



Summer School 2024

Day 3

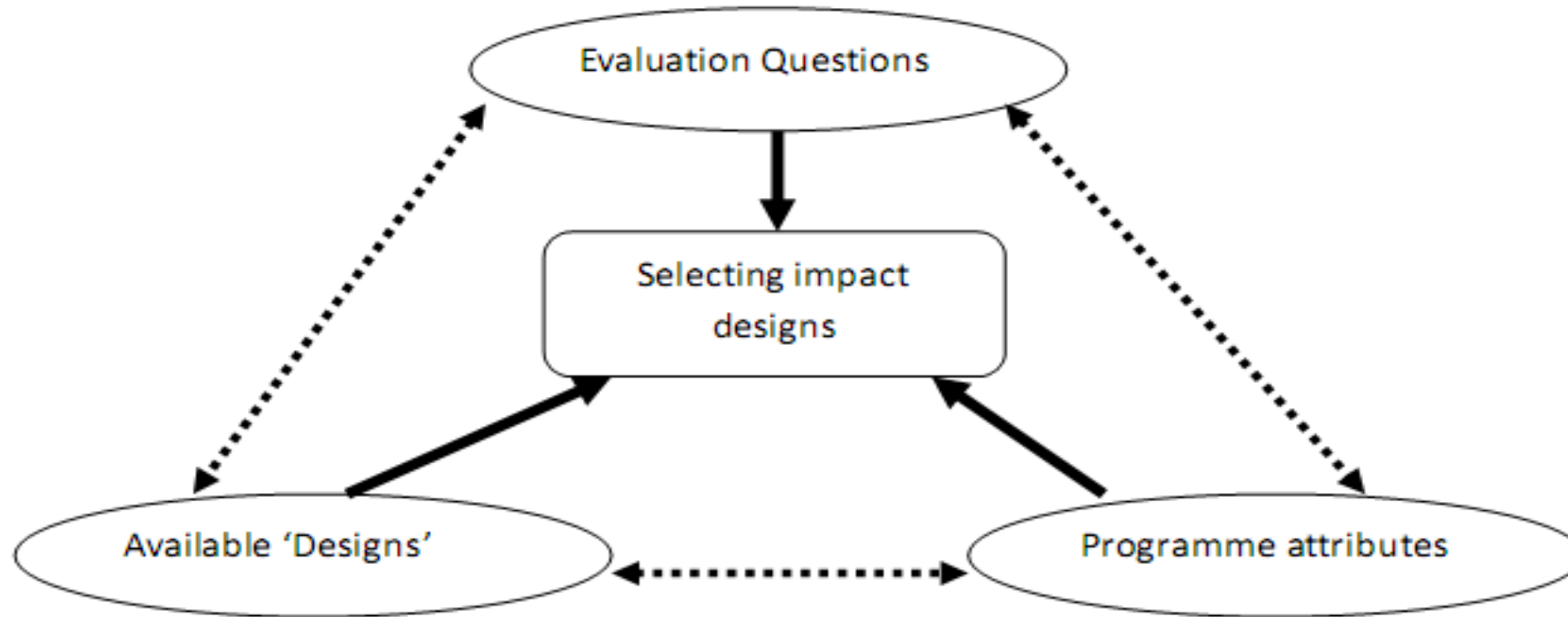




Why it is important to tailor the
evaluation to the different
characteristics of the interventions



Evaluation design: Reconciling multiple considerations



Programme Attributes

- There are many ways to characterise a programme – in terms of sectors; objectives, their degree of innovativeness etc.
- Attributes should first be understood in terms of an ‘intervention logic’, ‘theory of change’ or ‘programme theory’ set into a wider context
- We therefore need to begin with the expected goals, sequences of inputs and activities, roles of different actors and partners; and assumed causal pathways set into a wider socio-economic and regional context which shapes these pathways
- This provides focus but is only a first step to evaluation design and methodological choice

Programme Characteristics and Designs

We can divide characteristics and associated ‘attributes’ into two categories – Primary and Secondary

- Primary characteristics follow from the intervention logic and programme theory –intentions, activities and assumed ways of working
- Secondary attributes, which are similar to technical constraints – how often the intervention occurs, in what setting, with what populations
- Mainly talking about primary attributes here...

Characteristics with Methodological Implications :

A few Examples

- **Many cases** doing the same thing vs few cases doing different things
- Simplicity or **complexity** of the intervention itself and its context, e.g. multiple causal factors; interacting or isolatable
- The **maturity of knowledge** in the focal area – are we doing something we know a lot about or not?
- Single or multiple **delivery agents/implementation chains** – single/multiple sequential/parallel causal pathways
- **Timescales and trajectories of change**: from short term to intergenerational
- How bounded or embedded programmes are in relation to other programmes, activities and systems

ATTRIBUTE	EXAMPLE	CHARACTERISTICS
Implementation by intermediaries/ act as agents	Banks that disburses loans & grants – financial instruments	Indirect delivery
Partner led	RTD support to Enterprise/Higher Education consortia	Devolved responsibility
Long term impact	Greening the economy, adapting to climate change	Effects usually after evaluation ends
How much we already know	We know very little about evaluating large scale behaviour change needed for major societal transitions	Lack of basic knowledge and tools – descriptive and toolkits needed before explanation is possible
Multi-level interdependent strands: Example 1	Carbon reduction initiatives – public transport, energy efficiency, public transport, grid strengthening	Simultaneous interventions that interact in complex environment
Multi-level interdependent strands: Example 2	Strengthening competitiveness at SME, infrastructure and human resource levels	Simultaneous interventions that interact in more stable environments
Replicated interventions	Vouchers to SMEs, retraining the unemployed	Multiple standardised interventions
‘Chaotic’ interventions	Responding to crises	Multiple, unplanned, parallel interventions – loosely coupled

Intervention examples	Possible approach
Indirect delivery: The fund/Bank <i>Diversity of projects within common implementation structure</i>	•Develop two stage programme theory: (implementation & programme theory) •Separate ‘project-evaluations’ within common evaluation framework •Derive impact criteria from overall policy goals •Configurational analysis within project ‘clusters’ (e.g. realist synthesis or QCA)
Effects in long term <i>Uncertainty and possibility of external disruption</i>	•Set up long term monitoring-system for outcomes •Develop a time extended programme theory •Track ‘distance-travelled’ •Ensure evaluation strategy is staged/iterative/responsive •Track critical events that re-direct the programme- Process Tracing or Critical Incidence Analysis
Multiple standardised evaluations <i>Implications of different contexts</i>	•Develop typologies of context •Confirm standardisation – identify local variations •Confirm the ‘isolatability’ of causal factors - from theories of change and from typologies •Consider counterfactual methods and statistical modelling
Simultaneous Interventions that interact in stable environment <i>Interdependence of multiple causal factors</i>	•Systems mapping to identify degrees of interdependence •Build in monitoring into administrative data •Devise nested strategy – separate relatively independent interventions, from relatively interdependent interventions •Statistical and case-based analyses •Conduct synthesis linked to overall policy goals

Example of a Qualitative Comparative Analysis (QCA)

The « **Factory of the future** » programme (Nouvelle-Aquitaine, FR, 2020-2021).

- A regional policy, aiming at improving industrial performance & assisting towards an innovative factory model, since 2014
 1. Free diagnosis of areas for improvement by external consultants
 2. Company's action plan
 3. access to assistance (coaching, training, hiring) and investment funding (i.e. ERDF, national funds...)
- 600 beneficiary SMEs, most of them with funding
 - 270 with a diagnosis between 2014 & 2016 (enough time for impact)
- Evaluation main objective : *Have the beneficiaries indeed implemented the action plans, and improved their industrial performance?*
- An imposed methodology made of interviews, survey, SMEs case studies and territorial workshops

But the evaluation object makes it possible to go further

- **A set of characteristics**

- A consistent and rather simple process for all beneficiaries
- A rather homogeneous target group (industrial SMES)
- A common expected change, with possibility to give a Y/N answer
- A set of characteristics (conditions) to be compared in between SMES

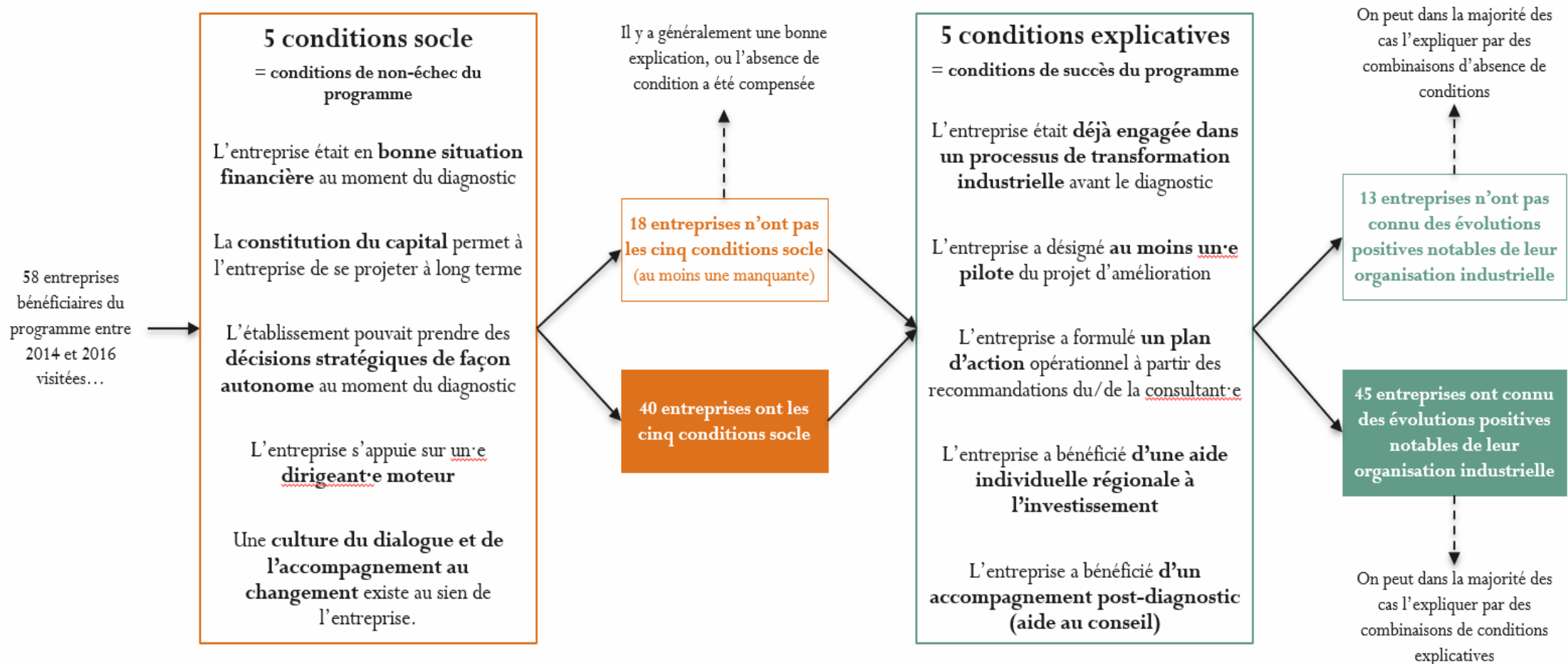
- **An opportunity** : 80 field case studies

→ The perfect conditions for a QCA

→ To reveal configuration of factors associated to a result

→ With this knowledge, you can better choose your target groups and improve the effectiveness of the programme

In which cases is support most likely to be a success?



Working group 4

- Consider some features of the evaluation object
- What consequences in terms of the evaluation approach?