



INVITATION TO TENDER: SCOPING STUDY TO ASSESS THE SCIENTIFIC NEED FOR A 2011/2012 COHORT

Closing date for tenders: 4pm on Friday 2nd March 2007

Executive Summary

1. To support the development of the *National Data Strategy for Data Resources for Research in the Social Sciences*¹ the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) initiated a *Strategic Review of Panel and Cohort Studies*² (hereafter referred to as the Strategic Review). The Strategic Review was commissioned in order to establish the research requirements for a new UK longitudinal study and to consider the future development of the birth and other age cohort studies.
2. One of the main conclusions of the Strategic Review was that the world renowned series of British Birth Cohort Studies are effective vehicles for studying the relationship between the human life course and exposure to different biological and environmental (social and physical) influences. The Strategic Review made a number of recommendations concerning the long-term sustainability of this series.
3. Key amongst these recommendations was that a new cohort study should be started in or around 2011/2012 in order to maintain the 12 year interval established between other major birth cohort studies. The recommendation stated that this should be preceded by scoping new designs to determine whether to concentrate data collection in one year or spread it over several years, and also whether to start all cohorts at birth or some at later stages in the life course.
4. Before moving forward with these recommendations, the ESRC has decided to commission a study which will consider in more depth the scientific case for a 2011/2012 cohort study. As a result, tenders are now being sought for a scoping study to assess the potential benefits that would accrue if such a new cohort study was to be funded.

¹ A copy of this Strategy can be accessed at:

http://www.esrc.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Images/National_Data_Strategy_Final_tcm6-16581.pdf

² A copy of this Review can be accessed at:

http://www.esrc.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/Images/Strategic_Review_Panel_Cohort_Studies-Report_Appendices_tcm6-16583.pdf

Background

5. This scoping study is being commissioned within the context of the *National Data Strategy for Data Resources for Research in the Social Sciences* (hereafter referred to as the National Data Strategy, NDS). The NDS is a plan which aims to ensure that the national data infrastructure of the United Kingdom (UK) meets the demands which will be placed upon it to address both current and future research needs. It has been created by the UK Data Forum; a body that brings together those organisations with responsibilities for the development of the data resources. It builds on the work undertaken by many of these organisations to identify the key research challenges they will face over the next five to ten years. It also sets out a series of goals that must be met in the short term to provide the resources required to address the longer term research issues it has identified.
6. Four key research challenges have currently been prioritised as areas that are likely to require a wide range of data from a variety of sources. These are (i) the ageing population, (ii) migration, (iii) globalisation, and (iv) child development. The NDS identifies longitudinal data as a critical resource to support research in these areas, given that they provide detailed information about processes of change, often over long periods of time, for organisations, households and individuals. The importance of such data relates to their ability to capture information on transitions and to relate these to longer term outcomes.
7. Within the framework of the NDS, this scoping study will assess the scientific need for a 2011/2012 cohort as recommended by the *Strategic Review of Panel and Cohort Studies* (hereafter referred to as the Strategic Review). The Strategic Review was commissioned in order to establish the research requirements for a new UK longitudinal study and to consider the future development of the birth and age cohort studies. The NDS gives a commitment that the ESRC will work with funding partners following the Strategic Review and that it will act quickly upon its recommendations.
8. One of the main recommendations from the Strategic Review was that a new cohort study should be started in or around 2011/2012 to maintain the twelve year interval series that typifies earlier birth cohort studies. This should be preceded by scoping new designs to determine whether to concentrate data collection in one year or spread it over several years, and also whether to start all cohorts at birth or some at later stages of the life course.
9. Before moving forward with these recommendations, the ESRC has decided to commission a study which will consider in more depth the scientific case for a 2011/2012 cohort study. This scoping study is therefore being commissioned by the ESRC to provide the evidence base for any decision to fund a further cohort study. The Strategic Review also made a number of other recommendations concerning longitudinal studies. It is expected that the scoping study will give due consideration to these other recommendations as they may relate to the scientific case for a new 2011/2012 cohort study.

Terms of reference

10. The overall aim of this study is to scope the scientific need for a cohort study in 2011/2012.
11. The specific Terms of Reference for the study are to:
 - assess the scientific case for a cohort study in or around 2011/2012;
 - advise on alternative design options for a new cohort study and to recommend the most appropriate design options;
 - advise on the most appropriate timing and interval of any new cohort study.

Conduct of the Scoping Study

12. It is likely that the range of expertise needed for this study will require the formation of a team of experts. Such a consultancy team is expected to consist of leading researchers in the field of longitudinal studies. All members of the team will be leading experts in their field and will have a broad understanding of the key research issues that are best addressed through longitudinal research, as well as expertise in longitudinal research design.
13. The consultancy team will be responsible for engaging with key academic and research users to identify the major scientific questions that might be addressed by a possible 2011/2012 cohort study, and on the most appropriate longitudinal design to underpin it.
14. The consultancy team will liaise closely with the ESRC's Expert Group for Panel and Cohort Studies. This Group consists of representatives from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the academic community and the ESRC. The Group will advise the consultancy team on their proposed strategy for undertaking the scoping study.
15. More specifically, the consultancy team will be expected to:
 - conduct desk-top research to identify the extent to which existing resources and planned future resources can meet the future needs of potential users of a 2011/2012 cohort;
 - undertake selective consultation with key UK academics to establish the specific core content of any new 2011/2012 cohort study;
 - engage in a select consultation with overseas academics to identify key research issues that could be explored via a new cohort study;
 - commission experts, as appropriate, in specific scientific areas to:
 - support the identification of core content for a potential 2011/2012 cohort study; and
 - analyse data collection design options; and
 - undertake select consultation with key research users on content and design issues
16. The consultancy team will be expected to produce a report of approximately 10,000 words addressing the key areas set out above.

17. It is anticipated that the scoping study will commence on **1st April 2007** and a final report submitted to the ESRC no later than **30th September 2007**.

Permissible Costs

18. Permissible costs under this scoping study consultancy include:

- consultancy budget – the ESRC does not work to a standard rate for such budgets, although do expect them to be well within the normal parameters for academic consultancies
- fees for the commissioning of any expert reports
- administrative support, or short-term hiring of research staff
- travel and subsistence costs, including those for attendees at any events
- fees for the hire of venues
- postage, photocopying and stationery
- VAT (if registered)

19. A maximum available budget for this scoping study is **£50,000** (inclusive of any VAT). A consultancy contract will be issued for this work and will therefore not incur Full Economic Costing. It can either be issued the host institution or privately.

20. The ESRC has specific guidance relating to consultancies undertaken by academics. This takes into account that established members of staff within the Higher Education (HE) sector are funded through the Higher Education Funding Councils (HEFC's). To ensure that the funding of consultancies does not contradict arrangement for the support of HEFC funded staff, the ESRC asks consultants to confirm that they have conducted less than 25 days consultancy work in any single year. This is the maximum upper limit that any HEFC funded academic is expected to undertake alongside their other duties.

Tender Format

21. Tenders should be no more than eight sides of A4 (excluding summary CV's) in length and be presented under the following headings:

- Introduction
This should include a summary of the bidder's relevant interest and experience, especially in relation to the fields of longitudinal studies and survey design.
- Aims
A clear description of the aims of the scoping study and the key issues that will need to be addressed.
- Methodology
A clear description of the proposed approach to undertaking the study relative to the Terms of Reference. This should include plans for conducting the scoping study and strategy for selective consultation exercise.

- Work programme and timing
A description of the timetable for delivering the scoping study, with key milestones.
- Fee
*The budget available for this scoping study is **£50,000**. All costs for conducting the study should be justified along with associated explanation (please indicate where VAT is applicable).*
- Curriculum vitae
A brief C.V. (two sides of A4 maximum) for each of the key contributors should be attached to the tender.

Tender Submission and Closing Date

22. The closing date for the receipt of tenders is **4pm on Friday 2nd March 2007**.
23. Tenders must be clearly marked **‘Tender for 2011/2012 Cohort Scientific Need’** and include an original institution stamp and original signature. Two copies of the proposal should be posted to:

Records Management
Communications and Information Directorate
Economic and Social Research Council
Polaris House
North Start Avenue
Swindon
SN2 1UJ

24. Please note that faxed or emailed tenders will **not** be accepted. It is the bidders’ responsibility to ensure that the tender is delivered to the ESRC. Notification of receipt will be provided after the closing date.

Further Information

25. For further information or queries relating to this specification please contact :

Miss Siân Bourne
Policy and Resources Directorate
Economic and Social Research Council
Polaris House
North Star Avenue
Swindon
SN2 1UJ

Email: sian.bourne@esrc.ac.uk
Telephone: 01793 413164



INVITATION TO TENDER: SCOPING STUDY TO ASSESS POTENTIAL FOR LINKING THE BRITISH BIRTH COHORT SERIES, ANY POTENTIAL NEW 2011/2012 COHORT STUDY AND THE PROPOSED UK HOUSEHOLD LONGITUDINAL STUDY

Closing date for tenders: 4pm on Friday 2nd March 2007

Executive Summary

1. To support the development of the *National Data Strategy for Data Resources for Research in the Social Sciences*¹ the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) initiated a *Strategic Review of Panel and Cohort Studies*² (hereafter referred to as the Strategic Review). The Strategic Review was commissioned in order to establish the research requirements for a new UK longitudinal study and to consider the future development of the birth and other age cohort studies.
2. One of the main conclusions of the Strategic Review was that the world renowned series of British Birth Cohort Studies are effective vehicles for studying the relationship between the human life course and exposure to different biological and environmental (social and physical) influences. The Strategic Review therefore made a number of recommendations concerning the long-term sustainability of this series.
3. Key amongst these recommendations was that a new cohort study should be started in or around 2011/2012 in order to maintain the 12 year interval established between other major birth cohort studies. The recommendation stated that this should be preceded by scoping new designs to determine whether to concentrate data collection in one year or spread it over several years, and also whether to start all cohorts at birth or some at later stages in the life course. These recommendations are addressed by a separate scoping study designed to establish the scientific case for a new study and to advise on relevant design options.
4. Another key recommendation of the Strategic Review was the need for a substantial longitudinal study of UK households. In light of this recommendation the ESRC has successfully secured the funds to develop a new longitudinal study of approximately 40,000 UK Households, known as 'UK Households: a Longitudinal Study' (UKHLS). It is estimated that within a longitudinal household study of this size there will be approximately 800 to 900 new births per annum. It is planned that the

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UKHLS will be linked with a range of administrative and biomedical information making it the single and most comprehensive household longitudinal dataset in the world.

5. Tenders are now being sought from consultancy teams to undertake a scoping study to identify the potential for drawing together the British Birth Cohort Series, any potential new 2011/2012 cohort, and the UKHLS, designing these resources in such a way that they complement each other, facilitating cross cohort comparison and/or the selection of subpopulations from the UKHLS that might further enhance the birth cohort series.

Background

6. This scoping study is being commissioned within the context of the *National Data Strategy for Data Resources for Research in the Social Sciences* (hereafter referred to as the National Data Strategy, NDS). The NDS is a plan which aims to ensure that the national data infrastructure of the United Kingdom (UK) meets the demands which will be placed upon it to address both current and future research needs. It has been created by the UK Data Forum; a body that brings together those organisations with responsibilities for the development of the data resources. It builds on the work undertaken by many of these organisations to identify the key research challenges they will face over the next five to ten years. It also sets out a series of goals that must be met in the short term to provide the resources required to address the longer term research issues it has identified.
7. Four key research challenges have currently been identified as areas that are likely to require a wide range of data from a variety of sources. These are (i) the ageing population, (ii) migration, (iii) globalisation, and (iv) child development. The NDS identifies longitudinal data as a critical resource to support research in these areas as they provide detailed information about processes of change, often over long periods of time, for organisations, households and individuals. The importance of such data relates to their ability to capture information on transitions and to relate these to longer term outcomes.
8. Within the framework of the NDS, this scoping study will assess the potential for better linking the British Birth Cohort Series, any potential new cohort study in 2011/2012 and the UKHLS. Particular attention must be paid to the so-called 'gap' that exists between the 1970 birth cohort and the Millennium Cohort and the possibility that this gap could be addressed via the development of other longitudinal studies undertaken in England and Scotland.
9. The study will build upon the findings and recommendations arising from the separate scoping study designed to establish the scientific case for a new study and to advise on relevant design options (the 'scientific case' study). To achieve this, work will not commence until after the scientific case study has reported to the ESRC.

Terms of Reference

10. The overall aim of this study is to determine the best way of organising the existing birth cohort studies, any future cohort study and the UKHLS, so that the potential that exists within these studies to address major future research issues is maximised.
11. The specific Terms of Reference for the study are:
 - Building upon work to establish the scientific case for a cohort study in or around 2011/2012, to suggest how the existing birth cohort studies, a new cohort study and the UKHLS can be integrated to provide a new and more powerful longitudinal research resource;
 - With respect to the gap that exists between 1970 and 2000, when no UK-based longitudinal birth cohort was conducted, to examine the feasibility of adapting other longitudinal studies as a means of bridging this gap;
 - To advise on the appropriate research structures required to facilitate any proposed work to coordinate these various studies as a coherent research resource.

Conduct of the Scoping Study

12. It is likely that the range of expertise needed for this study will require the formation of a team of experts. Such a consultancy team is expected to consist of leading researchers in the field of longitudinal studies. All members of the team will be leading experts in their field and will have a broad understanding of the key research issues that are best addressed through longitudinal research, as well as expertise in longitudinal research design.
13. The consultancy team will liaise closely with the ESRC's Expert Group for Panel and Cohort Studies. This Group consists of representatives from the Office for National Statistics (ONS), the academic community and the ESRC. The Group will advise the consultancy team on their proposed strategy for undertaking the scoping study.
14. The consultancy team will be expected to produce a report of approximately 10,000 words addressing the key areas set out above.
15. It is anticipated that the scoping study will commence on **1st October 2007** and final report submitted to the ESRC no later than **31st January 2008**.

Permissible Costs

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- postage, photocopying and stationery
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17. A maximum available budget for this scoping study is **£25,000** (inclusive of any VAT). A consultancy contract will be issued for this work and will therefore not incur Full Economic Costing. It can either be issued the host institution or privately.
18. The ESRC has specific guidance relating to consultancies undertaken by academics. This takes into account that established members of staff within the Higher Education (HE) sector are funded through the Higher Education Funding Councils (HEFC's). To ensure that the funding of consultancies does not contradict arrangement for the support of HEFC funded staff, the ESRC asks consultants to confirm that they have conducted less than 25 days consultancy work in any single year. This is the maximum upper limit that any HEFC funded academic is expected to undertake alongside their other duties.

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Telephone: 01793 413164

Study to Examine the Scope which Exists to Inform Research at the Boundary of the Medical and Social Sciences

Background

There is a recognised need to provide new and powerful research resources that will facilitate research on issues which sit at the boundary between the medical and the social sciences. These include: childhood and adolescent development; fertility and childbearing; lifestyle, health and well being; ethnicity and health and various aspects of health and ageing. The proposed UK Households Longitudinal Study (UKHLS) has the potential to provide a research framework within which some of these issues might be explored.

The ESRC wishes to appoint a consultant to prepare a study which will examine the scope that exists to inform research in these areas. This study will assist with plans to prioritise future development of data and sample collections within the UKHLS. Particular attention needs to be given to plans already made (or potentially available in the future) for study of such issues using other longitudinal studies (e.g. Biobank, ALSPAC, NCDS and a possible new national cohort study starting around 2012).

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference for the scoping study are as follows:

The consultant will:

- consider the research potential within the new longitudinal study to address issues that will be not covered (or insufficiently covered) by other studies, particularly for issues which will promote engagement between the medical, biological and epidemiological research communities on the one hand and social science researchers on the other;
- consider the range of biomedical information required for such studies, including genetic materials and possibly neuroscience;
- examine the issues and problems involved;
- suggest mechanisms to promote the requisite 'transdisciplinary' research;
- suggest how potential funders may be engaged with the new study;
- report these findings in a written report suitable for circulation to a well-informed community of social and medical scientists; and
- assist with preparations for and help present these findings at a specially convened workshop to be organised by the ESRC in collaboration with other potential research funding agencies (e.g. MRC, Wellcome).

Fee

It is estimated that in its entirety the Study will take 15 working days, where it is proposed the consultant is paid £600 per day. It is also proposed that the fee incorporates a travel budget of £1000 to enable to consultant to consult with key figures in both the UK and the US. Therefore, the total proposed budget is **£10,000**.

Timescale

It is proposed that the consultant's contract be for 3 months, from 1st March 2007 to 31st May 2007. This will mean that the findings from the study can be presented at the July RRB meeting.