

## ESRC Government Forum on Research Methods

28 October 2004, at The Royal Society, London

### Summary of Discussion

Participants at the forum came from a wide range of government departments as well as the National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM), the Research Methods Programme (RMP) and ESRC. The meeting sought to identify needs relating to research, training and capacity building in research methods as well as to identify opportunities to address these needs via engagement and co-operation between government and NCRM (and academia more generally). The half-day meeting included the following presentations.

<b>Title</b>	<b>Presenter</b>	<b>Affiliation</b>
Welcome	Ian Diamond	Chief Executive of ESRC
The ESRC National Centre for Research Methods	Chris Skinner	Director of NCRM, University of Southampton
The ESRC Research Methods Programme	Angela Dale	Director of Research Methods Programme, University of Manchester
An Example of Cooperation	Steven Morris Ian Plewis	Department for Work and Pensions Institute of Education, University of London
NCRM Engagement with Government – NCRM Ideas	Jackie Powell	Co-Director of NCRM, University of Southampton
NCRM Engagement with Government - Government Perspective	Sue Duncan	Head of Government Social Research, Cabinet Office

The presentations were followed by discussion of needs and opportunities in break-out groups. The outcomes of these discussions were brought together in a final plenary session. The table overleaf summarises the outcome of the discussions. Needs and opportunities for collaboration are summarised under the headings: ‘research’, ‘training and capacity building’ and ‘information, resources and communication’.

	<b>Needs</b>	<b>Opportunities</b>
<b>Research</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Lengthy list of specific methodological areas with identified research needs</li> <li>- Higher profile for <i>methods</i> research per se</li> <li>- Build on what already exists</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Map needs in specific methodological areas to nodes (and broader methodological community) to identify collaborative opportunities</li> <li>- CASE studentships, joint projects/proposals, methods reviews</li> </ul>
<b>Training and Capacity Building</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Coordination</li> <li>- Regional delivery</li> <li>- Unmet needs in specific methodological areas</li> <li>- Need for <i>basic</i> training</li> <li>- Promote “research mentality”</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Variety of types of training events</li> <li>- Joint seminars</li> <li>- Node and hub events</li> <li>- Variety of placements and secondments</li> </ul>
<b>Information, Resources and Communication</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- build on what exists</li> <li>- access to information (both within and outside government)</li> <li>- better dissemination of methods used in research</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- establish joint methods group at some level</li> <li>- a methods forum</li> <li>- “first port of call” brokerage role for NCRM</li> <li>- Develop role for associate membership and affiliated projects</li> </ul>