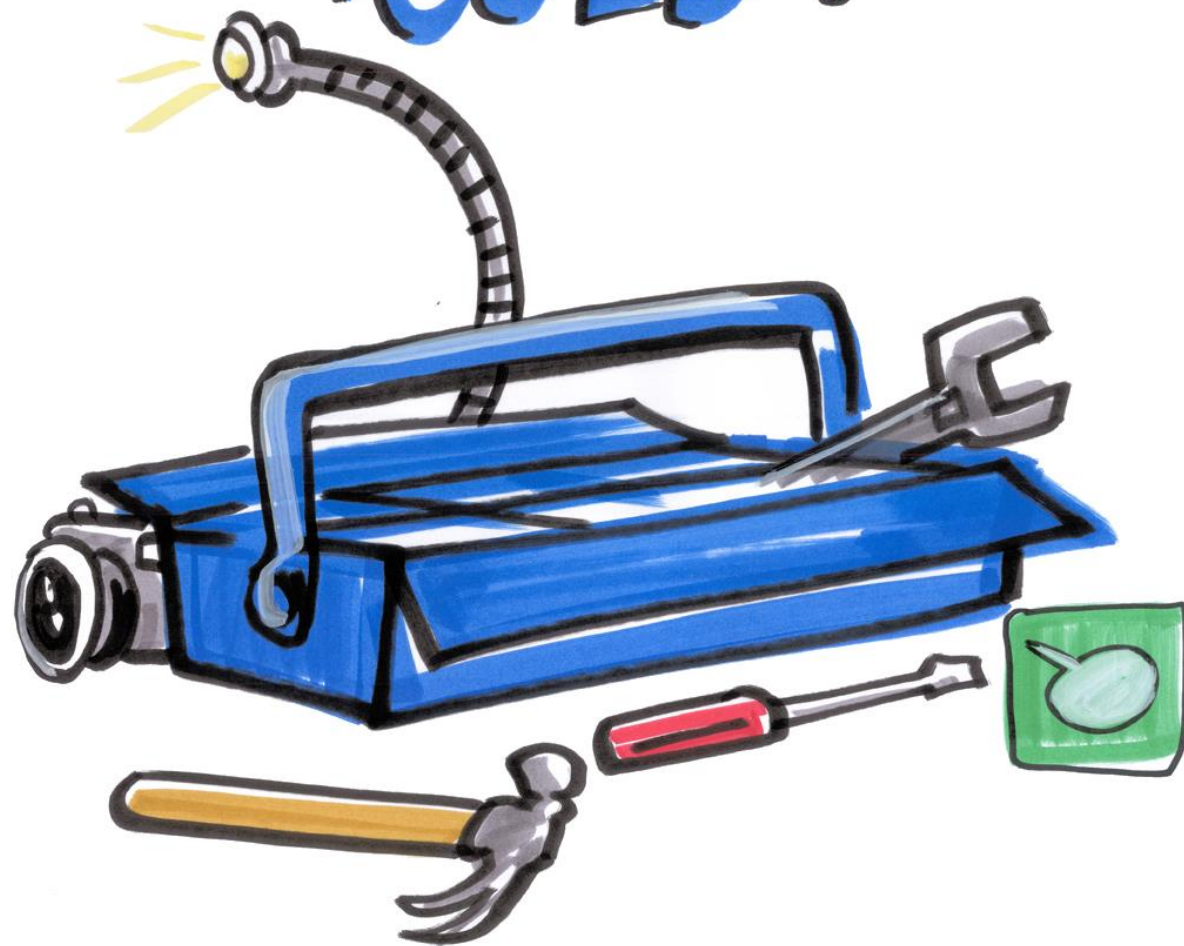


EVALUATION TOOLS :



SESSION 7

Evaluation tools

Mixed method approach

Evaluation tools: Session Outline

Evaluation tools:

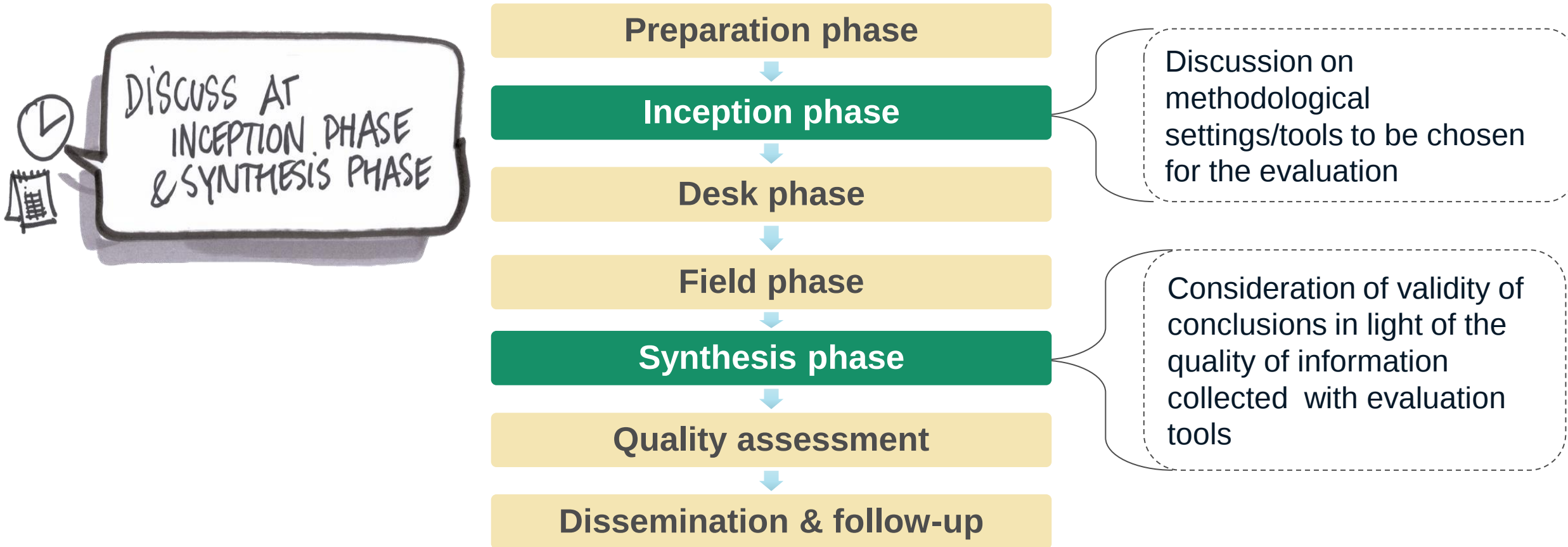
- Crucial stages for discussing evaluation tools
- Experience sharing on evaluation tools
- Quantitative & Qualitative evaluation tools
- The advantages of a mixed-method approach





*Crucial stages for
discussing evaluation tools*

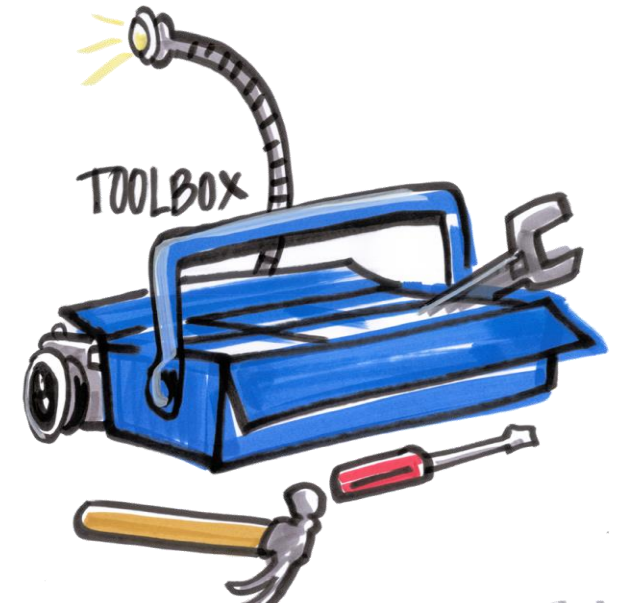
Two most important phases for discussing evaluation tools



Validity and appropriateness of evaluation tools

Guiding questions to design and select the most appropriate evaluation tools and methods:

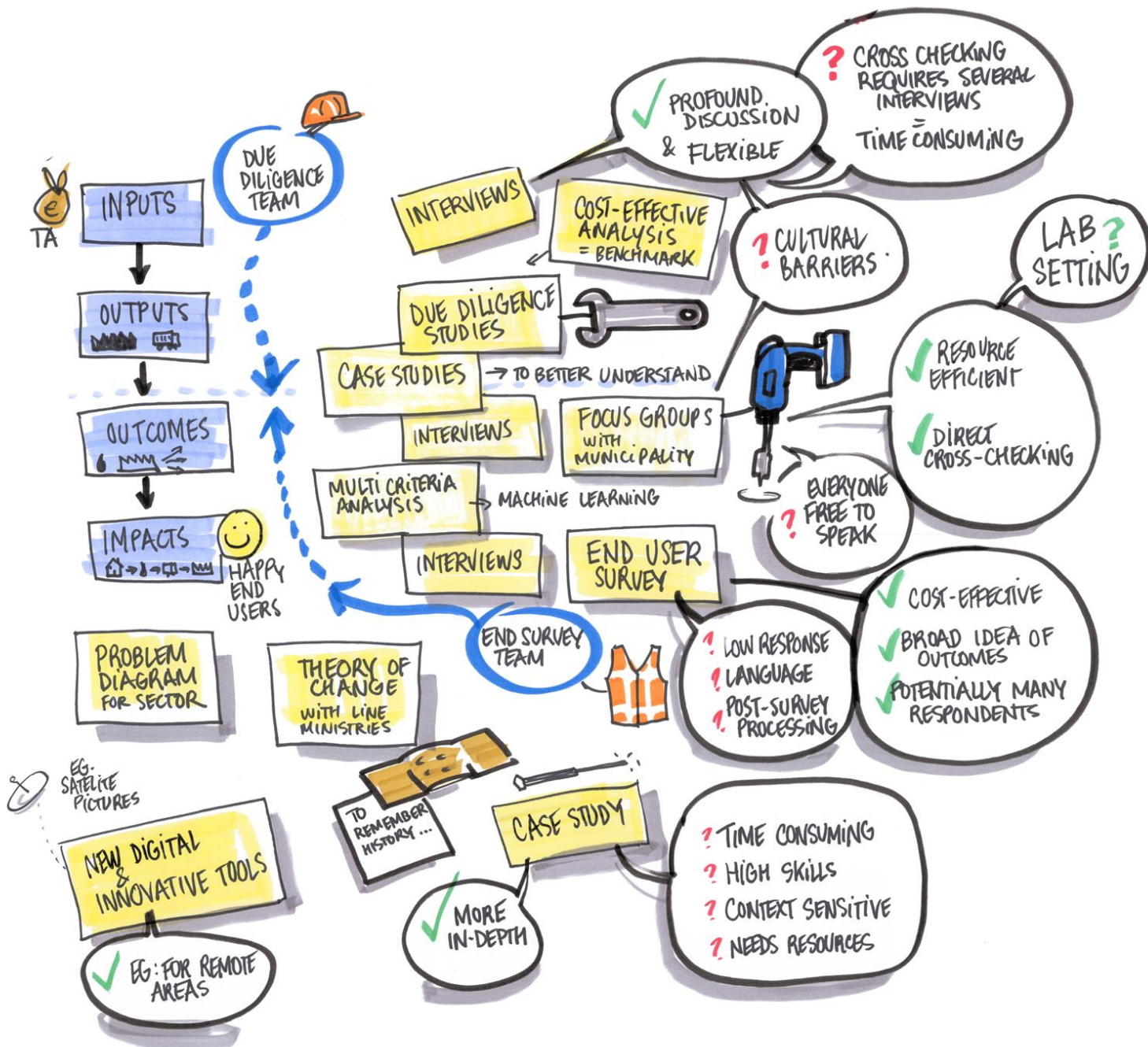
- What kind of data do we need - quantitative or qualitative?
- Who is our target audience?
- Which tools will allow us to collect richer, more robust and sound data?
- Are data collection tools and methods adapted to the cultural context and do they take into account key issues such as :
 - ✓ Relevance to local traditions and way of life
 - ✓ Technical and language barriers
 - ✓ Openness to information sharing



Key criteria for selecting (mix of) evaluation tools

- Specific **functions** and **ability to be implemented**
- Need for **specific data** (check availability and reliability in advance!)
- Necessary **resources** for using the tools
- Necessary **time** for preparing and using the tools
- The **availability of qualified and suitably skilled experts** (good knowledge of national languages and cultures, field experience, experience with specific evaluation tools e.g. RCG)

➡ Often a combination of tools suited to the context, adapted to the objectives of the evaluation and for triangulation



Experience sharing on evaluation tools

Interviews

Definition & purpose

- One of the **most common** evaluation tools
- To collect qualitative data

How

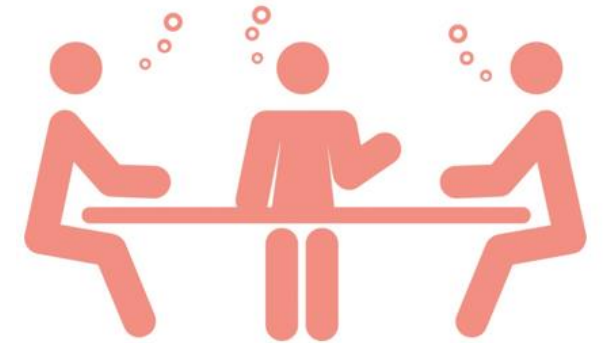
- Usually **face-to-face**, also **video conferences**, **calls**, **email...**
- Can be individuals or groups
- Can be « **semi-structured** » using a checklist

Advantages

- Collection and analysis of information and points of view **at each stage of the evaluation/first hand. Fluidity** of information flow

Limitations

- Potential **biases** (vested interests)
- Limited numbers (representativity)
- Incorrect selection of interviewees



Surveys

Definition & purpose

- Collect **structured information** from a large group of individuals

How

- **Structure the questionnaire** to be used
- Conduct survey **directly** or using **internet platforms**

Advantages

- Collect **information on viewpoints & practices from a large range of people**
- Can be **analysed statistically** to **quantify opinions**

Limitations

- Challenges of **representativity** and **statistical significance**
- The quality of the results depends **formulation of the questions (lose nuance of face to face)**



Focus Groups

Definition & purpose

- Collect information from a **group of participants**
- Ensure **diversity of propositions** and a **cross-check of information**

How

- **Through collective** analysis, perspectives and suggestions
- **Varied participant profiles** and **timing** according to the data collection/ analysis/ validation purpose

Advantages

- **Debate/discussion** providing insights
- **Qualitative data**; perceptions, feelings, stories..
- **Understanding reasons and coherence** for certain opinions

Limitations

- **Minority opinions pushed aside or over represented**
- **Need skilled facilitator**
- **Considerable time needed to organize/prepare**



Case study

Definition & purpose

- In-depth analysis of component/specific aspect of an action (micro analysis)
- Goals and content can **vary** greatly **depending on the context** and **needs** of the evaluation

How

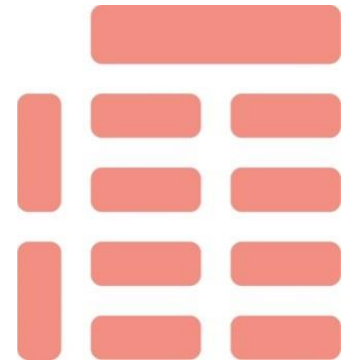
- Findings collected through mix of tools focusing on a specific aspect(s) of a given P/P e.g. a selection of regions; of components, of sub projects etc.

Advantages

- Provides a **more detailed picture**, of an aspect of an action.
- **Good insight into different scenarios**

Limitations

- **Representativity**
- **Not able to provide overview of entire action**
- **Reliant on correct choice of content of studies**



SWOT analysis

Definition & purpose

- **Strategic and analytical** tool
- Combines the assessment of **strengths** and **weaknesses** with the assessment of **opportunities** and **threats**

How

- **Robust joint analysis and diagnosis** of the situation according to the four criteria
- Often used as a means to aggregate findings after data collection

Advantages

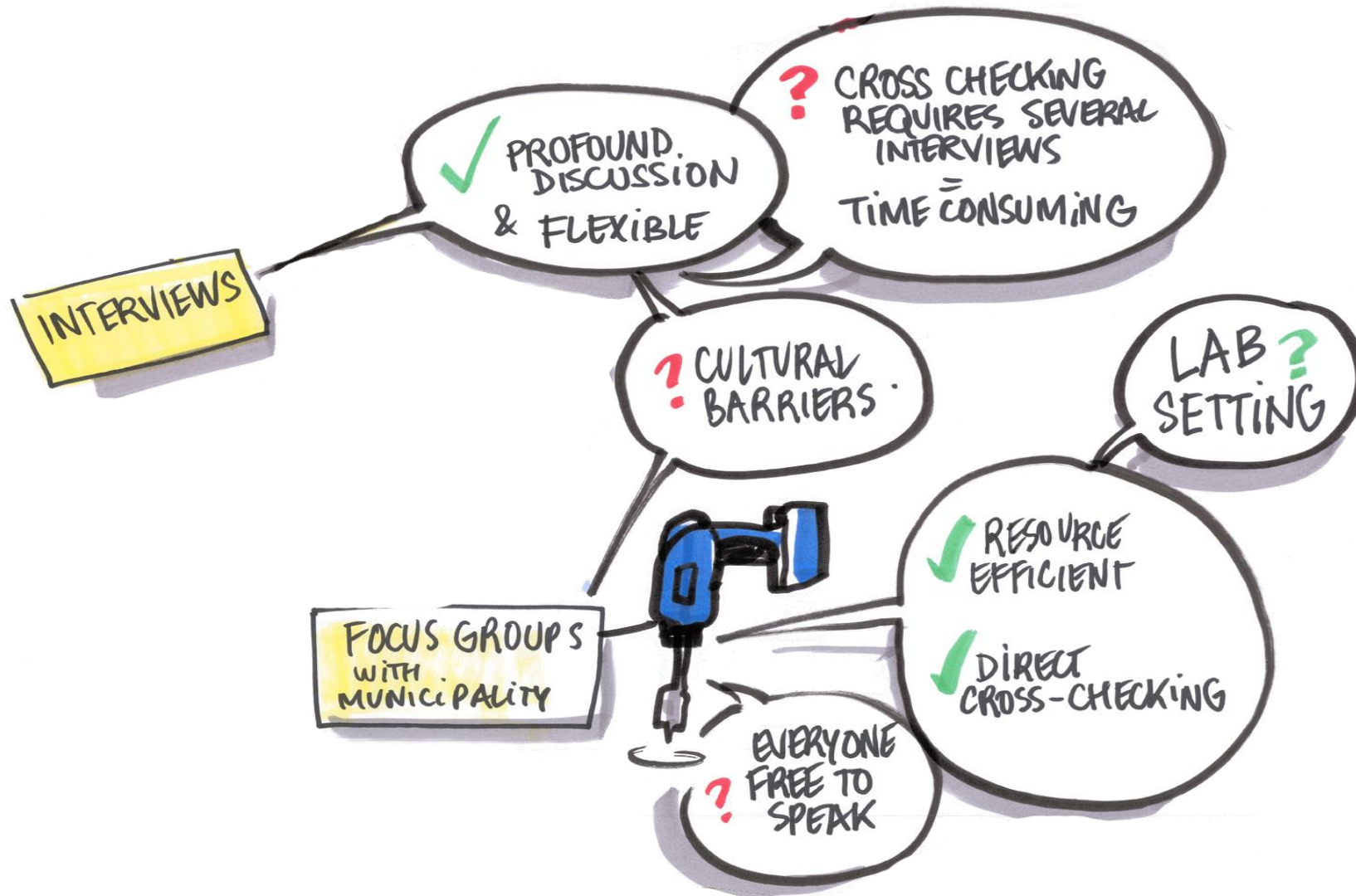
- Supports decision-making and incorporation of **strategic approaches** within the evaluation
- Quickly underlines the **(in)adequacy of a strategy**, in relation to the **problems and issues** under consideration

Limitations

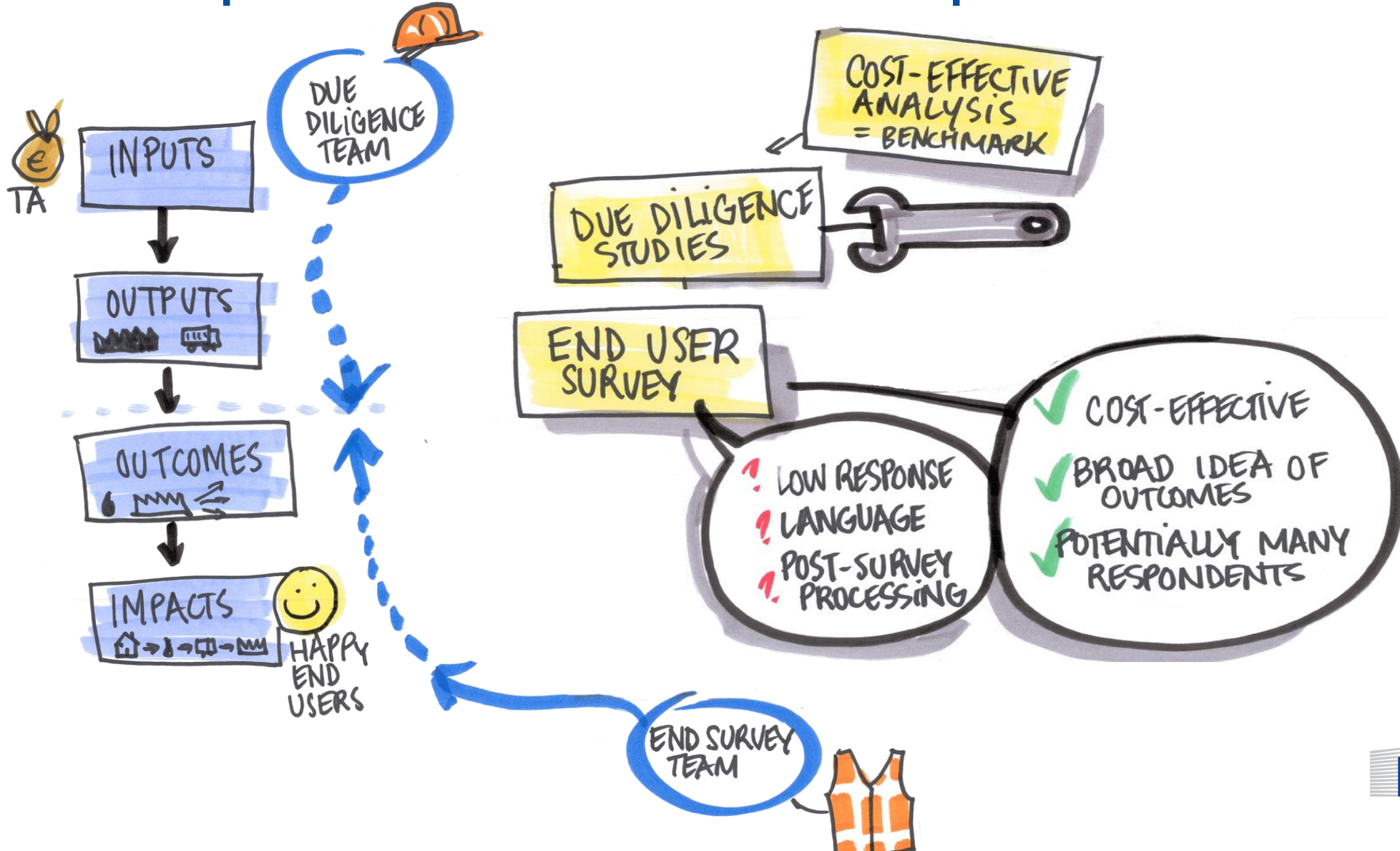
- Even if well conceived, it remains **subjective**
- Challenge of **distinguishing between internal and external factors**
- Reputed to be **simplistic in approach** (matrix)



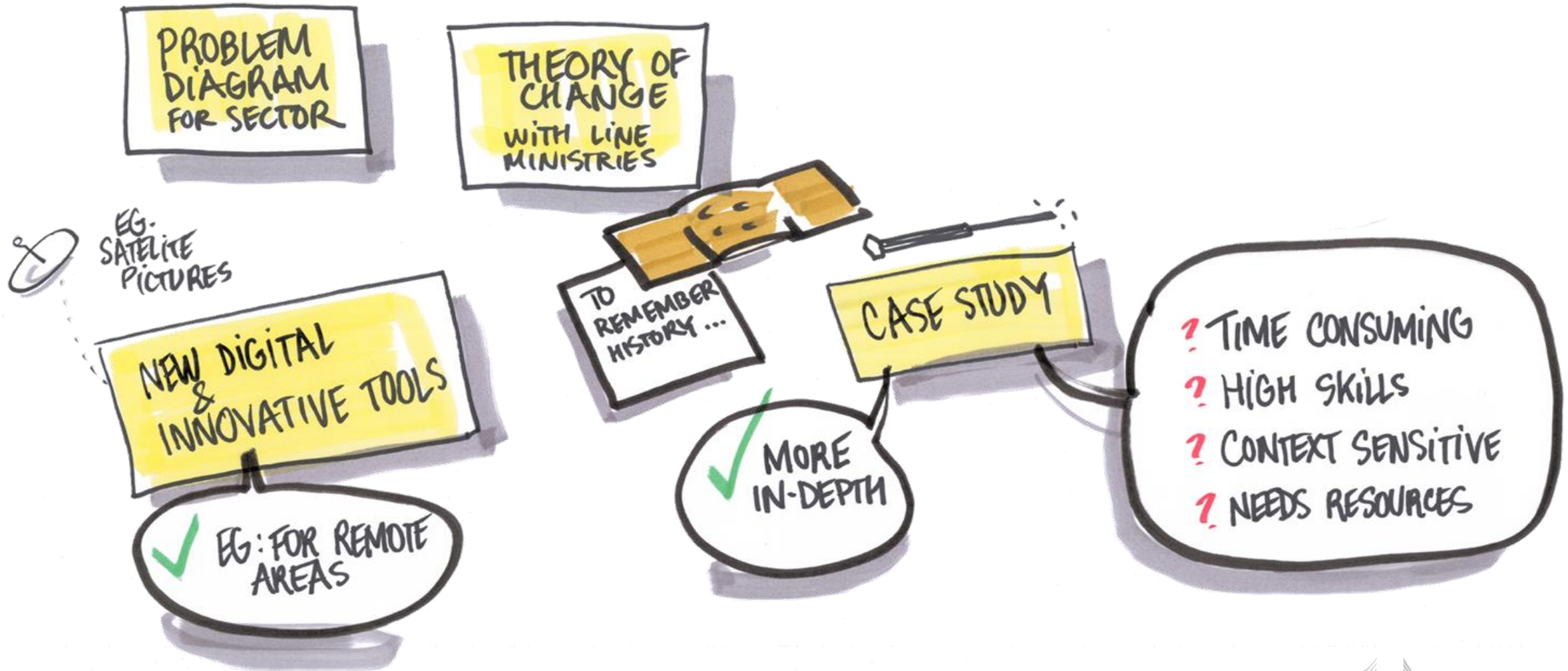
Example: tool box for an impact evaluation



Example: tool box for an impact evaluation



Example: tool box for an impact evaluation



Preventing and correcting biases to improve the reliability of collect data

Evaluation team members

Constant awareness of potential biases

- **Confirmation** bias
- **Empathy** bias
- **Self-censorship**
- **Strategy/vested interests** of interviewees
- **Question-induced answers**

Techniques to improve data reliability

- Asking *open questions*
- Mixing *positive and negative questions*
- *Promising anonymity* (and keeping this promise)
- Constantly *focusing on facts*

Lots of other traditional/new evaluation tools

- LFA related tools e.g. Intervention Logic, Problem/Objective diagrams (to understand pathway of change)
- Randomised Control Trials, Multi-Criteria Analysis, Cost-Effectiveness Analysis (to make comparisons)
- New digital and innovative tools (highly relevant for evaluations in hard to reach areas)
- <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/devco-ess>



Quant & Qual evaluation tools

Quant methods: some definitions

- Used to investigate things that can be measured or quantified to generate numerical data
- Measure the amount of things and their relationships
- Use numbers for interpreting data
- Emphasis on measurement and statistical analysis
- Provide uniform measures of project achievements (all along the results chain)
- Usually aim to tell us something about a population based on a sample (findings can/should be generalised)
- Popular with many because of their potential to generalize results
- Often takes less time to administer quanti than quali methods
- Make large use of secondary data sources
- They are top down: data are collected to test a theory or hypothesis

Qual methods: some definitions

- Use words and text in data collection instead of numbers
- Capture perspectives and the meaning of things
- Describe in detail:
 - Situations, events
 - People and their experiences
 - Interactions
 - Behaviours, attitudes
 - Beliefs, thoughts
- To understand how people make meaning of and experience their environment or world
- Narrow in scope, applicable to specific situations and experiences, not intended for generalization
- Make large use of primary data sources (from fieldwork)
- They are bottom up: a theory or explanation is developed from data

Quant vs Qual: Comparative description

Quantitative methods methods

- To generalise
- To capture indicators (what, when, where)
- For broad information from many sources
- When models / links are established / known

Qualitative

- To contextualise
- To understand mechanisms (how, why)
- For detailed information from few sources
- When models / links are hypothetical / unclear

Quant vs Qual: example of questioning

Quantitative analysis

- Tell me what you learned
- How many individuals are participating?
- What are the changes in performance?
- Is there a change in quality of life?
- Is there a change in health measures?
- Is there a difference between those involved and those not involved?

Qualitative analysis

- How do you apply what you've learned?
- How are participants experiencing the change?
- Differences in the way they experience change? Why?
- To what extent is the intervention culturally and contextuality valid?
- How and why has quality of life changed?
- What are the unanticipated impacts (positive, negative)?

Quant vs Qual: Comparative limitations

Quantitative analysis

- Reduction of narrative into numbers
- Design / data collection protocols difficult to adapt to changes
- Standard categories & data coding fail to capture nuances
- Lack of in-depth analysis
- Risk of decontextualized findings
- Assume the programme operates as planned and everyone receives the same services

Qualitative analysis

- Time consuming
- Data analysis challenging, need for knowledge and skills in qualitative data analysis approaches, techniques, software, etc
- Data and finding robustness depends on skills and perspectives of the evaluators
- Evidence gathered from a small number of people
- Anonymity more challenging

Quant vs Qual: some data collection tools

Quantitative tools

- **Secondary source analysis** (statistics, reports, admin records...)
- Surveys, questionnaires, self-report surveys
- Observation/surveys with random sampling & statistical analysis
- **Counterfactual analysis, ...**

Qualitative tools

- Interviews, **questionnaires**
- Focus Groups
- Story telling (incl. MSC)
- Outcome harvesting, outcome mapping
- Topic guides
- Scenarios, Observation
- **Secondary sources analysis** (literature, case studies...)
- **Counterfactual analysis**

A long story short

Quantitative Methods



Qualitative Methods





*The advantages of a mixed-
method approach*

Advocating for using mixed methods

*“Over the last decade, development programs (...) have increasingly undertaken rigorous impact evaluation. Despite advances, **much evaluation and program monitoring data have limited utility because of an over-reliance on quantitative methods alone.***

While surveys provide essential data on whether or not changes have occurred as a result of a program, qualitative methods identify the underlying explanations for why we do or do not observe these changes.

Survey methods will tell us, for example, the rate of change in attended hospital births, while qualitative methods will explain why some women now go to hospitals to give birth while others will not, despite a program designed to encourage their attendance.”

Advocating for using mixed methods

“When used in isolation, both QUANT and QUAL evaluation methods have strengths and weaknesses. The purpose of Mixed Methods is to draw on the strengths of both (...) approaches and integrate them to overcome their weaknesses.”

Michael Bamberger, quoted

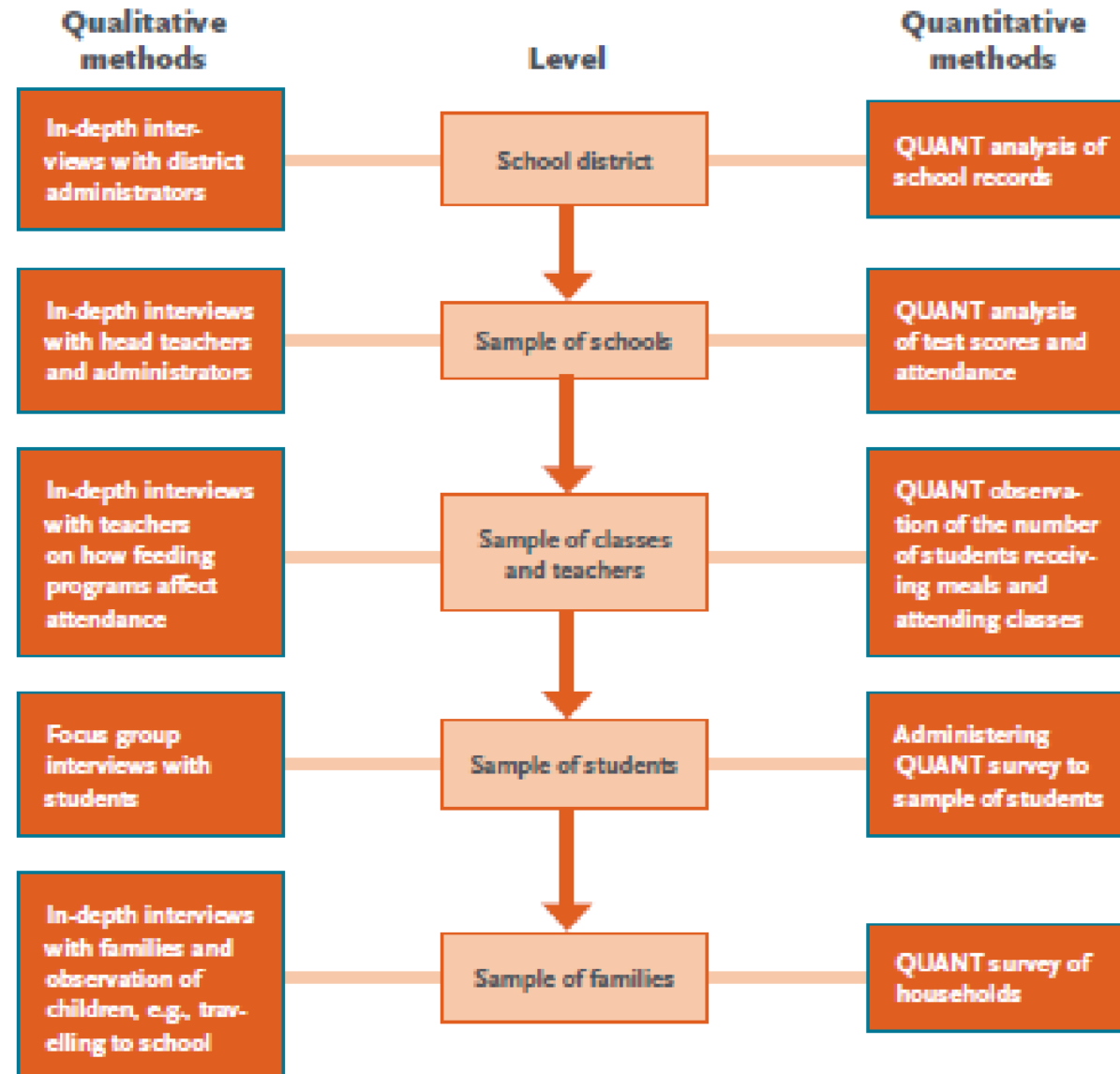
“Quantitative evidence is the bones; qualitative evidence is the flesh; and evaluative reasoning is the vital organs. If you are missing any of these you don’t have the full evaluative picture.”

Jane Davidson, in Michael Q. Patton, quoted

5 main benefits of mixed methods

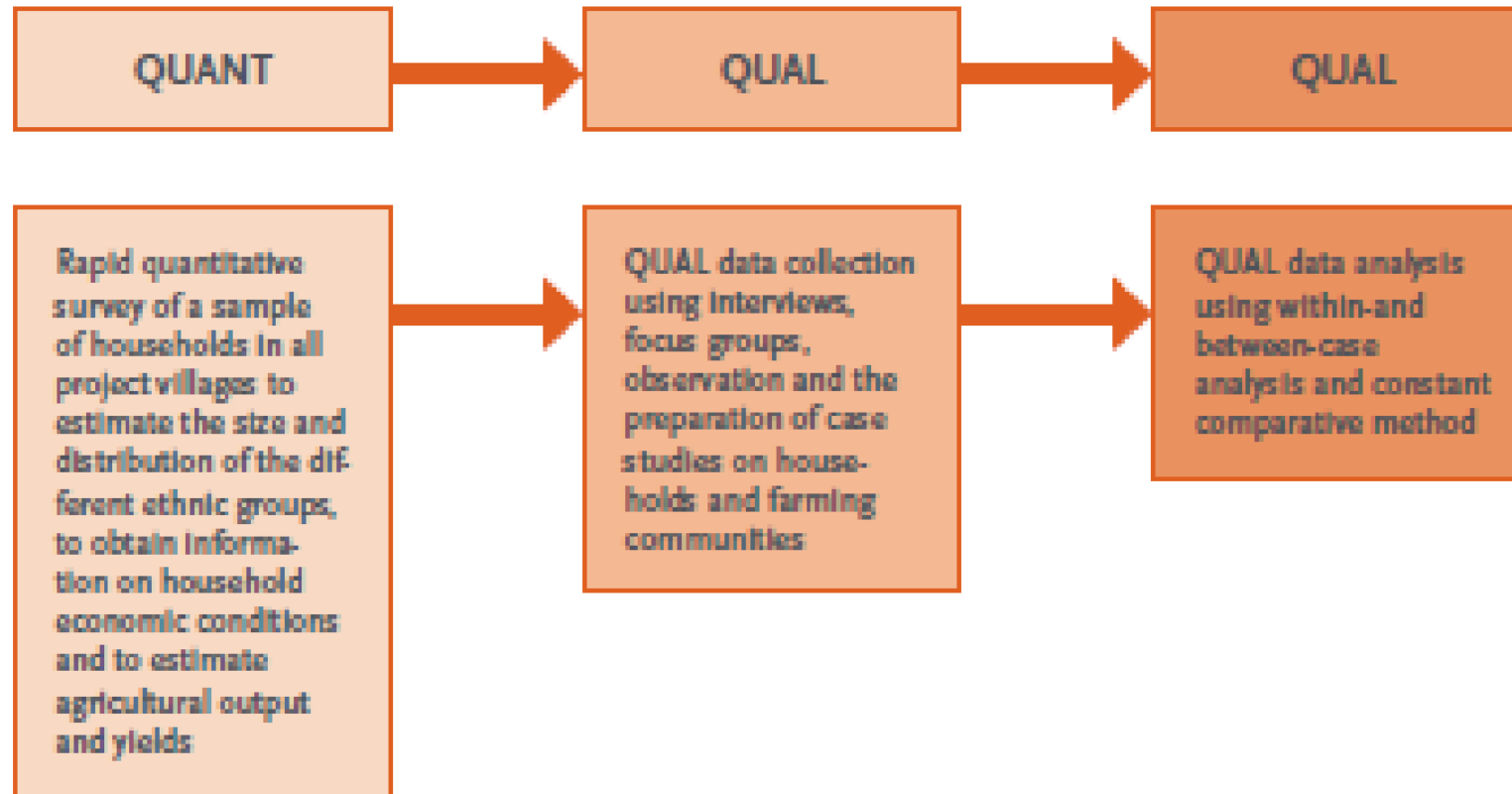
1. Triangulation of evaluation findings (if convergence, greater validity; if incoherence, need for analysing reasons)
2. Development: results from one method helps developing the tools / sample / instrumentation of another
3. Complementarity (broader, deeper understanding)
4. Initiation: diverging results call for reconciliation through further analysis
5. Value diversity: incorporating a wider diversity of values through different methods

Example multilevel mixed method design



Using both QUANT and QUAL tools at each level of an evaluated system to triangulate and complement the information collected , in Bamberger, quoted

Example of mixed method approach



*Using QUANT survey results to shape QUAL data collection
To be further analysed with QUAL comparative method, in Bamberger, quoted*

Need help to use a mix of methods in your evaluations?

For more support on using mixed methods in the evaluation you are managing:

Contact the ESS: helpdesk@evaluationsupport.eu



Further reading among many others:

- Michael Bamberger, Introduction to mixed methods in impact evaluation, InterAction / The Rockefeller Foundation, August 2012
- Kevin Williams, Mixing quantitative and qualitative evaluation tools: a pragmatic approach (based on the work done for the EC/Mean Programme)

Q&A session



Open question & answer session

4' video [quant/qual tools, mixed method approach.](#)

3' video [evaluation tools & approach before-after vs with-without](#)

2' video [randomized control trials \(RCT\) in evaluations](#)



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