

Working at Pace and Scale in the ARC

Reflections from members of a methodology theme

Matt Breckons and Katie Thomson

ARC NENC



Presentation outline:

NIHR | Applied Research Collaboration
North East and North Cumbria



Background:

- Considerable interest in rapid methods.



Wessex
Academic Health
Science Network



e.g., humanitarian crises, healthcare emergencies


- ‘Rapid’ not clearly defined.
- How can research be undertaken differently?

Very rapid insight generation to support UK health and care systems: An AHSN approach

Jackie Chandler*, Philippa Darnton and Andrew Sibley

Wessex Academic Health Science Network, Southampton, United Kingdom

Rapid, Responsive, and Relevant? A Systematic Review of Rapid Evaluations in Health Care

Cecilia Vindrola-Padros^{1,2}, Eugenia Brage³,
and Ginger A. Johnson^{4,2} 

METHODOLOGY

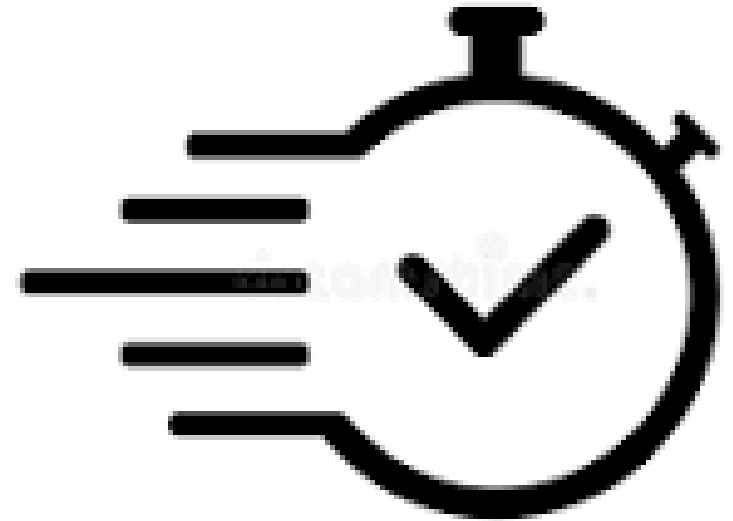
Open Access

Expediting systematic reviews: methods and implications of rapid reviews

Rebecca Ganann*, Donna Ciliska and Helen Thomas

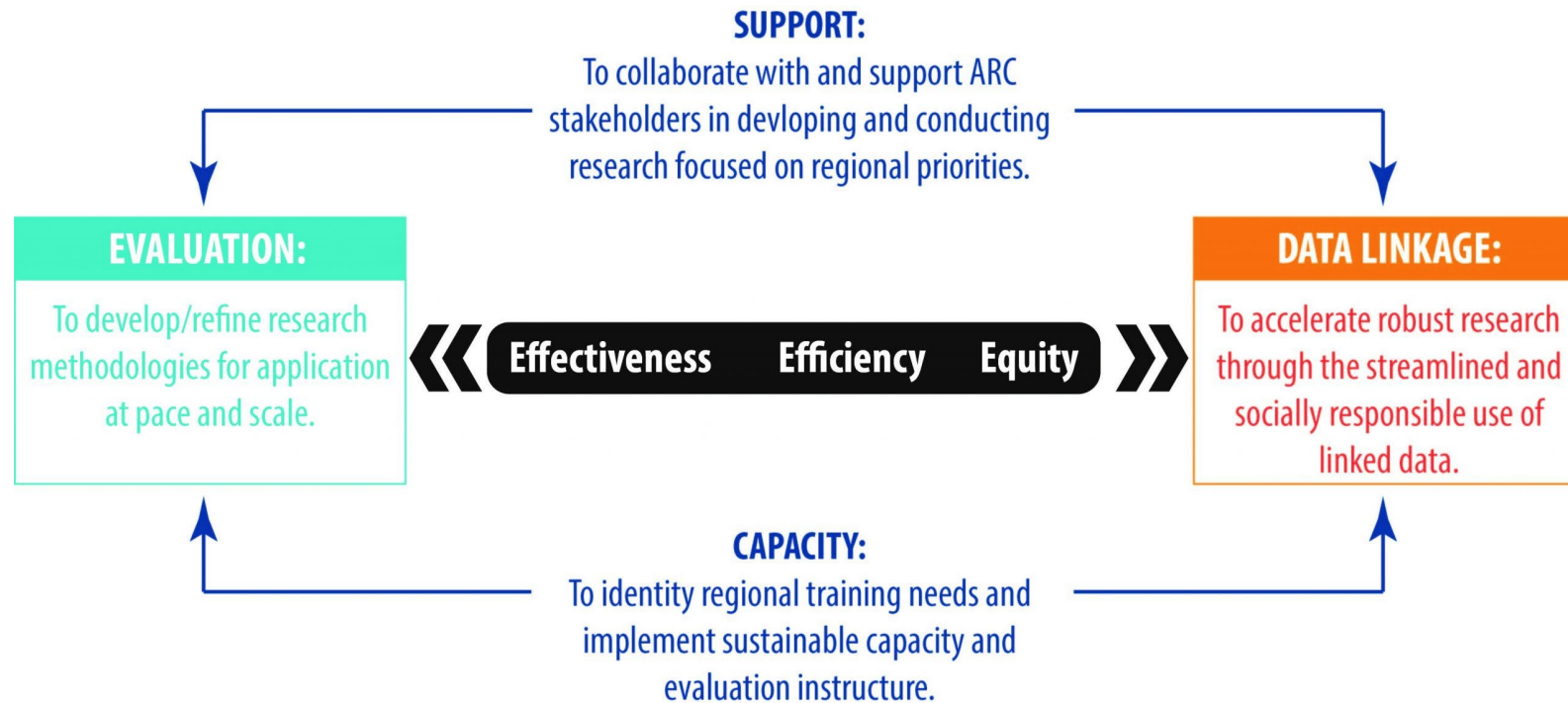
Why do we want to do things quickly?

- To quickly acquire and analyse data to evaluate current processes and improvement projects.
- Use finite resources efficiently.
- Implementation and funding deadlines



Introduction to the EM theme

- Aims to develop, apply and support the best use of qualitative and quantitative methodologies in research.
- Helps researchers produce high-quality evidence that can be used to make informed decisions that can lead to better health and social care.

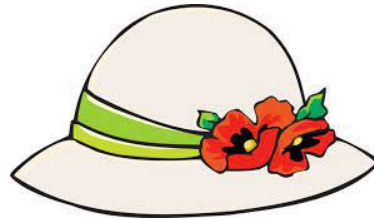


- EM theme involved in 29 projects
- Also role in capacity building (e.g., NESWA, VONNE)

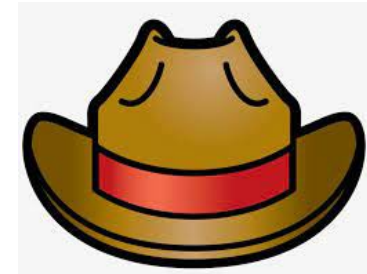
Our roles as EM fellows:



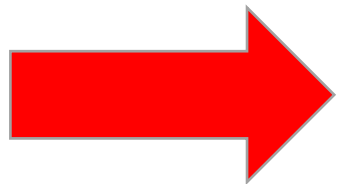
Applying/advising
on methods



Developing methods



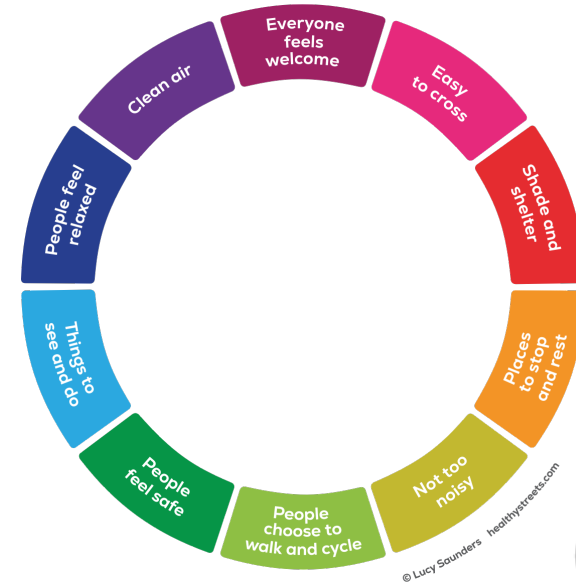
Method training



Not all projects are defined by needing to be conducted at speed but some have required rapid outputs...

Projects exploring pace and scale

- Healthy Streets (with Stockton Borough Council)
- Best practice in interim analysis for adaptive trials
- Review of qualitative approaches during first COVID lockdown
- CRC work
- Training



How do we do things quickly?

- Use methodological techniques to reduce time taken to collect and analyse data?
 - Adaptive trial design
 - Automated methods
 - Virtual data collection
 - Team-based approaches
 - Staged approach to evaluation
- But are our methods making our research slow?



Routes to research

Stage 1:

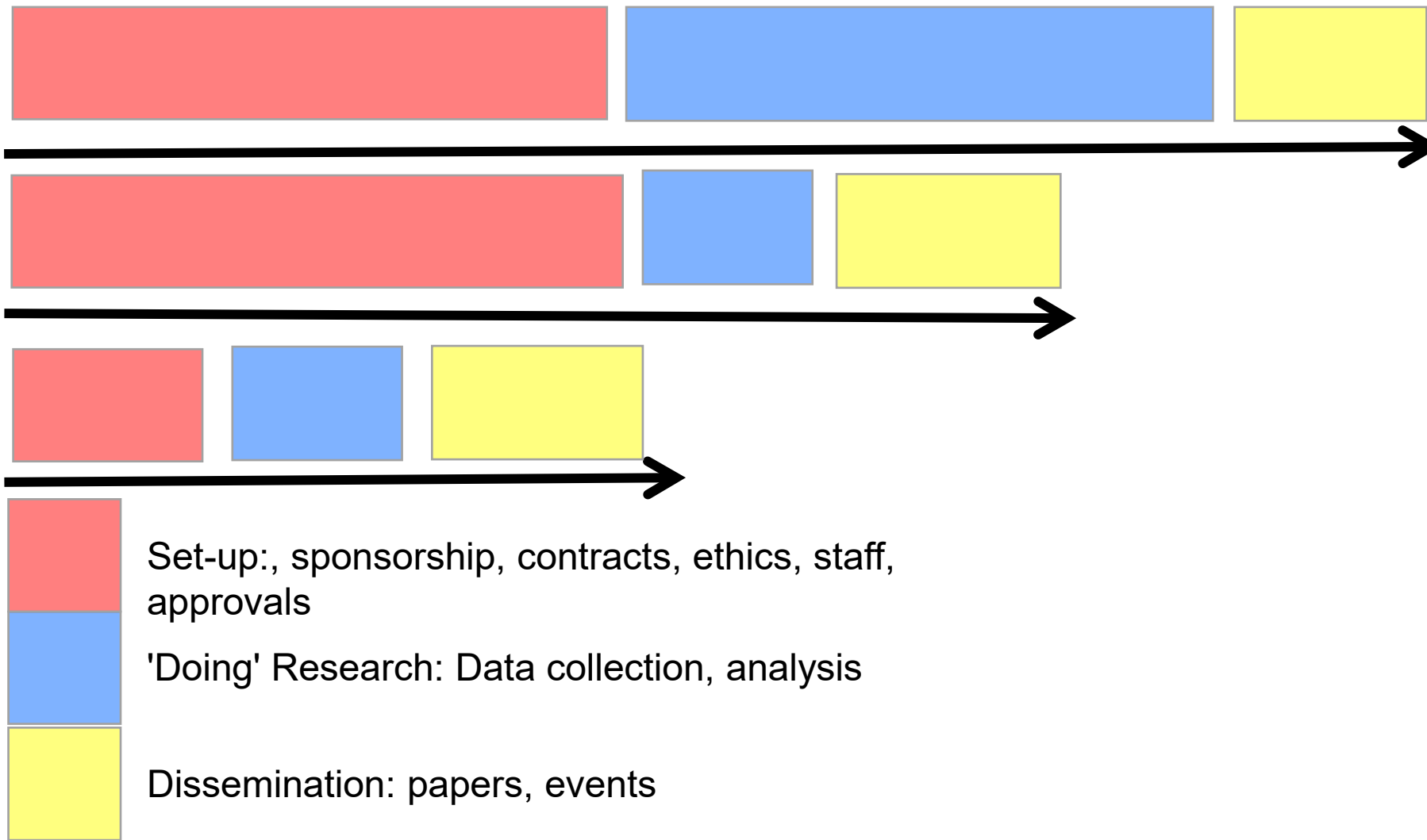
Lead applicant
CV, research
team, plain
English summary,
research plan

Stage 2:

Detailed
programme: CVs of
applicants, research
background, research
team, scientific abstract,
plain English summary,
detailed research plan

Competition launch	20 July 2022	February 2023
Submission deadline	09 November 2022	March 2023
Submission outcome	February 2023	July 2023

The impact of rapid methods



National Developments

Home › Approvals and amendments › What approvals and decisions do I need? › Research Ethics Committee review › Think Ethics ›

Rethinking ethics review: our new public conversation

Last updated on 7 Dec 2022

www.gov.uk/government/news/review-launched-to-reduce-red-tape-for-uk-researchers



Press release

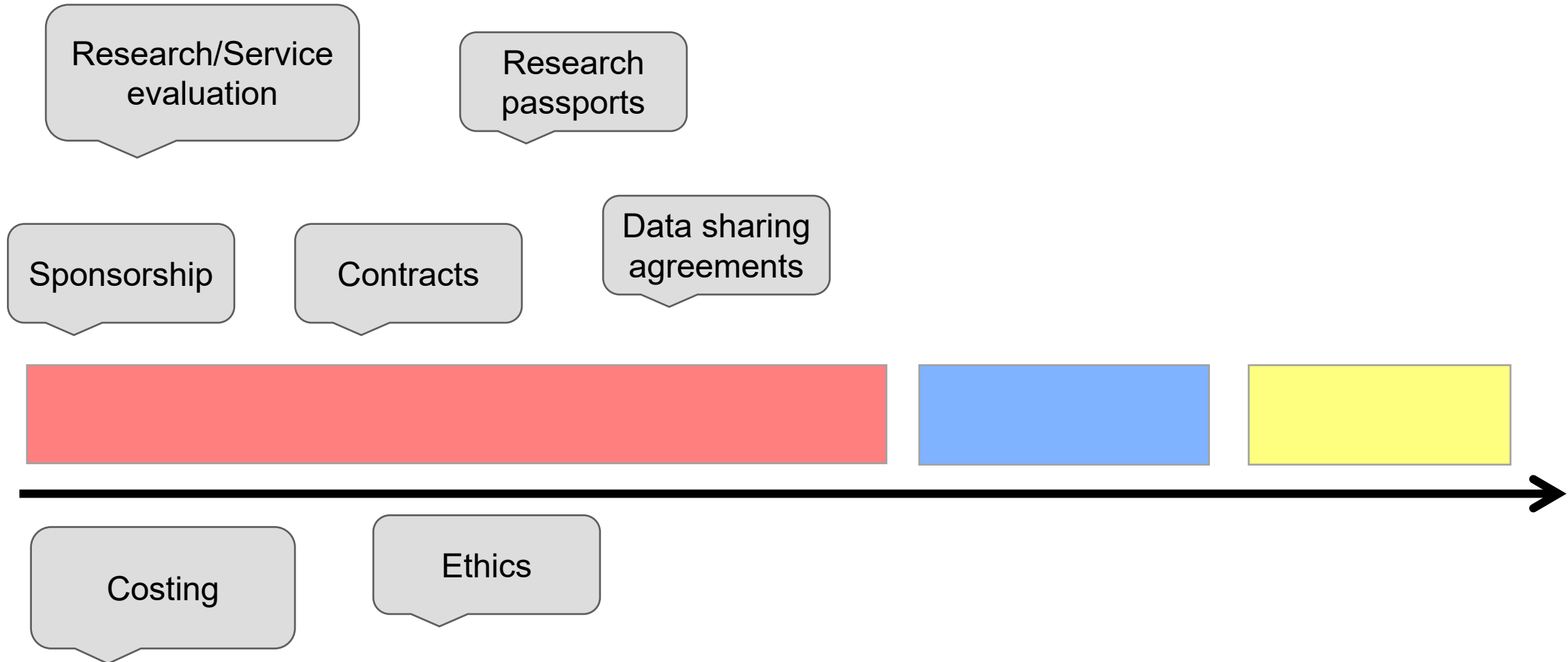
Review launched to reduce red tape for UK researchers

A new independent review into UK research bureaucracy will identify ways to free up researchers to pursue world class research.

Are there unique challenges in an ARC?

- Aim of increasing the rate at which research findings are put into practice and can benefit communities
- Brings together teams with diverse backgrounds, needs and expectations
- i.e. sometimes new ways of working

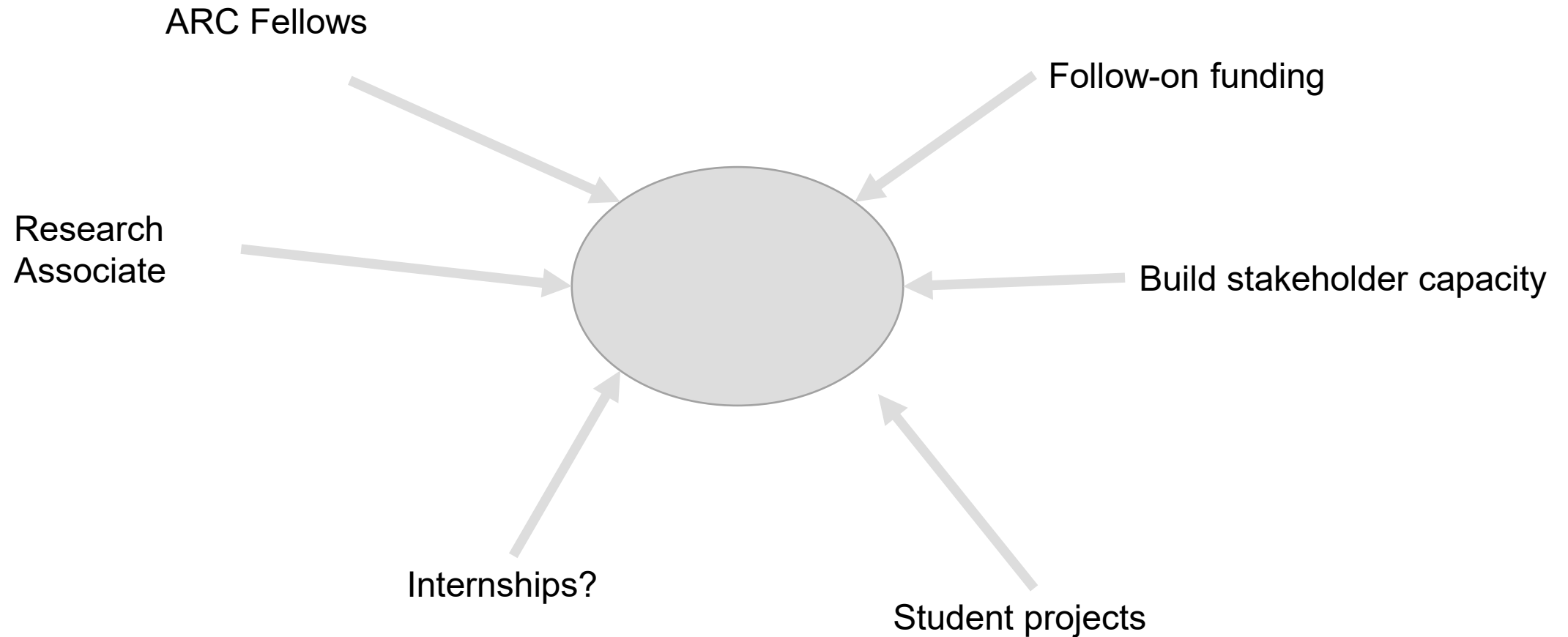
The path to 'doing'



Why is scale important?

- Sometimes scale is non-negotiable e.g. trials, seeking saturation
- All research has finite resources
- Expectations need to be managed
- Evaluation on a shoestring - can we think small?

Scaling up – Utilising available structures and systems



Working at pace and scale – what do we need?

- Robust and rapid methods
within
- Supportive and flexible local and national systems
facilitated by
- Our own skills/knowledge to navigate these systems

Final reflections

- Should we talk about responsive methods?
- Methods are one part of a research timeline which needs to be streamlined
- Challenges to development of methods alongside rapid delivery
- Collective learning as an applied research community is happening and we need to capture it
- Work with local systems to understand how processes can be streamlined



Thank you

