

# Definition of an ADRN project

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**EXTERNAL**

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**T** +44 (0)1206 873435

**E** [help@adrn.ac.uk](mailto:help@adrn.ac.uk)

[www.adrn.uk](http://www.adrn.uk)  
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## **Scope**

This policy establishes a set of criteria that defines a project suitable for acceptance by the ADRN.

This policy applies to:

- projects suitable for ADRN

This document does not cover:

- criteria for acceptance of projects by other research services

## **Purpose**

This policy aims to set out clearly the criteria projects must meet to access the services of the ADRN.

## **Definition of Terms**

See ADRN018-Glossary document for a list of definitions.

## 1. An ADRN Project - Definition

- The project is for non-commercial research purposes
- The project has evident potential public benefit
- There is a demonstrable value from using unit level administrative data to answer the research question.
- Projects must have an economic or social science focus, i.e. address issues that would come under the remit of the Economic and Social Research Council as defined in their Funding Guide available at <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/files/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-funding-guide>. This does not imply that projects need to be funded by the ESRC. Projects which are defined as not strongly focused on social science will be considered on a discretionary basis. Further advice on how to assess whether the project meets this definition is covered in section 4.
- The project does not constitute normal operational functions undertaken by government departments or their agencies.

## 2. An ADRN Project - Eligible people

The researcher must meet the requirements set out in ADRN013- ADRN Researcher.

## 3. An ADRN Project - Conditions

- All projects must be approved by the ADRN Independent Approvals Panel (assessed for ethics, privacy impact, feasibility, scientific merit, and potential public benefit).
- The project would not be more appropriately served by other existing services (e.g. UKDS Secure Lab, Longitudinal Studies, HMRC Data Lab, etc).
- The results of the project including all research outputs must be made available in the public domain. Where no formal publication mechanism is available the research results must be published as an ADRN working paper.
- The ADRN will be informed of all publications, presentations and other forms of dissemination that are produced in relation to ADRN research projects.
- The researcher will provide a maximum 2-page summary of research findings in accessible language for the data provider and the Network. These will be made publicly available on the ADRN website.
- The researcher must make copies of relevant code, syntax and documentation developed for the project available for reuse following the project end date. These materials must be appropriately structured and annotated to facilitate reuse.

## **4. Assessment whether the project has an economic or social science focus**

To assess whether a project meet this criterion a two track approach is followed:

- [Track 1] Standard route for projects defined as strongly economic or social science f focused in nature – will be eligible (as constrained by resources) for ADRN support. The test to meet this definition is set out in section 5.
- [Track 2] A discretionary route for projects that are not defined as strongly focused on social science.

A project that was identified as appropriate for the standard route would go to the ADRN Approvals Panel and through the normal assessment process. Projects put into the discretionary route would only be taken forward if there is capacity after Track 1 projects have been accounted for at the ADRC Director's (or their deputy's) discretion. For clarity, these projects will also still go to the ADRN Approvals Panel and through the normal assessment process.

## **5. The test for defining 'strongly economic or social science in focus'**

A research proposal might be defined as economic or social science in focus if it can be demonstrated that the core part of the study focuses on economic or social science questions (ie studying cultural, psychological, social, economic or religious phenomena etc.).

The use of core focus or a significant factor implies that there would be hypothesis or research question directly related to the social or economic issue in the proposal. That any paper, report emanating from the research would discuss at some length the social or economic issue in its findings.

The test of this is the following:

- [1] If there is no evidence of any social or economic science in the proposal – the project does not meet the criteria of an ADRN project.
- [2] If the main outcome of interest is economic or social in nature then the project will be considered track 1 (see section 4)
- [3] If a significant factor that is being examined as causally important economic or social in character then the project will be considered track 1 (see section 4)
- [4] If the use of social and economic variables is simply for characterisation, to produce matched samples then the project will be considered track 2 (see section 4)

## 6. Examples of application of the test

These examples are for clarity and are not designed to be a definitive list.

- Example a) the impact of asthma on a child's school attendance and achievement - would be track 1 (test 2)
- Example b) the measurement of unmet health need in a health economics study - would be track 1 (test 3)
- Example c) a non-randomised follow-up on survival after different types of surgeries where a measure of poverty was used to match groups - would be track 2 (test 4)
- Example d) a study of the different compliance to drug therapies between different social groups where the research question really focused on difference in health outcomes between different social groups (ie the socially produced differences in compliance was the focus of the study) – would be track 1 (test 3)
- Example e) a study of transport related pollution and its impact on the risk of developing heart disease – would be track 1 (test 3)
- Example f) a study of the long term impact of drug X on survival follow up of RCT where the follow up entirely in terms of an individual's health – would not be supported (test 1)