learning models. Budgets may include funds for baseline models, algorithms, or other tools to make the dataset more usable. Per the Selection Criteria (see "Efficiency" in Section 2 of the Request for Proposals), projects should not duplicate already openly available resources, and all resources must be licensed subject to Lacuna Fund's IP Policy.
26.Q	Will we have contact with a mentor for guidance on the proposal?
26.A	Lacuna Fund is partnering with Climate Change AI (CCAI) to provide a digital partnership platform where teams or individuals seeking to collaborate can connect and find potential partners. CCAI will also facilitate a mentorship program to connect potential applicants with experts working in relevant topic areas. Register here for the partnership and mentorship platform!
27.Q	What are the steps to send the proposal? Do I have to register with the foundation before applying?
27.A	Please submit proposals through the application portal (either Climate & Energy or Climate & Health). You will need to create an account on the application portal, but no further registration is necessary.
28.Q	Can you provide some clarity on how you plan on determining label quality, as well as measurements for data quality given size, variance, and type?
28.A	Applicants should consider how they will ensure label quality within the context of their specific dataset, use case(s), and context for data collection and annotation. The Technical Advisory Panel will assess proposals based on the selection criteria in Section 2 of the RFP document, which include quality, feasibility, qualifications of the team, and linkage to use cases. When measurements of data quality are available for the type of dataset proposed, applicants are encouraged to include them in their proposal narrative. Including detailed information on proposed dataset size, collection methodology, and QA/QC methods for annotation may also be valuable.
29.Q	What type of dataset is preferred for this proposal, is it a primary dataset or secondary dataset?

29.A	We do not have a preference. Dataset proposals will be evaluated on resource efficiency, including making use of existing resources where available, in addition to quality and other selection criteria included in Section 2 of the RFP document. If you decide to use secondary data, please confirm that you have permission to release it publicly per Lacuna Fund's Intellectual Property Policy.
30.Q	Is there a gender factor to be considered in the formation of a team? Is there a preference for female involvement in the team of researchers?
30.A	Given that Lacuna Fund aims for datasets that are representative and inclusive of race, gender, ethnicity, ability, etc., we encourage teams to also be representative of all identities, including gender.
31.Q	Is it necessary for all datasets generated through this funding to be fully open-sources, and would it be possible to limit the availability of these data sets for only non-commercial purposes?
31.A	Per Lacuna Fund's Intellectual Property Policy, the dataset and any related IP, such as collection methods, models, datasheets, how to load or read datasets, or other information to ensure usability should be made available under an open source, by-attribution license (CC-BY 4.0 or similar). You may propose more restrictive licensing in order to protect privacy or prevent harm. If you are requesting more restrictive licensing, provide a rationale for this.
32.Q	Would Zenodo be acceptable as data repository? Is the platform OSF.io acceptable?
32.A	Yes, Zenodo and OSF.io are acceptable. Lacuna Fund will prioritize releasing the intellectual property under a permissive open-source licensing structure, such as Apache 2.0 (https://opensource.org/licenses/Apache-2.0) for any code or other inventions, or CC-BY 4.0 International (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/) for any other intellectual property (e.g. creative works that are not code, or patentable, such as datasets). Any platforms used should facilitate publication under such licensing structure and ensure dataset discoverability and easy publication of metadata.
33.Q	Are we sourcing for the dataset or are you providing one for analytic study?
33.A	Lacuna Fund supports the creation, annotation, expansion, release, and maintenance of datasets for the training and evaluation of machine learning models. Lacuna Fund is not providing a dataset for analytic study. Project teams are welcome to use existing datasets in their projects, with appropriate permissions.

Budget

34.Q	How much money for each project? Do you have a budget limitation for the proposals?

34.A	The budget is up to the project teams. We hope to fund a few larger proposals in the USD$151,000 - $300,000 range and a higher number of smaller proposals in the USD$50,000 - $150,000 range.
35.Q	Is it possible to finance the infrastructure to collect the dataset? Can the budget include funding for technical instruments (e.g., weather stations, water level, or meteorological sensors)?
35.A	Infrastructure and equipment are eligible for funding as long as they are used to create or expand a dataset that will be publicly available.
36.Q	How is it envisioned to deal with scenarios where communities may seek monetary or non-monetary benefits for providing their data? Community consultation needed to be elaborate and budgeted for - will this budget item be allowed?
36.A	You may include compensation for communities under data costs in your budget.
37.Q	Translators may be necessary working with indigenous people. Is this staffing component allowed?
37.A	Yes, translators are allowed.
38.Q	Is the travelling cost to collect data is inclusive? Also international travel to engage with international experts for data collection? Is travel for the coordinator or another member of the project team allowed?
38.A	Yes, travel costs for these purposes are allowed.
39.Q	Do you have cap rates for staff costs by level, i.e. national vs international experts?
39.A	We do not have cap rates for staff. The Technical Advisory Panel members will assess if staff costs are reasonable. However, we do have caps on indirect costs, which are indicated in each RFP.
40.Q	Is there information available about the co-financing required by the applicant?
40.A	There is no co-financing required by the applicant. However, if co-financing is available or in-kind contributions are made (e.g., research administration costs provided by the university, etc.), please state this in the budget narrative and proposal narrative.
41.Q	Can we include the budget for buying a server and database for storing the collected datasets?
41.A	Please see a full list of allowed costs on pages 10 and 11 of the RFP. Buying a server and database is allowed. However, purchasing a physical server to host the dataset onsite may not be the most cost effective nor sustainable approach. Applicants should consider the sustainability plan and dataset hosting and accessibility

	plan that best meets the selection criteria, in particular the efficiency, sustainability, and transformational impact criteria.
42.Q	Is it possible to add lines to the budget?
42.A	Yes, you may add lines to the budget.
43.Q	In what currency should the budget be quoted? What is the exchange rate to be used for the budget?
43.A	Budgets should be quoted in US dollars. Applicants determine their exchange rates.

Reporting

44.Q	Could you share a bit about your grant reporting requirements?
44.A	Grantees submit a midterm and final report. In the midterm report, we ask for progress on deliverables that you identified in your proposal. In final report, we ask grantees to submit deliverables and a link to the dataset.
45.Q	Are lessons learnt part of the completed deliverables in final report?
45.A	Yes, we invite grantees to share 1-3 lessons learned in both the midterm and final reports.

Climate & Energy

46.Q	Are we specifically talking about KWatts/MWatts data for energy demand and supply? Do the energy data have to be hourly, daily, or annually?
46.A	The Climate & Energy call for proposals includes a wide range of potential topics. Demand in megawatt-hours is one idea, but there are other relevant data too. Demand can also connect to other energy consumption, such as buildings, transport, and energy efficiency questions. Another consideration could be how to manage demand, not just measure it in megawatts. There is no requirement that the data be hourly, daily, or annually – propose whatever makes the most sense for your project and use cases.
47.Q	Do you prefer that applicants compile existing energy data?
47.A	We do not have a preference between compilation of existing or collection of new data. Consider which will have a greater impact for machine learning data and/or addresses a compelling use case. Please reference the Selection Process and Evaluation Criteria on page 4 of the RFP for more information on how proposals are evaluated.
48.Q	Would a data set renewable energy expenditure of subnational governments in a single African country be a potentially viable proposal? It focuses on public energy demand.
48.A	We welcome proposals focused on development of datasets for a wide range of energy

	applications, including energy demand and renewable energy. Please see the Purpose and Need section on page 6-7 of the RFP for a sample of the type of datasets and use cases projects could consider addressing.
49.Q	We have collected a lot of information regarding grid and transmission networks for a state in a low- or middle-income country, but these are all from the government and are confidential. Can such data also be included in the proposed database?
49.A	Per Lacuna Fund's [Intellectual Property Policy](#), the dataset and any related IP, such as collection methods, models, datasheets, how to load or read datasets, or other information to ensure usability should be made available under an open source, by-attribution license (CC-BY 4.0 or similar). Applicants are encouraged to consider strategies such as aggregation or other forms of anonymization in order to make the data as open as possible. More restrictive licensing will be considered on a case-by-case basis in order to protect privacy or prevent harm. Proposals requesting a more restrictive license must provide a clear rationale.

Climate & Health

50.Q	Would screening of a potato germplasm for drought resistance/tolerance be appropriate for climate and health call? We are thinking about its importance for food security.
50.A	See the Purpose and Need section on pages 5-6 of the RFP. We are seeking datasets that will help us better understand the impacts of climate change on human and community health and interventions that could mitigate these impacts. If you are able to clearly show how the proposed dataset will help to better understand or mitigate an indirect effect of climate change (e.g., food security) on health, it may be appropriate for the climate and health call.
51.Q	Ecosystem health and climate change go hand in hand. We are interested in applying with a project that directly addresses high-level data gaps in the wildlife conservation sector. Is this potentially within the scope of your needs?
51.A	This request for proposals focuses on community and human health. We anticipate releasing another RFP focused on climate, biodiversity, agriculture, and forests later this year or early next year. Ecosystem health and wildlife conservation would be a better fit for that RFP.
52.Q	Could Epigenetics and its influence on health and "certain" diseased phenotypes be a particular invitation for the call?
52.A	See the Purpose and Need section on pages 5-6 of the RFP. We are seeking datasets that will help us better understand the impacts of climate change on human and community health and interventions that could mitigate these impacts. If the proposed dataset links epigenetics to climate change and health, it could be a fit.

53.Q	Is this RFP focused on human diseases? Could the upcoming call include topics related to plant health and its relationship to climate?
53.A	This request for proposals focuses on community and human health. We anticipate releasing another RFP focused on climate, biodiversity, agriculture, and forests later this year or early next year. Plant health and climate would be a better fit for that RFP.