

Review of Networks for Methodological Innovation Projects 2005-9

Background

As part of its brief to identify national needs, and to complement the longer-term research programmes of the NCRM Nodes, the Hub has the responsibility for commissioning, developing and organising a programme of event-based projects known as Networks for Methodological Innovation (formerly known as 'short term projects'). These projects are aimed at broadening out the work of the Centre by enabling networks of researchers to come together in order to stimulate the development or enhanced understanding of methods. The call for projects that will be issued in 2010 is included as an annex to this document. Projects are expected to engage in one of two types of activities:

- catalysing activities: stimulating research and promoting debate on new methodological challenges in specific methodological areas of interest
- synthesising activities: reviewing developments within a specific methodological field and/or identifying commonalities between different fields.

Projects consist of a series of events and related activities over a period of between one and 12 months. Events and activities may include:

- small expert workshops between network members designed to facilitate intensive research interaction;
- meetings open to wider audiences;
- visits by junior researchers to other network members;
- the development of specialist ICT fora for the exchange of information between network members;
- training events, including both those targeted at network members and those targeted at wider audiences as part of a network's dissemination strategy.

Review of NMI projects 2005-9

This review focuses on Network for Methodological Innovation (NMI) projects conducted during the Hub's first phase of funding (1/4/04-31/3/09)¹. The first set of projects commenced in April 2005. Nine projects were funded during this period.

During this period, the Centre had a budget to fund two projects per year, each for a maximum of £25,000. The nine funded projects were awarded grants ranging from £19,213 - £25,000. Projects ran between April and March

¹ Four further projects have been funded since this period but have not yet reported; 2 will be completed March 2010 and two March 2011.

each year. Topic areas for applications were identified in 2005, 2006 and 2008 and these were: comparative research (2005); the integration of theory and methods (2006); and, topics arising from NCRM's 2006 Research Needs Assessment (2008). An open call in which applications were invited on any methodological topic was issued in 2007.

The number of applications submitted for consideration for funding during this period was: 11 in 2005, 5 in 2006, 24 in 2007 and 10 in 2008. Three projects were funded 2005-6, one was funded 2006-7, three were funded 2007-8 and two funded 2008-9².

This review draws on the final reports of the projects as well as email correspondence with grant-holders during January 2010 inviting them to provide information on outputs associated with their project since its completion and general comments about the NMI scheme. Details of the nine NMI projects and outcomes are listed in tabular form in Appendix A (page 5) with detailed information about outcomes listed in Appendix B (page 8). The following discussion summarises this information. Comments from grant-holders are provided in Appendix 3 (page 13).

Events and activities

All projects undertook at least two different types of activity. All but one project ran seminar-type events either for a specific invited audience (Lynn, Cameron) or a more general audience (Brannen, Holmwood, High, Crossley, Moore, Norval). One project ran an expert meeting following on from a conference specifically to identify a focus for future research (Jowell). Five projects ran conferences (Jowell, Holmwood, High, Moore, Norval). Six of the nine projects ran training events (Brannen, Cameron, High, Lynn, Crossley, Norval). One project provided a range of online activities (High) and one organized a UK researcher exchange (Lynn).

Event Participants

The number of participants across all events per project ranged from 68-193, with a median of 119 participants. Participants at events were drawn from a range of academic disciplines, most commonly sociology, psychology, education and management. The number of non-academic participants was low for most projects (5-15% of participants at all project events), the exceptions to this were the projects led by Jowell (55%), Lynn (33%) and High (21%).

Outputs

The reported outputs that were directly related to the NMI projects were varied and included webpages, on-line resources, books and journal articles.

All projects had a webpage on NCRMs website with information about the project; some projects also developed webpages linked to their own institutions. These webpages, at a minimum, contained information about the

² Additional funding from the ESRC enabled 3 projects to be funded in 2005, 3 projects were also funded in 2007 as only one had been funded the previous year.

project, the events held and provided links to the presentations given. Some projects developed more substantial websites and included reading materials, resources, blogs and discussion forums (Cameron, High, Crossley, Norval, Moore). Two projects provided extensive training materials in specific methods via their websites (Cameron, High).

In the case of five of the nine NMI projects, books, book chapters or journal articles were prepared drawing directly on the material generated from the project (Brannen, Holmwood, Cameron, Crossley, Moore). Three projects also prepared NCRM Methods Review papers which are available via NCRMs website (Jowell, Norval, Moore).

A range of other outcomes appeared to be, or were reported as, *related* to NMI project funding. These included: successful applications for research funding (Brannen, Jowell, Cameron, High, Lynn, Crossley); related publications (Jowell, Lynn, Cameron, Moore, Norval); subsequent presentations and training events (all projects); the development of research centres in the topic area (Crossley, High); collaborative activities (Crossley, Lynn); and, the development of teaching or training programmes (Holmwood, High). Although it is difficult to directly attribute these outcomes to NMI funding several award-holders noted that these developments might not have occurred if the NMI project had not taken place.

Award-Holders Comments

Comments made by award-holders about the NMI scheme related to the importance of the scheme in stimulating knowledge, understanding and take-up of specific methodological approaches. Various developments and spin-offs of the project were also identified. Appendix C contains comments made by award-holders.

Conclusion

Exploring the longer term outcomes of these NMI projects has proved a useful exercise. The NMI projects funded during this period have made an important contribution to NCRMs remit to stimulate development or enhance understanding of methods. Project outputs have been varied but most have gone beyond the minimum expected of NMI projects and developed outputs that have the potential to 'reach out' to the wider social science community and enhance understanding, knowledge, and skills in a range of innovative or developing methodologies or approaches. The dissemination of project outputs is clearly crucial and the use of on-line materials, including NCRM methodological reviews, is important. Projects have certainly made good use of on-line tools to communicate materials. Projects funded since 2008 have been encouraged to provide NCRM Methods Review papers which provide researchers with a synthesis of current knowledge on a topic and these appear to be popular resources. The challenge is to ensure that the social science community is made aware of the resources that are available and that they are easily accessible. NCRM has worked alongside grant-holders of projects to disseminate the resources that emerge from these projects to the wider social science community via a range of communication channels, primarily via our website and the NCRM e-bulletin.

In the second phase of NCRM Hub funding (1/4/09-31/3/14) there is funding for 10 NMI projects (two per year). Projects for 2009-10 and 2010-11 have already been awarded. It is anticipated that for the remaining 3 year period, an open call for projects will be issued in order to encourage a broad range of applications but applicants will be asked to make reference to the NCRM Research Needs Assessment (2009) in making the case for their project. The call for applications issued in 2010 will continue to stress the importance of a range of outputs being developed, including methodological reviews. Assessment of expected outputs will form a central issue in the peer review of applications.

Appendix 1: NMI Projects 2005-2009

Name	Topic	Cost	Events	Participant Numbers ³	Discipline/Sector of Event Participants ⁴	Outputs	Subsequent/planned outputs or further work ⁵
J. Brannen, Institute of Education	Cross-national comparative research (2005-6)	£24,970	3x1day workshops 1x2day training seminars	124	Sociology, social policy, education, psychology, geography. 'Mostly' academics	Papers/ presentations on NMI webpage	Edited book; RDI project (2010-12); Involvement in ESRC Comparative methods Initiative; Presentations UK and international; Course for doctoral students in Norway
R. Jowell, City University	Mixed mode data collection in social surveys (2005-6)	£19,461	1 day Conference 1 day expert workshop	90 (75 at conference; 14 at expert workshop)	Statistics, sociology. 55% [41/75] non-academic participants.	Presentation on NMI webpage; NCRM Methodological Review paper; Report on expert workshop.	Publications; presentations; 2 EC projects grants.
J. Holmwood, University of Sussex	Cross-cultural and comparative methods (2005-6)	£25,000 [+ £11k from Sussex]	3x2day seminars [and closing conference funded by University of Sussex]	108	Anthropology, geography, sociology, politics, development studies. 5% (6/108) non-academics.	Papers/ presentations on NMI webpage; archived webpage	Edited book; Developed MSC in comparative and cross-cultural research methods; 3 Grant applications (unsuccessful); Mentoring 2 post-docs; Member ESRC working party.

³ Participant numbers reflect the total number reported across all events unless stipulated.

⁴ Disciplines in which less than 5 participants attended are not listed.

⁵ References, links and further information on all outputs are provided separately on page 7

L. Cameron, University of Leeds	Metaphor analysis (2006-7)	£24,997	3x2day expert workshops 1x2day training workshop	68 (16 at each expert workshop; 20 at training workshop)	Management; education; arts and humanities; linguistics; psychology. 15% (3/20) non- academics at training event	Webpage with papers/ presentations; dedicated website with various material including: metaphor analysis procedures; data; annotated bibliography.	Edited book (in press); ESRC Research Fellowship; contribution to publications; ongoing interest in website (16,349 hits since November 2007)
C. High, Open University	Participatory video. (2007-8)	£24,171	Launch and final conference; 5 training events over 3 days; online activities; evaluation meeting	119	Management; geography; education; arts & humanities; development studies; social work; sociology. 21% (25/119) non- academics.	Dedicated website with papers, reading lists, discussions & resources including training curriculum and youtube videos of training exercises	Network is ongoing and active; ESRC seminar series; Network project funded by the Arts Council; expansion of research interest group at OU; applications for research funding; presentations.
P. Lynn, University of Essex	Longitudinal survey data quality (2007-8)	£19,213	2x1day expert seminars 1x2day workshop 1xjunior researcher exchange	111	Statistics; education; economics; sociology; medical sciences; social policy; psychology. 33% [37/111] non academic participants	Papers/ presentations on web page	Further collaborations; Journal submission; 2 Grant applications; Input into Survey Resources Network; Contribution to International Workshop on Panel Survey Methods.
N. Crossley, University of Manchester	Social network analysis (2007-8)	£23,090	4x1day seminar 2x1day workshops	135	Sociology; social policy; statistics; management; medical sciences. 10% [14/135] non- academic participants	Papers/ presentations & links to other resources on web page	Special issue of journal; further work with Government researchers; Leverhulme grant; development of SNA Centre.

N. Moore, University of Manchester	Archiving and reusing qualitative data (2008-9)	£22,689	4x1 day seminars 1x2 day conference	170	Sociology; arts & humanities; economic and social history. 11% [7/59] ⁶ non academic participants.	Papers/ presentations on webpage; NCRM Methodological Review paper.	Book under contract with Sage; journal papers published; presentations; grant application to EPSRC.
A. Norval, University of Essex	Discourse analysis (2008-9)	£24,092	2x2 day conferences; 1x2 day workshop 3x1 day master classes 1x1 day seminar	193	Politics; linguistics; management; psychology; sociology; arts & humanities. 6% [5/86] non- academic participants	Papers/ Presentations, podcasts and reading lists on web page; NCRM Methodological Review paper	Presentations; exploring possibility of DA handbook with Sage

⁶ Data available on only 59 of participants.

Appendix 2

Detailed Information on Outputs and Outcomes

Brannen (2005-6)

1. ESRC RDI proposal on International Comparative research training. Project to commence in May 2010.
2. Successful launch of £1m International Comparative methods Initiative under RRB.
3. Edited book (and specific book chapter): *Work, Families and Organisations in Transition* (eds S Lewis, J Brannen, A Nilsen) Palgrave 2009.
4. Several presentations at international conferences and seminars in the UK on the use of qualitative biographical and case study methods in cross national research.
5. Course for doctoral students in Norway in comparative methods
6. NCRM Project webpage:
<http://www.ncrm.ac.uk/research/other/NMI/2005/juliabrannenstrp04-05.php>

Jowell (2005-6)

1. Research funding:
 - 2006: 'European Social Survey Infrastructure – Improving social measurement in Europe' – a €6 million EC 6th Framework Programme 'Integrated Infrastructure Initiative (I3)' grant
 - 2008: 'The European Social Survey Infrastructure Preparatory Phase' – a €1.5 million European Commission (EC) 7th Framework Programme Infrastructures grant.
2. Publications:
 - Jäckle, A., Roberts, C. and Lynn, P. (Forthcoming) Assessing the Effect of Data Collection Mode on Measurement. *International Statistical Review*.
 - Roberts, C., Jäckle, A. and Lynn, P. (Forthcoming) *Mixing Modes on the European Social Survey: Implications for Data Quality*. *Journal of Official Statistics*.
 - Eva, G. & Jowell, R. (2009) 'Selecting the mode of data collection in a cross-national survey'. *Research World* February, 2009 No.6
 - Roberts, C. E., Eva, G. & Widdop, S. (2008) *Assessing the Demand and Capacity for Mixing Modes of Data Collection on the European Social Survey: Final Report of the Mapping Exercise*. Working paper for the Centre for Comparative Social Surveys, City University, London.
 - Jäckle, A., Roberts, C. and Lynn, P. (2008) Assessing the Effect of Data Collection Mode on Measurement. *ISER Working Paper 2008-08*. Colchester: University of Essex.
 - Roberts, C. E., Jäckle, A., & Lynn, P. (2007). Causes of mode effects: Separating out interviewer and stimulus effects in comparisons of face-to-face and telephone surveys. *Proceedings of the Social Research Methods Section of the American Statistical Association*.
 - Roberts, C., Jäckle, A. and Lynn, P. (2006) Causes of Mode Effects: Separating out Interviewer and Stimulus Effects in Comparisons of Face-to-Face and Telephone Surveys. *Proceedings of the Survey Research Methods Section*, Washington DC: American Statistical Association.

Jäckle, A., Roberts, C. and Lynn, P. (2006) Telephone versus Face-to-Face Interviewing: Mode Effects on Data Quality and Likely Causes (Report on Phase II of the ESS-Gallup Mixed Mode Methodology Project). *Working Paper of the Institute for Social and Economic Research*, paper 2006-41. Colchester: University of Essex.

3. NCRM methods Review paper <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/418/>

4. NCRM Project webpage:

<http://www.ncrm.ac.uk/research/other/NMI/2005/rogerjowellstrp04-05.php>

Holmwood (2005-6)

1. Edited book: S. Coleman and P von Hellerman. *Multi-Sited Ethnography: Problems and Possibilities in the Translocation of Research Methods* London: Routledge, 2009.

2. Development of an interdisciplinary MSc in Comparative and Cross-Cultural Research Methods at University of Sussex:

<http://www.sussex.ac.uk/Units/publications/pgrad2009/areasofstudy/Migration%20studies/20049>

3. Co-ordination of bids for subsequent funding, two to the Researcher Development Initiative and one to Leverhulme (unsuccessful).

4. Contribution to ESRC working party on comparative methods training.

5. Development of a broader project on the impact of globalisation on the social sciences.

6. Mentoring of two post-doctoral students who have developed interests in multi-sited research QCA.

7. NCRM Project webpage:

<http://www.ncrm.ac.uk/research/other/NMI/2005/johnholmwoodstrp04-05.php>

8. Project website:

<http://www.ncrm.ac.uk/research/other/NMI/2005/www.sussex.ac.uk/soccul/1-3-2.html>

Cameron (2006-7)

1. Edited book: Cameron, L. & Maslen, R. (eds) (in press) *Metaphor Analysis: Research Practice in Applied Linguistics, Social Sciences and the Humanities*. London (Equinox).

2. ESRC Research Fellowship, Global Uncertainties Programme, 1/7/09-30/6/10 'Living with uncertainty: empathy and the dynamics of metaphor in discourse'.

3. Contribution to publications of applicant and other network members:

Cameron, L. 2007. Confrontation or complementarity? Metaphor in language use and cognitive metaphor theory. *Annual Review of Cognitive Linguistics*, 5, 107-135.

Cameron, L. Maslen, R., Todd, Z., Maule, J., Stratton, & N. Stanley. 2009. The discourse dynamics approach to metaphor and metaphor-led discourse analysis. *Metaphor & Symbol*, 24, 1-27

L. David Ritchie (in press). "You're lying to Jesus!" Humor and play in a discussion about homelessness. To appear in *Humor*.

L. David Ritchie (2009). Relevance and Simulation in Metaphor. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 24, 249 - 262.

- L. David Ritchie and Char Schell (2009). "The ivory tower" on an "unstable foundation": Playful Language, Humor, and Metaphor in the Negotiation of Scientists' Identities. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 24, 90 - 104.
- Cynthia-Lou Coleman, L. David Ritchie, and Heather Hartley (2008).. Dispensing information or dispensing propaganda? Frames and metaphors in news coverage of prescription drug advertising. *Journal of Health and Mass Communication*, 1, 108-127.
- L. David Ritchie. (2008). X IS A JOURNEY: Embodied simulation in metaphor interpretation. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 23, 174-199.
- L. David Ritchie and Dyehouse, Valrie. (2008). FINE AS FROG'S HAIR: Three Models for the Development of Meaning in Figurative Language. *Metaphor and Symbol*, 23, 85-107.
- L. David Ritchie. (2008). Gateshead revisited: The integrative function of ambiguous metaphors in a tricky political situation. *Metaphor and Symbol* 23, 24 - 49.

4. Project website (with resources, training materials and data):

<http://creet.open.ac.uk/projects/metaphor-analysis/index.cfm>

5. NCRM Project webpage:

<http://www.ncrm.ac.uk/research/other/NMI/2006/shorttermprojects0506.php>

High (2007-8)

1. ESRC seminar series 'visual dialogues: new agenda in inequalities research' (led by network member Helen Lomax).
2. Arts Council funded network project working with media professionals exploring the use of participatory media. See: <http://www.catchermedia.co.uk/flyer.html>
3. Applications for research funding to ESRC. Invitation to participate in research funding applications to Joseph Rowntree and Seventh Framework Programme (FP7).
4. Expansion of Participatory Video Group at the Open University leading to four research bids.
5. Invitation to write a book with Sage on the use of video in research
6. Invitation to speak at international and national conferences.
7. Project website (including active discussions, blogs, resources) <http://community.eldis.org/.5993f371/>
8. NCRM project webpage <http://www.ncrm.ac.uk/research/other/NMI/2007/nmi.php>

Lynn (2007-8)

1. Collaborations: with international seminar presenters and seminar attendees resulting in research applications and publications.
2. Discussion at seminar 2 has influenced a grant application being made by researchers at ISER in collaboration with Professor Fred Conrad from the University of Michigan to pursue issues of longitudinal survey Measurement.
3. The discussion of interviewer continuity at seminar 1 inspired a field experiment that was carried out by NatCen in 2009 on their Omnibus Survey, these data are now being used as part of an ESRC SDMI project on panel attrition.

4. Discussion between network members has resulted in a successful proposal to the Australian Research Council which will include research exchange visits between the applicants at based at institutions in Essex, Melbourne and Berlin.
5. Gundi Knies, who took part in the researcher exchange, has continued to collaborate with researchers from CLS on issues regarding data linkage on Understanding Society and the birth cohort studies.
6. Some of the issues raised in discussion in the two seminars are now being taken forward as part of the work of the ESRC Survey Resources Network in developing a strategic vision for survey methods.
7. A number of the issues raised at both seminars were referred to again or developed further by a number of contributors at the International Workshop on Panel Survey Methods in July 2008.
8. NCRM Project webpage:
<http://www.ncrm.ac.uk/research/other/NMI/2007/nmi3.php>
9. Project website:
<http://www.iser.essex.ac.uk/ulsc/events/20070704/>.

Crossley (2007-8)

1. Special Issue of Methodological Innovations online, 2009, v4 (1) [5 papers and an introduction] <http://www.methodologicalinnovations.org/viewissue.html>
2. Grant from Leverhulme 2008, 'Networks, protests and students: the politicising effects of campus connections'.
3. Collaborations: with Government researchers, industry and academics.
4. Setting up of the Mitchell Centre for Social Network Analysis at University of Manchester
5. Project website:
<http://www.socialsciences.manchester.ac.uk/disciplines/sociology/about/staff/crossley/seminars/index.html>
6. NCRM Project webpage:
<http://www.ncrm.ac.uk/research/other/NMI/2007/nmi2.php>

Moore (2008-9)

1. Book under contract with Sage: Geiger, Moore & Savage 'Reusing qualitative data'.
2. Papers published in Ariadne (further papers also planned during 2010):
 - Ariadne, Issue 60, July 2009**
 - J. Palmer [Archives 2.0: If We Build It, Will They Come?](#)
 - S. Hawkins & A. Tanner [The Historic Hospitals Admission Records Project](#)
 - Ariadne, Issue 61, October 2009**
 - M. Kennedy [Cautionary Tales: Archives 2.0 and the Diplomatic Historian](#)
 - P. Bevan [Share. Collaborate. Innovate. Building an Organisational Approach to Web 2.0](#)
3. NCRM Methods Review Paper (in review)
4. Invited conference and seminar presentations
5. Grant application to EPSRC
6. Project website:

<http://www.cresc.ac.uk/events/archived/archiveseries/papers.html>

7. NCRM Project webpage:

<http://www.ncrm.ac.uk/research/other/NMI/2008/niamhmoore.php>

Norval (2008-9)

1. NCRM Methods Review Paper: <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/796/>

2. Presentations at seminars

3. Project webpage (including background reading and presentations):

https://www.essex.ac.uk/centres/Theostud/nmi_results_bkgd-read.html

4. NCRM project webpage:

<http://www.ncrm.ac.uk/research/other/NMI/2008/anorval.php>

Appendix 3

Comments from NMI award-holders

NMI grant holders were invited to comment on the NMI scheme and how they felt it had impacted on them, the broader research community and/or the area in which their project focused. The following comments were received:

Looking back now, I think the network helped to stimulate contacts, collaboration and research in the area. It is of course impossible to establish the counterfactual: some of the developments may have taken place even without the stimulus of the network activity. We will never know. But I do think that the NMI scheme in general has been very successful. It has found a niche for the kind of activity that is really important but is unlikely to be funded by any other source. It is mainly about bringing researchers together to share and discuss ideas, so the results are almost by definition somewhat intangible, but this by no means renders them less valuable.

[Peter Lynn]

The project has helped to disseminate to other social science researchers the potential of metaphor analysis as a methodological tool. For members of the project team, the major benefits came from testing and refining our methods through application to a wider range of research issues and data types. Personally, I am delighted to have forged research collaborations with project members that continue to bring benefits for all involved. One of the core members of the network team wrote: "I definitely benefited in terms of a greater awareness of methodological issues, and of the needs of scholars doing metaphor analysis in fields other than linguistics/discourse analysis." The US member of the project commented "My own participation in these workshops helped my scholarly work in at least two ways: It provided an opportunity to test and refine some ideas I had been working on for several years, and it provided an opportunity to incorporate ideas from other participants into my own thinking. The influence of the discussions I had with other participants both formally, in the workshop sessions, and informally is apparent in several subsequent book chapters and journal articles, and in an extended research project (funded by Portland State University) that I am currently engaged in. "

[Lynne Cameron]

Thank you very much for giving us the opportunity to run our seminar series. There have been a number of key developments in network analysis here at Manchester, since we ran the series, including the formation of a new centre devoted to the method(s), and these were undoubtedly bolstered by the impetus that the seminars provided. In addition, we developed many useful contacts and, we believe, managed to raise the profile of the UK in the international network analysis community.

[Nick Crossley]

From the start I thought this a key area where a lot of methodological development and training was needed. Certainly there was very good feedback from the participants and a large demand for places at the seminar especially from researchers from overseas or non UK citizens.

[Julia Brannen]

The workshop and seminar provided important guidance at an early stage of the ESS's mixed mode research, which is ongoing. Since the events, interest in mixed mode data collection has grown greatly. However, the events had the potential to influence survey research beyond the ESS as they brought together both survey practitioners and survey experts from around the world. Since 2005, research in this field has grown worldwide, and particularly in the UK, following the ESRC Survey Design and Measurement Initiative, which identified mixed mode data collection as a key area for research. The methodological review is still one of a very few comprehensive reviews of the literature on mixed mode research.

[Roger Jowell]

We believe the series has been crucial in creating a space where different projects, disciplines, and professions could meet and share accounts of working practices, histories and planned future trajectories, in a way that otherwise most of these projects/individuals etc would not have had the resources to do so. The series provided some valuable thinking space, particular for us at CRESC, free of the challenges and exigencies of a specific empirical project. The most exciting and most recent development is a joint funding bid with the Institute of Transport Studies, at the University of Leeds, which would enable us to take the insights of the series into an empirical project.

[Niamh Moore]

I think the network has been critical for the use of PV in the social sciences. It's hard to say whether the way that the topic has become so widespread led to the success of the network or vice-versa, but I think the fact that so many researchers in the field are now aware of one another and sharing ideas and opportunities is a key outcome of the network. As for awareness of PV in the wider social science community, I think the case is more clear cut - the NCRM supported network has been critical, and events such as the Visual Methods conference last year affirmed that researchers who use PV are well integrated into a broad community of academics and practitioners.

[Chris High]

NATIONAL CENTRE FOR RESEARCH METHODS SEVENTH CALL FOR PROPOSALS FOR NETWORKS FOR METHODOLOGICAL INNOVATION

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM) aims to stimulate imaginative developments in methods and to be responsive to new methodologically-related needs and opportunities as they arise within the social science community. Its overall mission is to provide a strategic focal point for the identification, development and delivery of an integrated national research and training programme aimed at promoting a step change in the quality and range of methodological skills and techniques used by the UK social science community. Information about the Centre's activities can be found at www.ncrm.ac.uk
- 1.2 As a complement to its longer-term research programme, the Centre commissions an annual series of network-based events focusing on research methods. The aim of the scheme is to enable networks of researchers to meet in order to stimulate debate and develop ideas (with associated outputs) in relation to methodological innovation. The scheme allows a series of events and related activities to be undertaken over a period of one year. NCRM will normally fund two projects per year, with a maximum budget of £24,000 per project. The focus of previous calls have been comparative research (2004), the integration of theory and methods (2005), topics arising from NCRM's 2006 Research Needs Assessment (2007). Open calls were issued in 2006 and 2008. For details of funded projects over the last five years see: <http://www.ncrm.ac.uk/research/other/NMI/>

2. Focus of the call in 2010

- 2.1 This year the call is open and proposals are invited for a series of network-based events on any methodological topic. However, proposals are particularly welcomed in the topic areas identified in the Research Needs Assessment conducted by NCRM in 2009 (see: <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/810/>)
- 2.2 Applications are invited from social scientists from any social science discipline.

3. Scope of NCRM Networks for Methodological Innovation

- 3.1 Network projects are expected to engage in one of two types of activities:
- catalysing activities: stimulating research and promoting debate on new methodological challenges in specific methodological areas of interest
 - synthesising activities: reviewing developments within a specific methodological field and/or identifying commonalities between different fields.
- 3.2 It is expected that network projects will be largely event-based. This might include any, or all, of the following:
- small expert workshops between network members designed to facilitate intensive research interaction;
 - opening and closing meetings open to wider audiences;
 - visits by junior researchers to other network members and their international visitors;
 - specialist ICT fora for exchange of information between network members;
 - related training events, including both those targeted at network members and those targeted at wider audiences as part of a network's dissemination strategy.

- 3.3 In line with the Centre's broader remit, the proposed series of events should contribute to the envisaged step change in the quality and range of methodological skills and techniques used by the UK social science community. They should be orientated towards stimulating new ideas and improving understanding of methods and of the connections between methods and disciplines.
- 3.4 It is expected that series of events will be network-based as opposed to institutionally-based, usually develop out of existing networks of researchers from across the UK social science community rather than teams of researchers based at single institutions. Networks should, where relevant, include non-academic researchers as well as potential users of research. Where appropriate, the planned events should be open to interested and suitably experienced participants outside of the network.
- 3.5 Where possible, proposals should include plans for the active participation of international visitors, usually experts in the relevant field, thus facilitating networking between UK social scientists and their counterpart communities overseas and raising the profile of UK social science methodology among the international research community.
- 3.6 Proposals should be characterised by a common focus on method rather than discipline. This may be reflected in the interdisciplinary composition of networks and/or in the demonstration of transferability to other disciplines or substantive contexts.
- 3.7 Proposals may have the potential for subsequent development into a full grant proposal, playing a pump-priming role for more developed research grant applications, and providing pointers to further research agendas that potentially could be met through ESRC funding.
- 3.8 Proposals should include training and capacity building amongst other expected outputs, and should include plans for imaginative forms of dissemination beyond the immediate network.
- 3.9 Networks will be expected to produce a range of outputs. Applicants are encouraged to consider undertaking a methodological review paper to form part of NCRM's methodological review series (see <http://www.ncrm.ac.uk/research/other/method/>). These papers provide a detailed review of specific methods and can be up to 10,000 words in length. They are made available from the NCRM website for downloading but remain the property of the author and may, if this is acceptable to the journal in question, also be published elsewhere.
- 3.10 Details of expected outputs, such as methodological review papers, reports on expert meetings, training materials and bibliographies should be provided in proposals. It is expected that networks will archive materials produced from the project as well as slides from presentations at network events and that these will be archived and made available via applicant's own institutional websites. NCRM is not able to provide technical support for the archiving of material from projects.
- 3.11 Networks will be expected to provide details of their project for the NCRM website; a link from this will be made to Network's institutional websites for further information.
- 3.12 A final report detailing the contribution of the network to the broader NCRM remit will be required.

4. Organisation

- 4.1 Funding of up to a maximum of £24,000 per series is available to cover:
- travel and subsistence costs of core UK-based network members (up to a suggested maximum of 20);

- travel and subsistence costs for international visitors;
 - travel and subsistence costs for guest speakers;
 - subsistence costs of additional participants at open meetings (up to a suggested maximum of 20 additional participants per event, i.e. 40 participants in total);
 - subsistence costs of non-network members at dissemination and training events;
 - travel and subsistence for UK-based junior researchers associated with a network (e.g. PhD students; junior research staff) to other institutions in the network;
 - room hire for project events;
- 4.2 **Please note that funding is not available to cover staff time (this includes academic, administrative and technical staff time). This scheme does not attract FEC.** Speaker fees are admissible only if a special case can be made.
- 4.3 Each series of events will be expected to run over a maximum period of twelve months from April 2010-March 2011.
- 4.4 The scientific content and planning of events will be the responsibility of each successful network. The Hub will liaise with the project lead in relation to the programme of events in order to facilitate collaboration between the Centre and the network. Administrative staff at the Hub can provide advice on organizational aspects of a project such as booking of venues and publicity.
- 4.5 NCRM has a remit to ensure the involvement in its activities of social scientists from across the different regions and countries of the UK. It is important that applicants take this into account in their proposals. Consideration should be given to this in the planning of any open meetings. Applicants might like to consider the use of access grid technologies to widen the scope of their potential network membership. Applicants may also wish to consider the use of ESRC Regional Training Centres as venues for their events. See <http://www.rdi.ac.uk/links.asp> for details.

5. Application process

- 5.1 Application forms are available from the NCRM website (<http://www.ncrm.ac.uk>). The original application and two copies should be sent to arrive by the closing date of **Friday June 26th, 2009** to:
The Administrator,
The National Centre for Research Methods,
School of Social Sciences,
University of Southampton,
Highfield,
Southampton. SO17 1BJ.
- An electronic version of the application should also be sent as an email attachment to N.D.Jackson@soton.ac.uk to arrive by midday on **Friday, June 26th, 2009**. Please note that emailing an application will not be accepted as a substitute to submitting in time for the deadline. **Applications postmarked after June 26th 2009 will not be accepted.**
- 5.2 Applications will be peer reviewed. They will also be assessed by the NCRM Hub Management Group in conjunction with the NCRM Advisory Committee. Full membership of the Committee is available on the NCRM website at: <http://www.ncrm.ac.uk/about/organisation/Advisory/> Decisions will be announced in December 2009.
- 5.3 Awards under this scheme will be made directly by the National Centre for Research Methods on behalf of the ESRC. Contractual arrangements will therefore be between the University of Southampton (as represented by NCRM) and the

grantholder's institution, and will be issued in line with the standard terms and conditions of the ESRC, to whom the NCRM is accountable.

6. Further queries

Please address any further queries to Rose Wiles at the NCRM. Contact details:
r.a.wiles@soton.ac.uk.