The Survey Question Bank (SQB) is a service providing a set of online survey research resources. It was set up as one strand of the ESRC-funded Survey Resources Network (SRN) in April 2009 in order to continue, enhance and extend its previous incarnation, the ESRC Question Bank (Qb).

Its core user constituencies are:

- social and economic researchers, wishing to find survey questions and search questionnaires as part of their ‘pre-analysis’
- commissioners/managers of survey research, working in all sectors, interested in seeing whether and how questions on their topics of interest have been framed in other surveys
- survey methodologists with a specific interest in questionnaire design
- teachers and trainers
- Ph.D./postgraduate students

1. Website

The SQB website (http://www.surveynet.ac.uk/sqb/) went live in June 2009, incorporating what had been inherited from the Qb. By the end of October 2011, the site had been extended to include the following key resources: question search; questionnaire (document) search; A-Z surveys; A-Z topics; ‘zones’ focusing on data collection, innovation, scales/instruments, harmonisation, international surveys and learning/teaching.

At the end of the award, the website’s most popular resources are the two search facilities – the question search and the questionnaire (document) search.
1.1 Question search

Version 1 of the question search was launched in April 2010. The search allows users to enter words and phrases into a freetext search box and match those words/phrases to the content of over 150,000 survey questions held in the Economic and Social Data Service’s (ESDS) Nesstar catalogue (http://nesstar.esds.ac.uk/webview/index.jsp).

From an initial results list, users may choose to look at a detailed record for a question. This record provides links to response frequencies/percentages for the question; to the full dataset held at the ESDS; to other instances of this question being used (both within and outside the survey it is associated with in the current search); and to the question itself within the associated PDF questionnaire.

A second release in May 2011 made some minor cosmetic changes and fixed some (trivial) bugs picked up by user testing. The detailed record for each question was also improved to include a link to the previous/next question in the survey and a link to the same search in ICPSR’s question bank (http://www.icpsr.umich.edu/icpsrweb/ICPSR/ssvd/index.jsp).

1.2 Questionnaire (document) search

Version 1 of the questionnaire (document) search was launched in November 2009. The search allows users to enter words and phrases into a freetext search box and match those words/phrases to the content of a wide variety of survey documents held in PDF; mostly questionnaires but also consent forms, advance letters, technical reports, interviewer instructions and showcards. Users may click on hyperlinked results to open the chosen PDF document with the words/phrases highlighted.

A second release in May 2011 fixed some (trivial) bugs picked up by user testing and enabled search terms to be imported from search boxes held on other SQB pages – e.g. users are able to search all ELSA documentation by entering words/phrases via a search box at http://www.surveynet.ac.uk/sqb/surveys/elsa.asp. This functionality was extended to allow ESDS Longitudinal users to make the same search via http://www.esds.ac.uk/longitudinal/access/elsa/questionnaires.asp.

At the end of the award, the search covers 2000+ survey documents from over 100 survey series going back to the 1960s.

1.3 Surveys and Topics pages

From March 2010, the SQB released two new suites of web pages. A set of pages on Surveys (http://www.surveynet.ac.uk/sqb/surveys/introduction.asp) provides an A-Z listing of the major UK and cross-national surveys with each survey having a dedicated page providing further information on the survey and links to associated resources.
A set of pages on Topics ([http://www.surveynet.ac.uk/sqb/topics/introduction.asp](http://www.surveynet.ac.uk/sqb/topics/introduction.asp)) was designed for those users who come to the service with a specific topic in mind and wish to see not only what questions have been asked in social surveys on that topic but also wish to understand the conceptual structure of a topic and the way it is reflected in the structuring of questions and survey instruments. 33 topics are covered and each has a dedicated page providing links to associated resources.

### 1.4 ‘Zones’

A novel feature of the SQB has been its focus on promoting specific elements of survey research via a series of ‘zones’ on the website. These zones were added to the website through the course of the award and, at October 2011, the following zones existed: data collection, innovation, scales and instruments, harmonisation, international surveys and learning/teaching. Most zones contain a list of external resources and links to fact sheets written for the Qb/SQB. The scales and instruments zone provides an A-Z listing of key survey instruments/question batteries and where they can be found within data held at the ESDS. The harmonisation zone is a collaboration with the Office for National Statistics (ONS), aimed at promoting the Government Statistical Service (GSS) harmonised question set ([http://www.surveynet.ac.uk/sqb/harmonisation/introduction.asp](http://www.surveynet.ac.uk/sqb/harmonisation/introduction.asp)).

### 2. Document/metadata enhancement

By the end of March 2010, all the PDFs inherited from the Qb had been marked-up with new metadata allowing them to be searched via the questionnaire (document) search. Throughout the award, documentation from recent, major UK surveys has also been marked-up and made available for search. The rights owners of several major cross-national surveys also agreed to allow us to disseminate their questionnaires via the SQB.

Metadata mark-up has involved some manual processing on top of work done by an automated script produced by the SQB team. For every PDF, values are added for eight key metadata fields, all of which are searchable: document title; keywords; country/countries covered; year(s) covered; document type; national or cross-national coverage; survey type; survey mode.

### 3. Collaboration with stakeholders

Throughout its existence, the SQB has sought to establish and develop collaborations with key external partners likely to provide benefit to or benefit from SQB work.
3.1 GSS harmonised questions

An important and ongoing relationship has been forged with the ONS Harmonisation and Classification Unit with regard to the promotion of the GSS harmonised question set. The SQB has established an area of its website devoted to these harmonised questions with links to where the questions have been used in UK surveys. Post-award, the SQB’s development of its question search (see 6.2) has been done in consultation with the ONS in order to incorporate that organisation’s requirements. The ONS is currently looking to the next development phase of the question search as a potential shortcut to creating a question library of its own.

3.2 NatCen cognitive testing documents

Collaboration with NatCen has led to agreement that cognitive testing reports will be forwarded to the SQB allowing users to discover these methods documents in the questionnaire (document) search. Post-award, the intention is to match the content of these documents to the questions found in the question search, allowing users to find a question and then check whether any testing has been undertaken on its development.

3.3 Council of European Social Science Data Archive s (CESSDA) partners

The SQB has twice been invited to share its experiences in developing its question search with its international equivalents. The SQB manager was invited to present at a workshop on question banks organised by the Réseau Quetelet in Paris on 28 January 2011: http://balzac.sciences-po.fr/OSC/index.php/QDB/wqdb and also at the 2011 CESSDA Experts Seminar held at the University of Lausanne on 20-22 October: http://www2.unil.ch/daris/spip.php?rubrique145&lang=en.

4. Progress against objectives

4.1 SRN milestones that relate to the SQB

M. (formerly KPI14) Within 3 months of the removal of the legacy design pages, focussed evaluation of the whole SRN web site will be carried out. (April/May 2010)

Progress: Milestone met. Survey of Survey Skills attendees was undertaken. Results analysed and some changes made to website navigation.

M. (formerly KPI12) Launch of question search interface, including comparison of questions across series/surveys. (March 2010)

Progress: Milestone met (see 1.1), one month overdue.
4.2 SRN KPIs that relate to the SQB

**KP1.** The target is for the numbers of people using the SRN website to increase over time. Key indicators will be the number of pageviews and the number of unique visitors during each quarter.

  Progress: **KPI met** (see 5.1).

**KP8.** To expand the number of topic overviews and methods fact sheets on the SQB website by at least 10 in 2010 and a further 10 by October 2011.

  Progress: **KPI met.** The SQB received and uploaded 27 documents (overviews, fact sheets, cognitive testing documents).

5. Usage statistics

5.1 Web traffic

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SQB</th>
<th>SSP</th>
<th>SDMI</th>
<th>SMS</th>
<th><strong>Total SRN</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pageviews</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pageviews</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pageviews</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pageviews</strong></td>
<td><strong>Pageviews</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Visitors</strong></td>
<td><strong>Visitors</strong></td>
<td><strong>Visitors</strong></td>
<td><strong>Visitors</strong></td>
<td><strong>Visitors</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>% increase on year before</strong></td>
<td><strong>% increase on year before</strong></td>
<td><strong>% increase on year before</strong></td>
<td><strong>% increase on year before</strong></td>
<td><strong>% increase on year before</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009 Q3</td>
<td>9,525</td>
<td>3598</td>
<td>781</td>
<td>592</td>
<td>16,551</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009 Q4</td>
<td>33,013</td>
<td>4092</td>
<td>1445</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>42,491</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 Q1</td>
<td>54,130</td>
<td>6835</td>
<td>1789</td>
<td>389</td>
<td>68,870</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 Q2</td>
<td>49,130</td>
<td>4456</td>
<td>1636</td>
<td>329</td>
<td>64,430</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 Q3</td>
<td>39,522</td>
<td>5448</td>
<td>1318</td>
<td>299</td>
<td>53,286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010 Q4</td>
<td>64,673</td>
<td>3841</td>
<td>1965</td>
<td>341</td>
<td>81,831</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 Q1</td>
<td>86,316</td>
<td>6762</td>
<td>2435</td>
<td>379</td>
<td>111,082</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 Q2</td>
<td>57,379</td>
<td>3602</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>354</td>
<td>70,883</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 Q3</td>
<td>52,405</td>
<td>1873</td>
<td>1495</td>
<td>248</td>
<td>62,465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011 Q4</td>
<td>98,351</td>
<td>1427</td>
<td>1498</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>115,217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>246,864</td>
<td>35,208</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1.11&gt;31.10)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>338,205</td>
<td>41,436</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(1.11&gt;31.10)</td>
<td>(+37)</td>
<td>(+18)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
5.2 Social media sign-ups

At 17 October 2011:
112 signed up to survey-resources-network@jiscmail.ac.uk.
47 signed up to http://www.methodspace.com/group/surveyresourcesnetwork.
243 signed up to http://twitter.com/surveynetacuk.

6. Progress post-award

The SQB is the one strand of the SRN that did not cease to operate at the end of the award.

6.1 Follow-on grant

In July 2011, the SQB received an extension in ESRC funding to take the service through to the end of September 2012, which will allow it to develop some key features before becoming integrated with the ESDS (and its successor, the UK Data Service).

6.2 Improved question search

Over the 11 month extension, the popular question search is being developed further with some content held in a new metadata structure (DDI-Lifecycle) and the search engine migrating to a new technical platform, Solr.

For users, these innovations will allow relationships to be established between survey questions – for example, whether questions are completely identical, whether a question belongs to a wider scale/instrument and whether a question is part of a quality-assured harmonised set (e.g. the GSS harmonised set). The search process will also be improved with new features allowing users to filter results and search for questions by topic.

At the same time, the SQB will be re-branded to fit with the ESDS (UKDS) look-and-feel and will further integrate with forthcoming improvements to the ESDS data catalogue.

6.3 Updated usage statistics

2012 Q1 has set a new record for number of visitors for a quarter – 14,553. At the end of March 2012, rolling annual figures for pageviews and visitors stand at 359,910 and 46,116 respectively.