



Use Case Grant call for Common Voice Kiswahili

About Mozilla Common Voice Kiswahili project

Mozilla [Common Voice](#) is an open-source initiative to make voice technology more inclusive. Supported by the funding from Bill and Melinda Gates, FCDO and GIZ, we have been enhancing the growth of open source data sets for Africa Languages in East Africa. Our open source data set for Kinyarwanda has been used to build a chatbot to respond to COVID-19 questions, and our partners in Uganda are working on a keyword spotter in Luganda.

In 2021, we focused on building an open source data set for Kiswahili and now Mozilla is opening up a grant call for **voice-enabled products delivering value to local populations in Kiswahili**. Specifically, we are seeking products focused on Agriculture and Finance, particularly impacting digitally excluded groups by gender, income inequality and location (for example, populations based in rural areas). The vision is to see products **powered by open voice data and technology, built with local community involvement and engagement**, which can shift power and improve social and economic opportunities for marginalized groups in Kenya, Tanzania and Kiswahili-speaking DRC.

What we are looking for

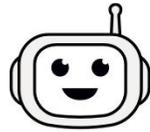
We are seeking voice interventions that make use of the Common Voice open source database to address the issues and opportunities above. And we are providing awards of up to **USD50,000 each**, from a total pool of **USD400,000**.

Ideal solutions will be rooted in the sectors of

- a) Agriculture and/or
- b) Finance

And, within these, will address gender inequalities that have impacted women and gender-marginalized groups and rural exclusion. Below, find examples of potential projects, based on use case research carried out in 2021. However, these are just ideas—we anticipate there could be many other relevant use cases:

Agriculture:



1. **Advisory service:**

For example, solutions might:

Provide geographically-relevant agricultural advice to improve crop yields

Provide targeted nutritional advice to families that shapes their farming methods

2. **Information service:**

For example, solutions might:

Provide timely pricing updates for small crop farmers

Provide listings of possible markets for small agriculture business owners

Provide easy-to-understand information on land rights to marginalised communities, such as women in rural areas

3. **Administrative assistant:**

For example, solutions might:

Assist in better record-keeping of farmers to keep track of produce, purchases and expenses

Finance:

1. **Service access:**

For example, solutions might:

Enable voice enabled banking services or crop insurance in local languages to allow for greater financial inclusion

2. **Admin:**

For example, solutions might: Support financial administrative tasks

Security:

For example, solutions might:

Verify transactions and handling of information or biometric requests to authenticate the user?

3. **Financial literacy:**

For example, solutions might:

Support financial literacy interventions targeted at savings groups such as Chamas/Vikobas and small scale producers



Review and Selection Criteria:

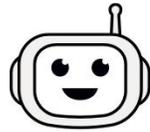
Projects will be judged by a committee including internal Mozilla team members, advisors, and external experts.

Awardees are selected based on quantitative scoring of their applications by the review committee and a qualitative discussion at a review committee meeting.

Only those projects meeting the applicant eligibility and award requirements for this awards track will be reviewed.

Selection criteria are designed to evaluate the merits of the proposed concept. The review criteria for the Common Voice Kiswahili grant call is as follows:

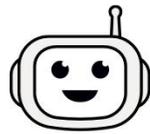
- **Feasibility and team:** How feasible is the outlined concept? How likely is the project team to be successful in implementing this approach? Has the project team demonstrated past success at executing projects at a similar scale?
- **Impact:** To what extent is this approach likely to lead to wider uptake for greater integration of ethical reflection and societal consideration into the tech industry?
Areas of impact must include:
 - Address gender and rural exclusion in digital agriculture and financial industry:
 - Consider women’s concerns in use of technology and implementing a solution that would meet their needs
 - Consider increased and beneficial participation of women in agriculture and finance
 - Provide insight/data on the uptake of the technology by men versus women, and specifically document barriers or challenges faced by women in the uptake of technology
 - Demonstrate benefits to the community or users of the solution
 - Provide insight/data on how the use of the solution impacts the community or user e.g in yields, income or wellbeing
 - Build on the current high uptake of mobile solutions in the African market:
 - Consider digital exclusion barriers such as low connectivity; language barriers, affordability and digital literacy
- **Data corpus contribution:** how will your work contribute to building relevant MCV data sets (i.e. sentences and voice contribution and validation) Your project should have the following:



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- The ability to contribute, and validate, relevant sentences and voice clips to MCV
- Use cases could leverage a 'conversation design' approach [aka utilise a conversational interface] and could leverage multiple datasets on top of MCV (such as cropping, harvesting, breeding crops for improved nutritional value, market or current information)
- **Community engagement:** How will your project build with the community of focus and ensure the participation of end users in the technology's development?
 - Demonstrate connection to end users and the experience of embedding projects in communities
 - Include the community throughout design and implementation of project, (e.g. accounting for social and cultural issues in context and ensuring equitable participation by gender)
 - Engage new and diverse perspectives in the conversation about ethics and technology
- **Differentiation and iteration:** How does the proposed concept differ from or improve upon existing solutions? What is innovative or novel about the proposed concept?
 - Increase availability of Kiswahili voice technology on mobile devices, by:
 - Minimising digital infrastructure barriers for Small Scale Producers in Eastern Africa
 - Integrating into an already existing solution or prototyping a solution adaptable to different types of devices - from low-end feature phones to high-end smartphones
 - Being inclusive of the diversity among Kiswahili-speaking communities in the relevant contexts. This may be in relation to demographic aspects such as gender, age, accents, dialects and variants.
- **Sustainability** – The project has a plan to ensure sustainability and future maintenance of the dataset, e.g., by a dedicated community or a pool of interested parties (for-profit and/or not-for-profit) and a robust governance model for the open dataset.



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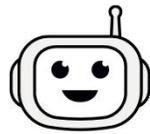
Applicants should meet the following requirements:

- Our focus is on experimental projects. Our hope is to fund promising approaches to solving problems that are widespread in the East African region through new voice-based technologies. We want to fund ideas, prototypes or projects that are already in implementation and need additional funding. Applicants must demonstrate an ability to be able to execute their plan via past experience or a prototype.
- Applicants should have a core team in place in the region of focus, East Africa (specifically based in Kenya, Tanzania, and/or the Kiswahili speaking part of DRC). The core team should be able to support the development of the project that is based in the region and is gender balanced (this team might include software developers working in close collaboration with AI researchers, designers, product/project managers and subject-matter experts)
- Organisations based in Africa with The team should embrace openness, transparency, and community stewardship as methodology (see [Open Leadership Course](#) and the [community participation guidelines](#) for guidance)
- Teams must make their work available under an open-source license.
- The dataset will be made widely accessible under open-source licensing, (either [a free software license according to the FSF](#) or [an open source license according to the OSI](#)). If this is not possible, projects may still be considered if a compelling case can be made for more restrictive licensing. If this is the case, please get in touch with commonvoice@mozillafoundation.org **Subject line Kiswahili Use case grant** prior to applying.

Eligibility and Deadlines

Who can apply

- Individuals or small communities and teams
- Small or medium-sized enterprises (fewer than 50 employees)
- Non-profit organisations
- For profit organisations



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Who cannot apply

- Projects managed by a for-profit organisation which are not licensed for use under an open source license
- Mozilla Foundation employees, Mozilla Corporation employees, contractors of either the Mozilla Foundation or the Mozilla Corporation and their immediate family members
- Corporations in which a Mozilla Foundation employee, Mozilla Corporation employee, or their immediate family members has an ownership stake

We welcome existing Common Voice community member applications.

- LOI Opens: 3 Mar 2022- <https://mozilla.fluxx.io/apply/cv>
 - For questions on using Fluxx please contact grants@mozillafoundation.org
- Deadline for LOI submission 22 Mar 2022 by 17:00 CAT
- **The Letter of Intent (LOI) is a required step for all applicants.** LOIs are reviewed on a rolling basis. You will receive a response to your Letter of Intent submission no later than 24 March 2022. By this date, you will either be invited to submit a full proposal or declined.
- Full application deadline 12 Apr 2022 by 17:00 CAT
- Final selection 31 May 2022 contracting complete
- Project start June 2022 and must be completed within 12 months or less

Reporting Requirements: All awardees will be required to submit their project on Mozilla public platforms and to complete a brief final report in Fluxx.

Awardees will work with Mozilla throughout the award period to create, execute, and report back on project impact and evaluation plans. They will be expected to join monthly calls for the duration of the project (beginning June 2022) in order to share their progress, ask questions and offer support to other project teams. Awardees will also have access to Mozilla fellows focusing on Common Voice and the Common Voice product team (who will serve as support in community building, gender assessment, data support and product development). All Common Voice grantees will have access to a Slack channel for asynchronous discussion and updates.