Building the concept of meso : What can we learn about the role of intermediary actors for agroecological transition using functional analysis ?

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Plan

1. **Problematic : how to evaluate the performance of agricultural innovation system**

2. **Contribution to the concept of meso : Functional services for the performance of innovation process**

3. **Conclusion**

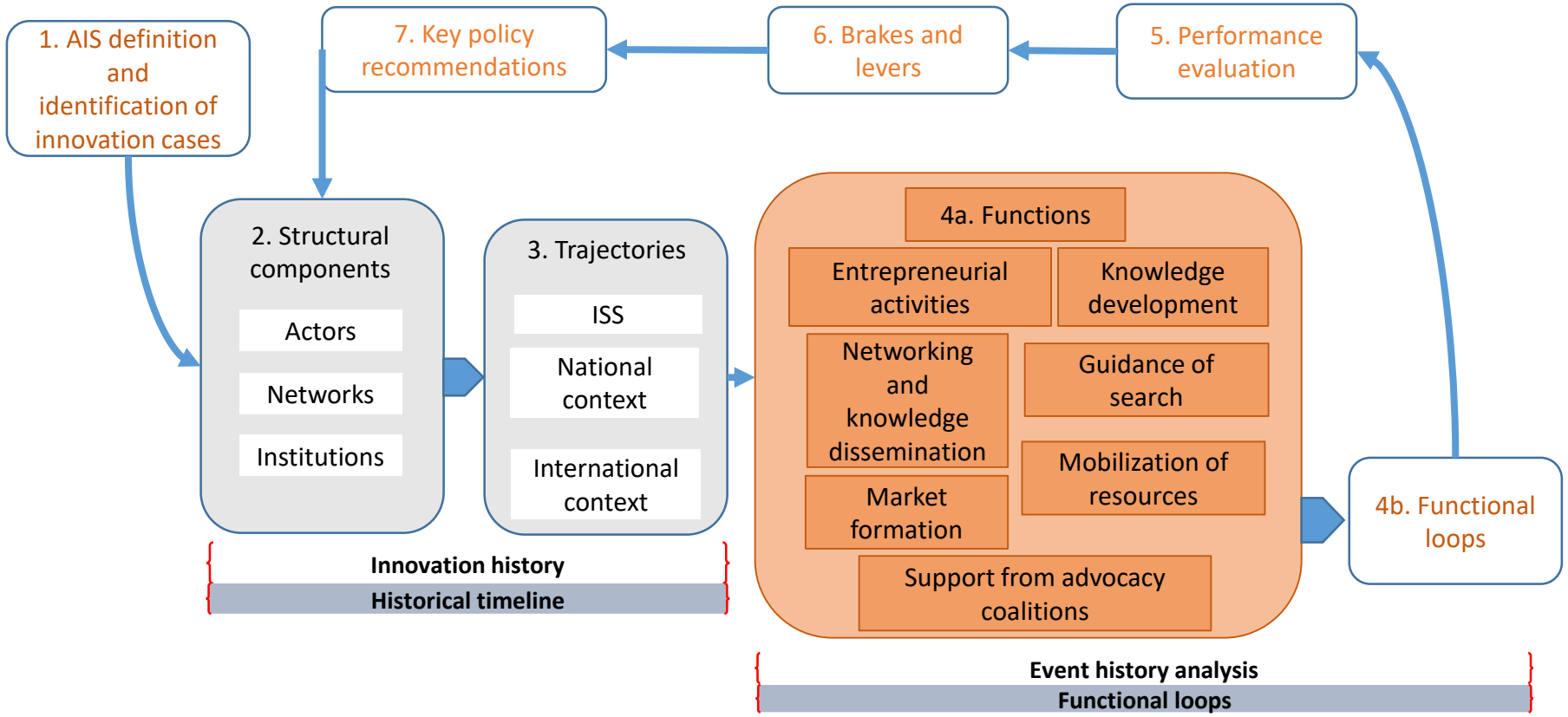
1. The problematic

1. Since 2015's Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP), a systemic perspective has started to be included in the **innovation policies documents** elaborated by Sub-Saharan African countries as Cameroon.

2. The functioning of Agricultural Innovation System is based on **Innovation Support Services** (Mathé et al, 2016; Mathé et al, 2019).

How to evaluate the performance of agricultural innovation system through the analysis of Innovation Support Services ?

2. Functional analysis of the performance of innovation process



Source : Auteurs, adapté de Bergek et al. (2008)

2. Functional analysis of the performance of innovation process

Table 1 - Description of the functions of the innovation process in AIS perspective

Function	Description (AIS)	Example of activities
F1. Entrepreneurial activities 	Creation of business opportunities from new knowledge, networks or markets. Also includes lobbying, funding or changing institutional structures	Demonstrations, innovation projects, investments in new technologies
F2. Knowledge development 	Creation of new knowledge in the form of research papers, reports or physical media	Field or laboratory experiments, pilot projects
F3. Network formation and knowledge diffusion 	Networking and facilitating information exchange	Creation of innovation platforms, scaling up and development of innovations, symposia, conferences, partnership building
F4. Guidance of search 	The process of selecting technological options to accompany the development of the innovation. This can be done naturally or through design activities	Expectations, promises, policy targets, standards, research products
F5. Market formation 	Creation of niche markets to make innovations competitive	Market regulations, Tax exemptions
F6. Resource mobilisation 	Human, financial and material investments to develop innovations	Grants, investments
F7. Support from advocacy coalitions 	Policy advocacy for enabling resources and institutions for innovations	Lobbies, advice

Source: Authors based on (2019b), (2007), (2009) and (2018)

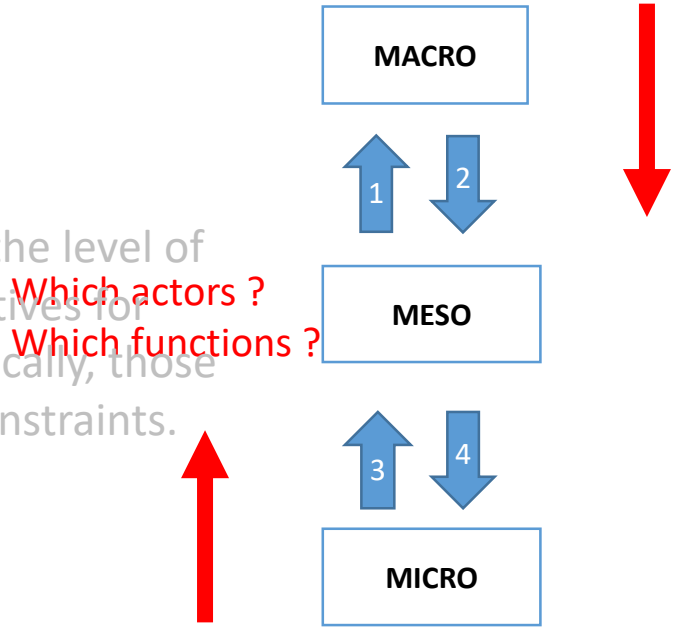
2. Contribution to the concept of meso : Functional services for the performance of innovation process

- (2+4) Macro – Meso – Micro : how the objective of performance in an innovation system can be transmitted to individual actors.

- (1+3) Micro – Meso – Macro : how the constraints of those actors can be taken into account in the policies.

- Constitution of the meso level

The set of functions ensuring the repercussion at the level of individual players of the orientations and incentives for innovation provided by public policy, and symmetrically, those who help public policy to understand farmers' constraints.

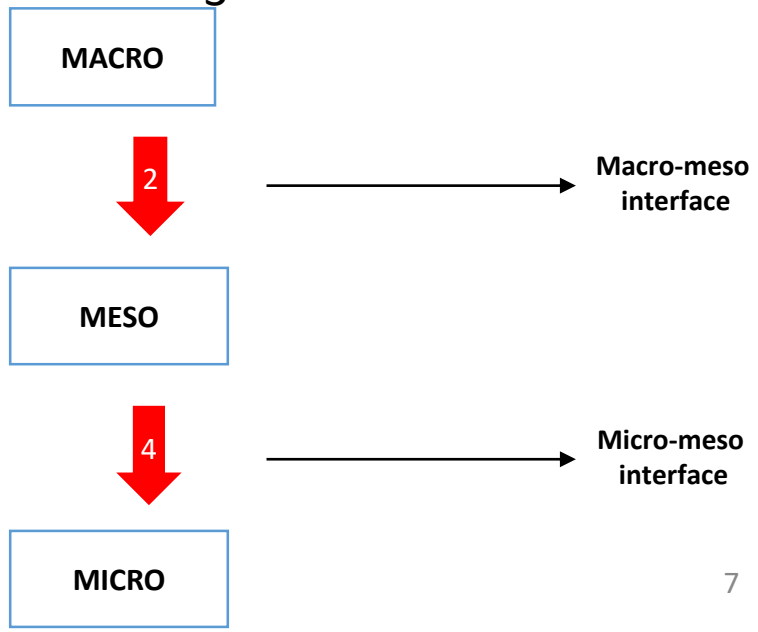


2. Contribution to the concept of meso : Functional services for the performance of innovation process

- (2+4) Macro – Meso – Micro : how the objective of performance in an innovation system can be transmitted to individual actors

- Activated functions : Resource mobilization (F_6), Support from advocacy coalitions (F_7), Networking and diffusion (F_3)

- Actors : State, Research institutes

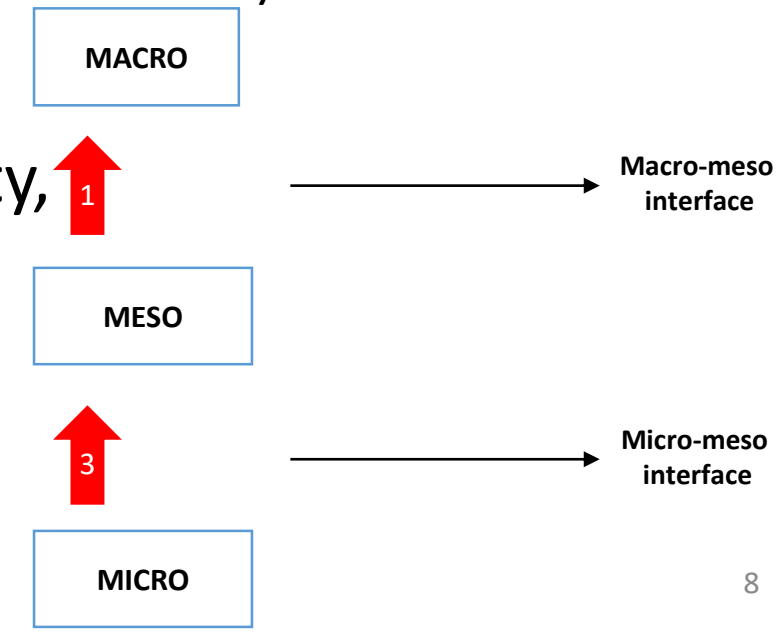


2. Contribution to the concept of meso : Functional services for the performance of innovation process

- (1+3) Micro – Meso – Macro : how the constraints of those actors can be taken into account in the policies

- Activated functions : Networking and diffusion (F_3), Resource mobilization (F_6), Support from advocacy coalitions (F_7)

- Actors : State, Research institutes, Civil society, Communities



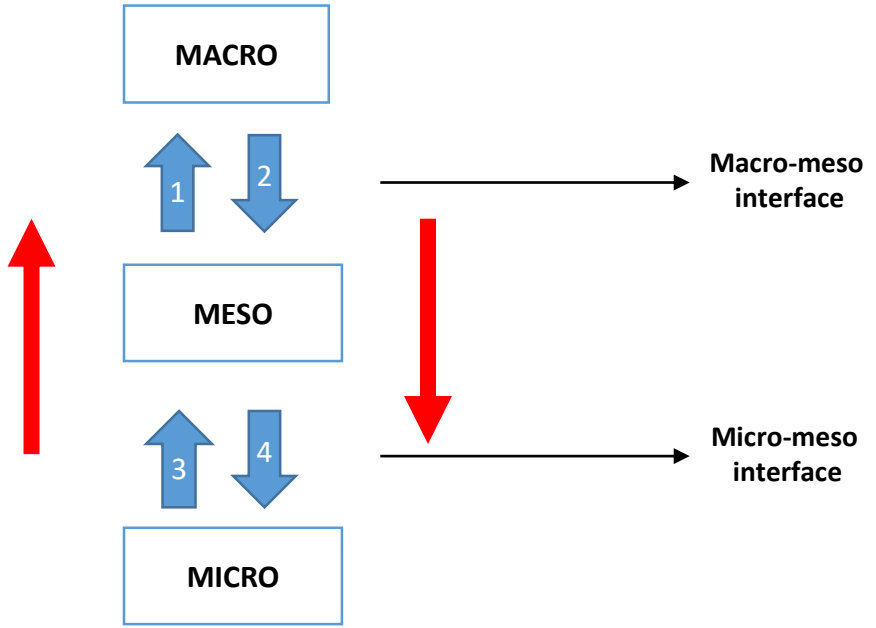
2. Contribution to the concept of meso : Functional services for the performance of innovation process

- Constitution of the meso level : actors, role
- Classical actors : State, Private companies, Farmers
- New actors : Civil society, Communities

2. Contribution to the concept of meso : Functional services for the performance of innovation process

A tool for analysing the role of intermediary actors

Functional approach gives a simultaneous perspective on the macro-meso-micro and the micro-meso-macro interactions.



3. Conclusion

- The functional analysis of AIS through ISS highlights the constitution, the role, and the place of the meso level through functions activated.
- The functional analysis highlights the importance of neglected actors at a meso level such as **communities and civil society** which need to be reinforced.
- Also, **the meso level on its own can have hindrances that call for policies to influence them**. It is not only an “intermediary” or a leverer.

3. Perspectives

- Our work opens a field of research on specific functions constituting the meso level in influencing the agroecological transition.

- It thus challenges the ability of research to contribute to the creation of relevant services for the development of agroecological innovation.

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Thanks for your kind attention.

Any questions and suggestions ?

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- **Cas d'innovation étudiés**

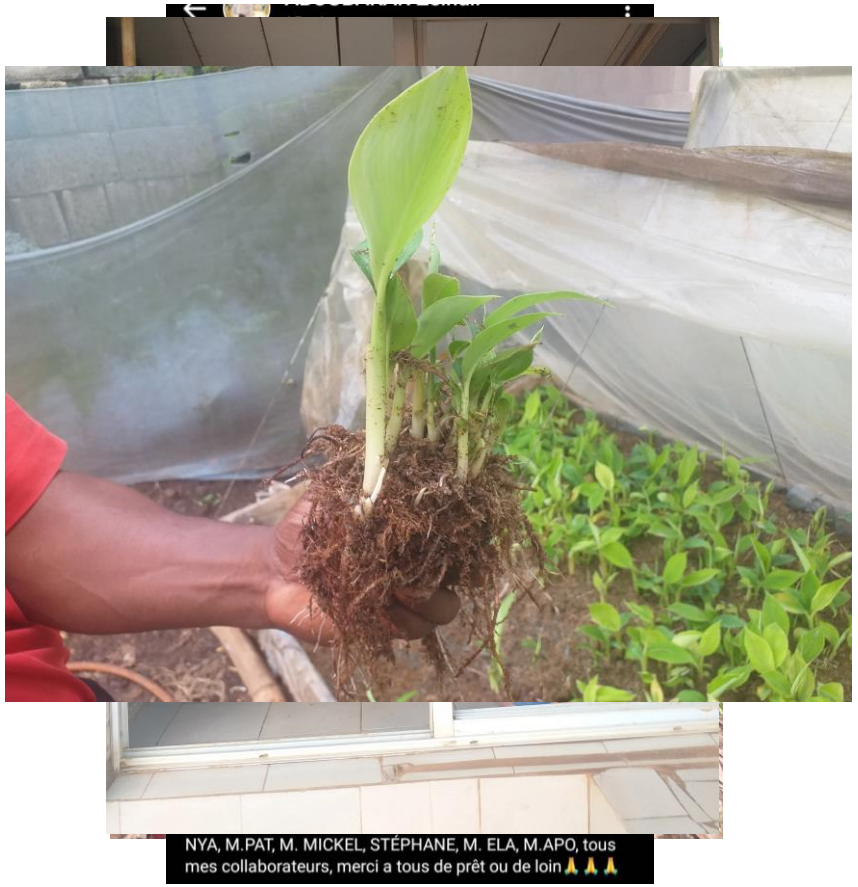

Tableau 4 : Présentation des caractéristiques des cas d'innovation

Caractéristiques des cas Cas étudiés	Nature de l'innovation	Acteur(s) porteur(s)	Temporalité
Agroforesterie cacaoyère sur savanes	Technique	Recherche internationale	> 50 ans
Production de biopesticides	Produit	Entreprise privée	< 5 ans
SPG Etso Mbong	Organisationnelle	ONG nationale	< 10 ans
Technique PIF	Procédé	Recherche nationale	> 40 ans

Source : Auteurs, 2023