

A photograph of two men, one in a dark shirt and one in a striped shirt, looking at a laptop outdoors. The image is overlaid with a dark blue semi-transparent filter. The word 'Azimut' is written in white serif font with a small orange dot above the 'i'. Below the name is a thin orange horizontal line.

# Azimut

**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE  
TO INCUBATORS AND ESOS**

S O F I Diagnosis

SOFI-ESO is a performance assessment and technical assistance due diligence methodology for incubators, accelerators and entrepreneurship support organisations (ESOs).

SOFI-ESO combines a quantitative and qualitative approach.

On the quantitative side, SOFI-ESO offers a comprehensive operational, financial and social performance analysis, based on a set of directly usable indicators and charts.

Qualitatively, SOFI-ESO offers a structured technical, managerial and financial diagnosis, allowing the identification of the main strengths and weaknesses of ESOs. Based on this diagnosis, SOFI-ESO identifies and prioritises Technical Assistance needs and develops a tailor-made TA plan.

**One of the added values of SOFI-ESO is the analysis of the ESO's capacity to change, with a particular focus on human capital to ensure that all the necessary conditions are met to drive sustainable change.**

Experience has shown that this contributes to embedding change within the supported ESOs, to the benefit of their performance.



The performance and quality of service of incubators is highly variable, with no benchmark.



The evaluation of ESOs is mostly based on impact (n° of jobs created...), without taking into account governance, business model and operational performance.



Change management needs to be factored into Technical Assistance (TA).



Entrepreneurial programmes focus on supporting start-ups, to the detriment of building a professional and successful ESO industry.

**ESOs use SOFI-ESO** to get an objective, independent and external view of their performance and priority technical support needs.

**SOFI-ESO allows donors** to have an overview of the sector's performance and to direct their contributions towards strengthening its actors, based on their own needs.

**Incubators networks use SOFI-ESO** to better understand the reality, potential and needs of their members, in order to improve their services and build standards for the industry.

SOFI-ESO thus allows those actors to select ESOs to work with and plan the support they need to improve their performance in a sustainable way.

SOFI-ESO thus allows those actors to provide an ex-ante and ex-post measurement framework to assess the impact of a Technical Assistance project to ESOs.

From its Monitoring and Information System, the diagnosed incubator fills in data tables quantifying its activity over the last 4 years:

- > Institutional data;
- > Data on products and services offered;
- > Data on companies supported;
- > Breakdown of these data by geographical site
- > Balance sheet
- > Income statement

From this data, the tool automatically produces:

- > 17 ratios and 10 graphs of operational performance
- > 18 ratios and 4 graphs of financial performance
- > 32 ratios and 7 graphs of social performance

SOFI Diagnosis is based on the analysis of the following four pillars:

**(S)TRUCTURE**

To what extent does the ESO have the adequate structure to grow its operations and fulfil its mission.

**(O)PÉRATIONS**

How well does the ESO manage its operations and are they demand-driven.

**(F)ONCTIONS**

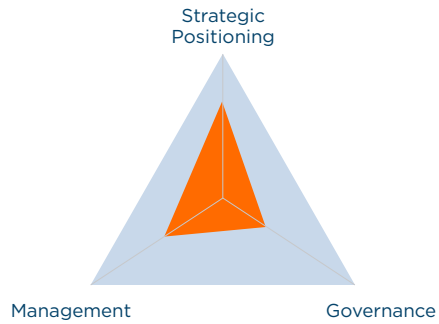
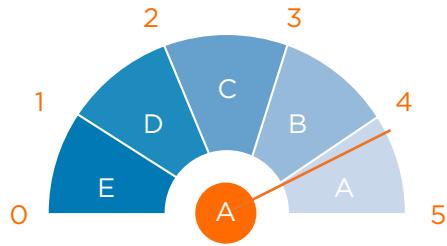
To what extent do supporting functions effectively contribute to the development of the ESO.

**(I)MPLÉMENTATION**

Capacity of the ESO to absorb Technical Assistance and manage change.

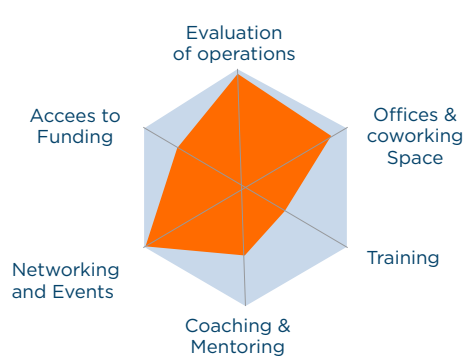
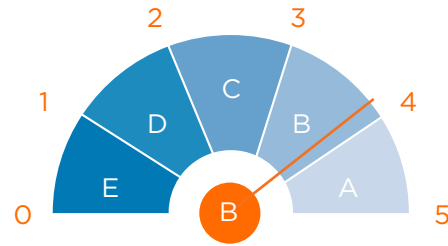
**(S)TRUCTURE**

- S1\_ Strategic Positioning
- S2\_ Governance
- S3\_ Management



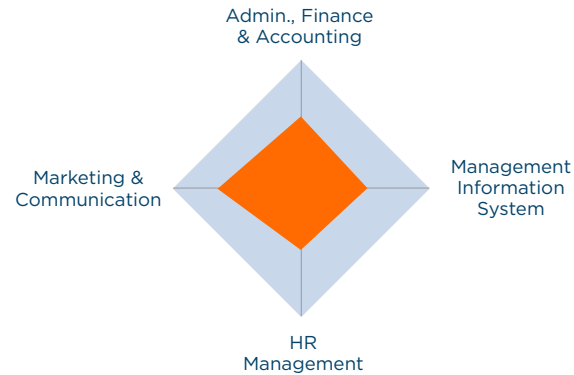
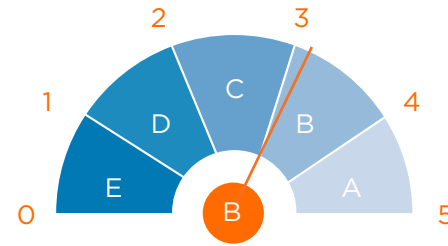
**(O)PERATIONS**

- O1\_ Evolution of Operations
- O2\_ Coworking & Office Space
- O3\_ Training
- O4\_ Coaching & Mentoring
- O5\_ Networking & Events
- O6\_ Funding



**(F)UNCTIONS**

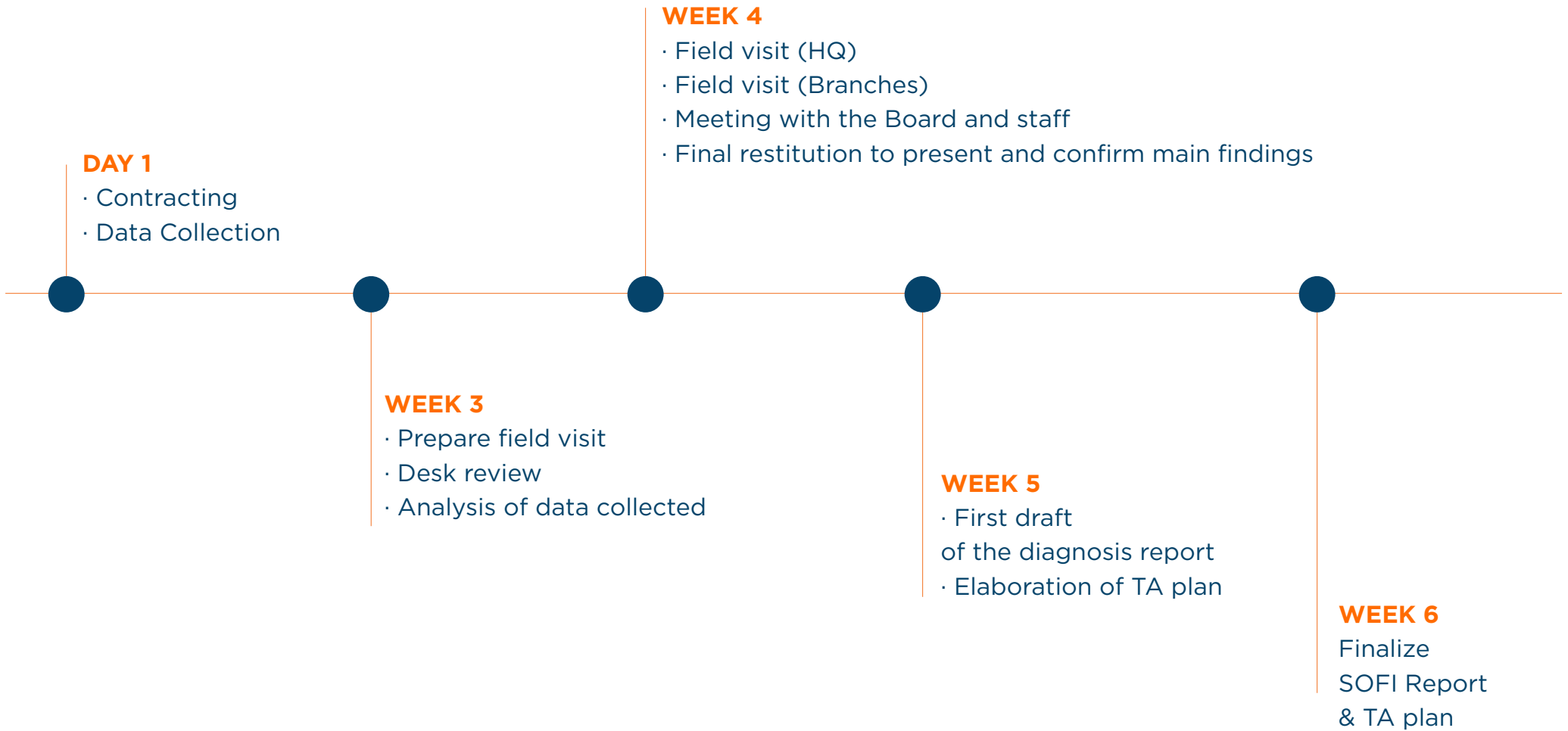
- F1\_ Admin, Finance & Accounting
- F2\_ Management & Information System
- F3\_ Human Ressources Management
- F4\_ Marketing & Communication

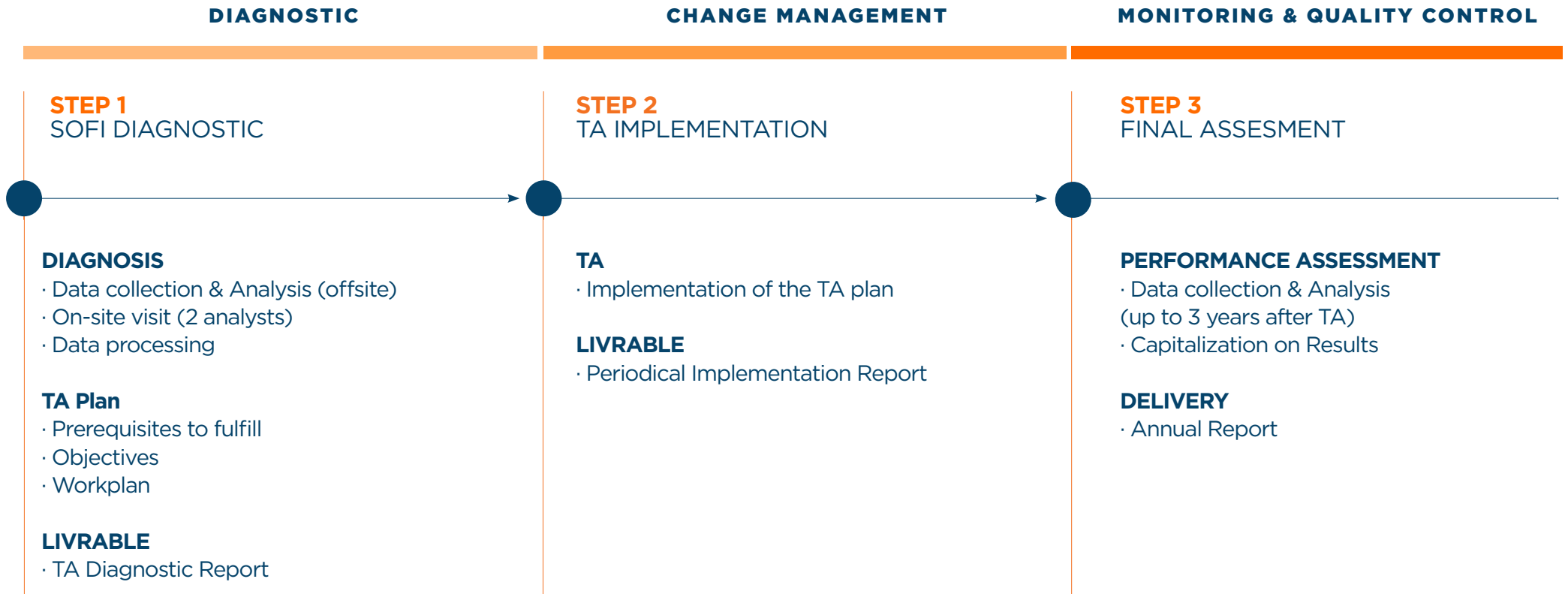


**(I)MPLEMENTATION**

- I1\_ Engagement
- I2\_ Leadership
- I3\_ Capacity
- I4\_ AT History
- I5\_ Communication
- I6\_ Project Risk







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