



DESIGNING THE ACTION OR EXPERIMENT:
TESTING YOUR HYPOTHESIS

<p>Deliverables</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design of concrete actions to implement in response to the problem and verification of the hypotheses • Support for action-researchers in designing all the dimensions of the project • Check on feasibility and participation pre-requisites
<p>Goals</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explicitly define the actions to be implemented in order to collectively advance the original situation. • Check the conditions for implementation of those actions. • Make space for EVERY participant
<p>Step-by-step, with some tools</p>	<p>This step starts with a reminder of the previous steps, and how they fit into the overall process, to make sure that everyone understands the approach and their place in it, and has appropriated it.</p> <p>SUGGESTED TOOLS :</p> <p>→ [“What is this horned beast!?” Link to the sheet] : helps check that every member of the group is able to locate where he/she is in the project in its current form. Helps explain the project clearly and succinctly.</p> <p>→ [“The masterplan at a glance!” Link to the sheet] : helps establish the status of the action-research process; helps get an overview of the project and the process using a simple, easy-to-understand visual aid. Can also be used as a resource to communicate about the project (within the group and outside).</p> <p>The action-researchers can then identify any limitations on the group’s actions: these are essential to checking feasibility and conditions for achieving the actions.</p> <p>→ [“The constraint triangle” Link to the sheet] : helps identify any constraints that limit the action-research group’s options.</p> <p>Most of this step consists in formulating clear objectives that must be met to set the stage for experimentation in the action-research. This is an operational translation of the actions (“research” type or “project” type) needed to test the hypotheses (STEP 3). That means thinking as realistically as possible about what elements will help in achieving those objectives before starting to implement them (STEP 5)</p> <p>Three considerations will guide how objectives are expressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HOW to achieve them: what procedure will be followed; what order will tasks be done in; what explanations will participants be given; what exactly will the test stage consist of; etc. • WHO will participate in this test stage: the number and characteristics of the participants need to be defined. • WHAT equipment will be needed to achieve the objectives.



<p>Step-by-step, with some tools</p>	<p>→ SMART goals: starting in STEP 3 (the problem and construction of hypotheses). Helps to more precisely target what actions (whether research, activities, actions in the field) are needed. Helps to distinguish between the project’s objectives and its expected effects¹. Helps anchor the project in an operational, realistic approach.</p> <p>So the purpose of this step is to design how to test the hypotheses by imagining the criteria and indicators that will allow the group to determine whether or not the hypothesis will prove valid after the action or experiment. The research process implies and requires such a verification stage, see STEP 6 (evaluation). This will inevitably mean setting up a framework for analysis of the actions implemented, starting in this step.</p> <p>In other words, for each objective listed (and the associated actions), a set of criteria must be defined (with indicators associated with each criterion) to determine how the validity of the actions implemented will be “verified” versus the hypotheses.</p>
<p>Reminders</p>	<p>In this step it can be tempting to go straight towards designing actions and heading towards a “full project” mode. While the suggested tools all rely on the codes used in project management methodology, it is important to make sure, and have the group make sure, that this step is actually part of the action-research process: are the objectives really a means to respond to the problem and to the hypotheses that have been defined? And how will they accomplish that?</p>
<p>Pitfalls & obstacles</p>	<p>Un certain nombre d’idées d’actions, de projets ou de solutions ont pu émerger dans les discussions du groupe lors des étapes précédentes. Une tentation à venir ici « <i>confirmer</i> » les intuitions initiales peut apparaître. Il s’agit alors de se « <i>décoller</i> » de celles-ci et vérifier si les objectifs d’actions peuvent effectivement répondre aux hypothèses énoncées et aux variables qu’elles comportent (et uniquement celles-ci).</p>
<p>Tips</p>	<p>“Quality criteria” in formulating the objectives behind actions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific: or precise. An action is expressed in verb form (do, achieve, produce, build, etc.) and concerns a specific aspect/variable. • Measurable: the action has measurable results (criteria and indicators must be determined for each action). It should be possible to measure the change or transformation (in the situation or the group) because of the project. • Attainable: in relation to the defined variables. The action must have an “influence” on the object. • Realistic: this relates to the constraint triangle. The participants are the “boots on the ground” in the project and must be able to implement the action operationally. • Time-bound: the action has an explicitly expressed start and end point.



¹ **What’s the difference between an expected effect and an objective?**

An objective is a concrete goal the group wants to achieve within the action-research (whether it’s a “project” type or “research” type action). An expected effect is what one imagines or hopes will happen as a result of that achievement. But effects are usually measured over a long period, and you can achieve the project’s objectives without the expected effect occurring... Unexpected effects (sometimes good ones!) can also occur.





<p>What's expected of you: your role, posture, and skills</p>	<p>Accompanying a project ... What does that mean? First, accompanying a project means getting involved in someone else's project. That means having the means, and therefore the resources, to understand, and be understood by, each other...</p> <p>The facilitator will therefore need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • make sure the group knows where it stands with reference to the steps already done and the steps to come • support collective decision making • make sure that each participant can express his/her limitations in the project (e.g. time available for the project), and help identify the group's limitations (e.g. budget). • reformulate, express and help to differentiate between the objectives of actions and their expected effects.
<p>Illustration</p>	<p>We believe that implementation of the action-research will help us appropriate the various aspects of soft mobility (process objective).</p> <p>HYPOTHESIS 1: Objective 1: propose a safe itinerary to our structure (bike path?) Objective 2: meet with local authorities to define the feasibility of our itinerary</p> <p>HYPOTHESIS 2: Objective 1: identify the number of potential users of secure bike parking Objective 2: determine what existing building could be used, or what work would need to be done to adapt or build secure bike parking</p> <p>Expected effects:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the structure's own employees will adopt soft transport for their own commutes 2. the project will attract new users to the structure who appreciate this type of approach"
<p>Ressources</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Toolbox: Tools for facilitators in participatory projects (Graine Guyane) https://graineguyane.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/09/Partie_3-Des-outils-d-animation-pour-mettre-en-oeuvre-la-participation-1.pdf • How to express how you feel within a project? Blob tree L'Arbre de Lison (Scicabulle): https://scicabulle.files.wordpress.com/2020/11/p-57-arbre-de-lison.png • Consent decision making (Université de Nous): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ft250ZfbsGI&feature=youtu.be • Film De la participation au croisement des savoirs (ATD Quart-Monde): https://www.atd-quartmonde.fr/de-la-participation-au-croisement-des-savoirs-le-film/ • [Guidelines Link to the guidelines]

