

Why Use the Canvas to Design an Audit with Your Team?

The Canvas provides a visual and collaborative basis for the audit team to align around an object and begin managing the work's risks.

It is an instrument to be used when little is yet known about the main aspects and issues of the audit object. Its role is to provide assurance in the decision-making processes of oversight, ensuring that the products delivered add value to the audit's final recipients.

UNDERSTANDING THE AUDIT CANVAS

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Introduction

Key Questions

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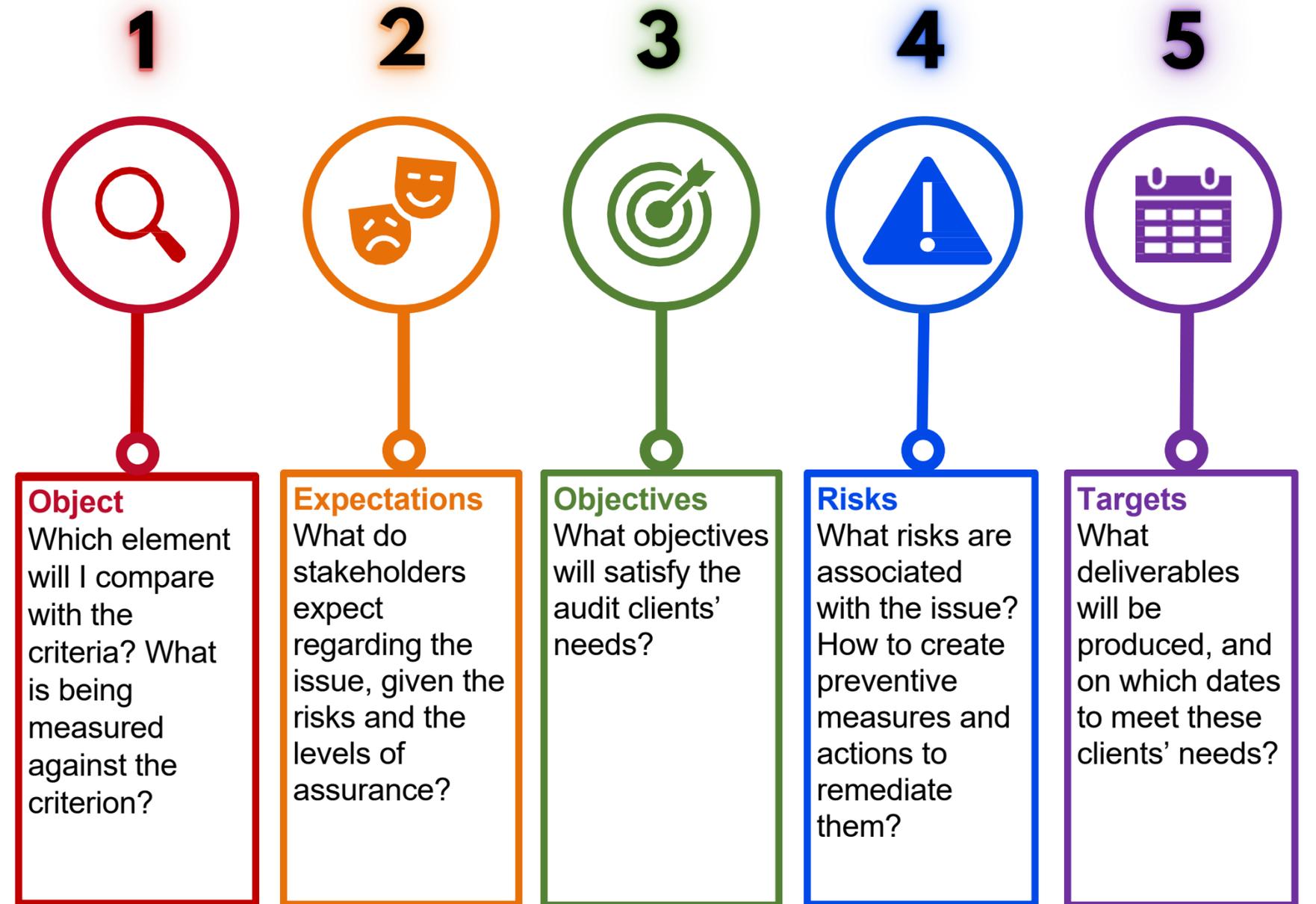
The Audit Canvas is an excellent tool for gaining a clear and organized understanding of the audit object, the business, and the institution where it operates.

This tool helps the team identify the main stakeholders interested in the audit's results. It organizes the key issues involved in the work, drawing on the team members' previous experience and the information available about the object — even when such information is limited — in an intuitive way.

It was designed for audits of any type or purpose and is particularly useful before developing the object's overall view.

About the Audit Canvas Model

The model is structured around five elements, each with key questions to be answered collaboratively, based on the team's prior knowledge and easily obtainable information about the audit object (through research, websites, and other sources).



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TEAM PREPARATION

The team may also invite a facilitator. For audits on topics where the team has limited experience, it can be helpful to invite an external participant — whether from within or outside the organization — to join the Canvas session.



BEFORE STARTING:

The team may already possess significant knowledge about the object, the business, the responsible parties, and the audited organization.

Past experiences are valuable for building the initial outline of the audit, prior to developing the object overview.

It is recommended that participants prepare in advance by reviewing information, documents, files, and websites related to the upcoming audit.

These preliminary steps help participants build their contributions more effectively during the Canvas session.

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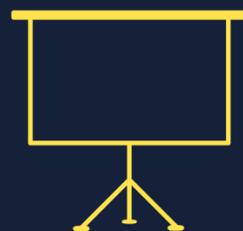
ORGANIZING THE CANVAS SESSION

CHECKLIST:



Gather the team:

Bring together the audit team and other collaborators in groups of 3 to 6 people.



Prepare the space for creativity:

Find a whiteboard or a large section of wall to display the Canvas. Choose a quiet place where everyone can stay focused.



Get the model ready for use

Print the Canvas on a large poster (at least A0 size) or use a collaborative digital tool (e.g., Whiteboard).



Set the stage for ideas to flow

Make sure to have plenty of sticky notes and markers available for all participants (for an in-person session).



Focus on the exercise:

Set aside 45–60 minutes without interruptions.

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Audit Canvas Model:

The Audit Canvas model is shown below. It contains twelve boxes organized around the five key questions presented earlier. These boxes should be completed collaboratively by the team during the Canvas session, preferably using a structured brainstorming approach.

 OBJETO 1	 CRITÉRIOS 2	 EVIDÊNCIAS 3
 OBJETIVO 7	 STAKEHOLDERS 5	 PROBLEMA DE AUDITORIA 4
		 NÍVEL DE ASSEGURAÇÃO 6
 NÃO ESCOPO 8	 RISCOS DE AUDITORIA 10	 ENTREGAS 11
 ESCOPO 9		 DATAS 12

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Connection between key questions and the Canvas sections

Each area of the Canvas model is linked to one of the five key questions presented in Slide 2:

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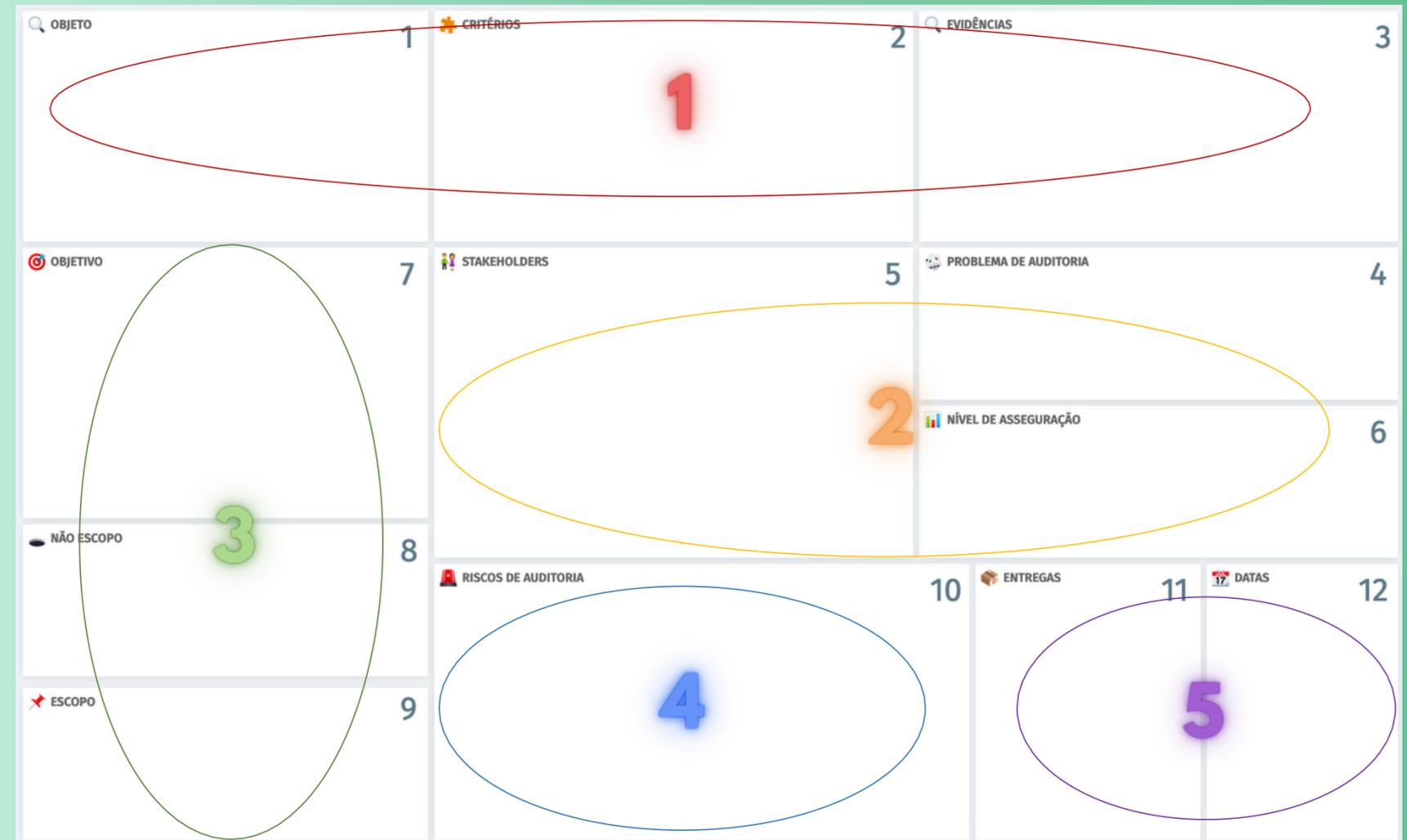
1 Object identified in a clear, measurable and evidentiary way.
- 

2 Expectations that help delimit the audit problem and its context.
- 

3 Objectives that are significant, action-oriented and meet the audit clients' needs.
- 

4 Risks identification of the main risks related to the audit problem.
- 

5 Targets specific, ambitious yet measurable and achievable.



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Sequence for Filling the Canvas

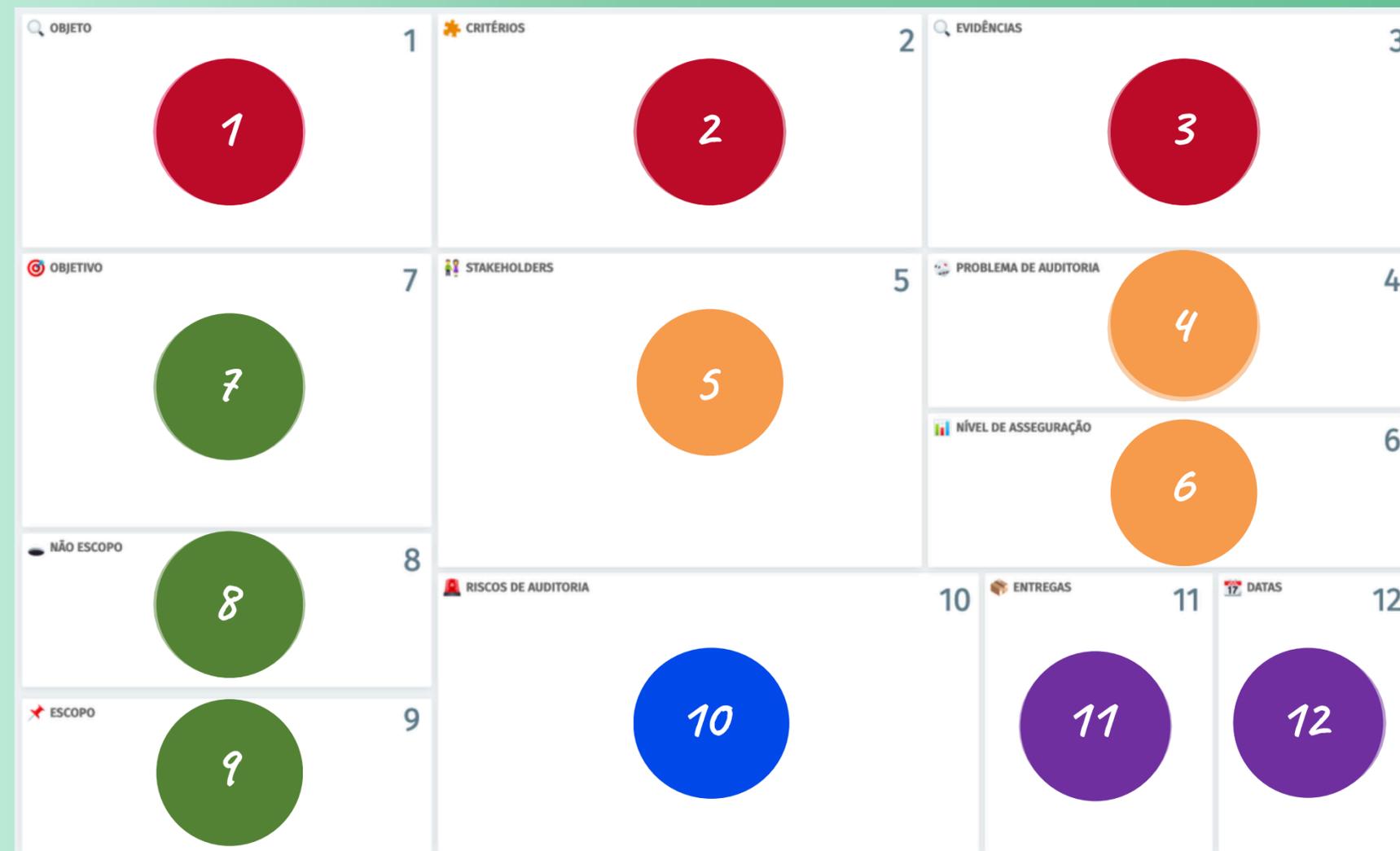
The Canvas should be completed sequentially, allowing the team to understand the logical progression of the audit planning process.

The sequence is represented by colors, which correspond to the five key questions in the audit model.

Each color represents a main analytical dimension and guides the team's discussion during the session, helping structure the audit from the definition of the object to the delivery of final products.

- Red: initial decisions about the audit object and criteria.
- Orange: defining expectations and aligning stakeholders.
- Green: detailing the audit objectives and scope.
- Blue: identifying and analyzing relevant risks.
- Purple: defining targets, deliverables, and deadlines.

Following this sequence helps build a coherent and integrated understanding between scope, risks, and expected outcomes of the audit.



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Detailed Structure of the Canvas Model

THE AUDIT CANVAS MODEL IS COMPOSED OF 13 KEY QUESTIONS, GROUPED INTO FIVE MAIN AREAS:

1

Object

Identification:

What will be evaluated in comparison to the defined criteria?

Criteria:

What conditions represent the desired performance of the object?

Evidence:

What elements will support the team's conclusions?

Relevance:

Which delimitation of the object is most significant for the audit clients?

2

Expectations

Audit Problem:

What is the central problem that connects the object and the criteria?

Stakeholders:

Who are the involved parties, their expectations and responsibilities?

Level of Assurance:

What level of assurance – or degree of confidence – is expected by requesters and interested parties?

3

Objectives

Objective:

What results will meet the needs of requesters and stakeholders?

Out of scope:

Which work processes, products, areas and periods will not be covered by the audit?

Scope:

Which processes, areas and periods will be examined, and to what depth and extent will the work be carried out?

4

Risks

Audit Risks:

What threats could compromise the quality and usefulness of the report?

Precautions:

How to identify, prevent and address these risks?

5

Targets

Deliverables :

What products will be produced and made available for use by the team, managers and decision-makers, and what minimum quality and content requirements apply?

Dates:

Which delivery deadlines will ensure that products meet clients' and stakeholders' expectations, guaranteeing their utility and timeliness?

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Object Delimitation

Key Question

What will be evaluated against the criteria chosen by the team?

The team must identify the audit object as precisely as possible, considering:

Physical delimitation

Define the activity, process, act, system, program or audited entity. In this preliminary stage, the team should identify the object using as many elements as available (name, identification number, responsible parties, etc.).

Spatial delimitation

Identify the agencies, departments or federated entities covered, defining the territorial cut and the stakeholders directly involved in the audit.

Temporal delimitation

Define the period under review and the audit's temporal reach – retroactive, concurrent or prospective – considering the feasibility of obtaining evidence for each phase.



A clear definition of the object guides feasibility, focus and the level of detail of the work, ensuring that the audit is conducted in alignment with the expectations of clients and stakeholders.

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Audit Criteria

Key Question

What attributes represent the desired condition of the object (how it should be)?

Criteria are the parameters that serve as the basis for evaluation and support the audit's conclusions. They should be relevant, reliable, and understandable, allowing the audit to produce useful and comparable information.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CRITERIA:

Relevant and Complete

Provide information that supports decision-making and do not omit essential aspects.

Reliable and Neutral

Lead to consistent, unbiased conclusions even when applied by different auditors.

Comprehensible and Useful

They are clear and objective, allowing findings and conclusions to meet the audit clients' information needs.

Comparable, Acceptable, and Available

They are based on good practices, standards or recognized benchmarks, accepted by experts and understandable to interested audiences.



The team should aim to build an ideal view of the object – based on standards, benchmarks, or performance references – before developing the audit overview, thereby strengthening its ability to identify risks and opportunities.

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Possible Evidence

Key Question

Which elements will be used to draw conclusions about the object with respect to the defined criteria?

MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF EVIDENCE:

Relevance

The evidence must show a direct and significant connection with the causes, effects, or conditions of the audit object, demonstrating its relevance to the examined issues.

Sufficiency

The gathered evidence must be quantitatively and qualitatively sufficient to convince a knowledgeable reviewer that the findings are valid and that the object's condition is consistent with the established criteria.

Validity and Reliability

The evidence should provide a sound basis for assessing the object against the defined criteria. It must be properly documented to demonstrate its condition and support each finding, and should be obtained through transparent, replicable methods that are free from errors or bias.



Audit evidence: These are the elements that demonstrate the consistency between the object and the established criteria, serving as the basis for the findings and conclusions. They must be obtained and recorded systematically and reliably, ensuring the traceability and credibility of the audit work.

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Relevance to Clients

Key Question

Which definition or scope of the object holds the greatest importance for the potential clients of the audit?

ASPECTS INDICATING THE OBJECT'S RELEVANCE:

Resources Applied

Budgetary value involved.

Actors Involved

Number, importance, and complexity of relationships among participants..

Public Importance

Real or symbolic, institutional, or political relevance of the object for society or clients.

Derived Effects

Social, economic, or environmental impacts resulting from the object.

Object Complexity

Multiple actors, difficulties in assessing or executing work processes.



The comparison between the object's condition and the criteria should generate useful information for clients and stakeholders, contributing to:

- Identifying opportunities for improvement;
- Ensuring compliance and legitimacy;
- Strengthening confidence in the information presented.

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WHAT WILL BE AUDITED?

Object:
Specify the element (act, event, account, process, program, department, etc.) whose condition will be assessed against the defined criteria – in other words, “what it is.”

Example: Governance structures and implementation of energy transition policies.



Example: National Energy Transition Plan and sector al guidelines. International Energy Agency (IEA) Good Practice Guide on Energy Efficiency.

Criteria:
Define the benchmark for comparison – such as laws, regulations, best practices, jurisprudence or benchmarks – representing “what should be”.

Evidence:
Specify which elements (documents, records, interviews, photos, reports, expert opinions, etc.) will be used to demonstrate whether the object meets the criteria – in other words, “what to document.”

Example:

1. Self-assessment responses
2. Supporting documents
3. Documentary analysis reports

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EXPECTATIONS

Audit Problem

Key Question

What is the issue involved in comparing the object with the criteria?

The audit problem should synthesize the reason and context that justify performing the work, articulating motivation, the available information and the type of control action most appropriate.

ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS:

Audit Motivation

This should reflect the origin of the work (annual planning, higher-level determination, complaint, parliamentary representation, or continuation of a previous control action).

Available Information

Preliminary information should be considered, such as previous reports, history of failures, anomalies, or results from other audits.

Work to be performed

Based on the motivations and initial information, define the most appropriate control action to meet the information needs of clients and stakeholders, supporting decision-making processes.



The audit problem can be framed either as an explanatory narrative (justifying the work) or as a central question to be answered by the audit.

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EXPECTATIONS

Stakeholders

Key Question

Who are the main parties involved in the audit process, and what are their expectations, functions and possible impacts on the work?

MAIN CATEGORIES:

Responsible parties

Managers and performers of the audited activities, with an interest in compliance and process improvement.

Partners

Organizations or entities with complementary objectives and related mandates.

Stakeholder Groups

External entities, civil society organizations, media, and the public, whose interests may exert institutional or social pressure.

Superiors

Individuals responsible for strategic decisions, quality requirements, and institutional implications.

Clients

Requesters and users of the audit products, interested in decision-making and reliability of the information.



The team should identify the main actors involved in the audit, understanding their interests, levels of influence, and potential impacts on risks and the feasibility of the work, in order to align planning with the identified context.

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EXPECTATIONS

Level of Assurance

Key Question

What level of assurance is required by the requesters and interested parties?

The level of assurance determines the depth and rigor of the procedures to be applied in the audit. It guides the degree of confidence that can be provided to users of the audit's outputs.

Limited Assurance

In this type of assurance, the auditor states that, based on the procedures performed, nothing has come to their attention that would lead them to believe the object is not in compliance with the applicable criteria.

If there are indications of non-compliance, the auditor must perform additional procedures to confirm or rule out the issue. Despite being limited, this assurance should still provide useful conclusions and add value for clients.

Reasonable Assurance

In this case, the audit conclusion is expressed positively: the auditor states, based on sufficient and appropriate evidence, whether the object is or is not in compliance with all relevant aspects of the applicable criteria.

The information should provide a true and fair view according to the defined parameters.



The team must define the level of confidence to be provided to users, taking into account the relevance, risks, and expectations of the primary audit clients.

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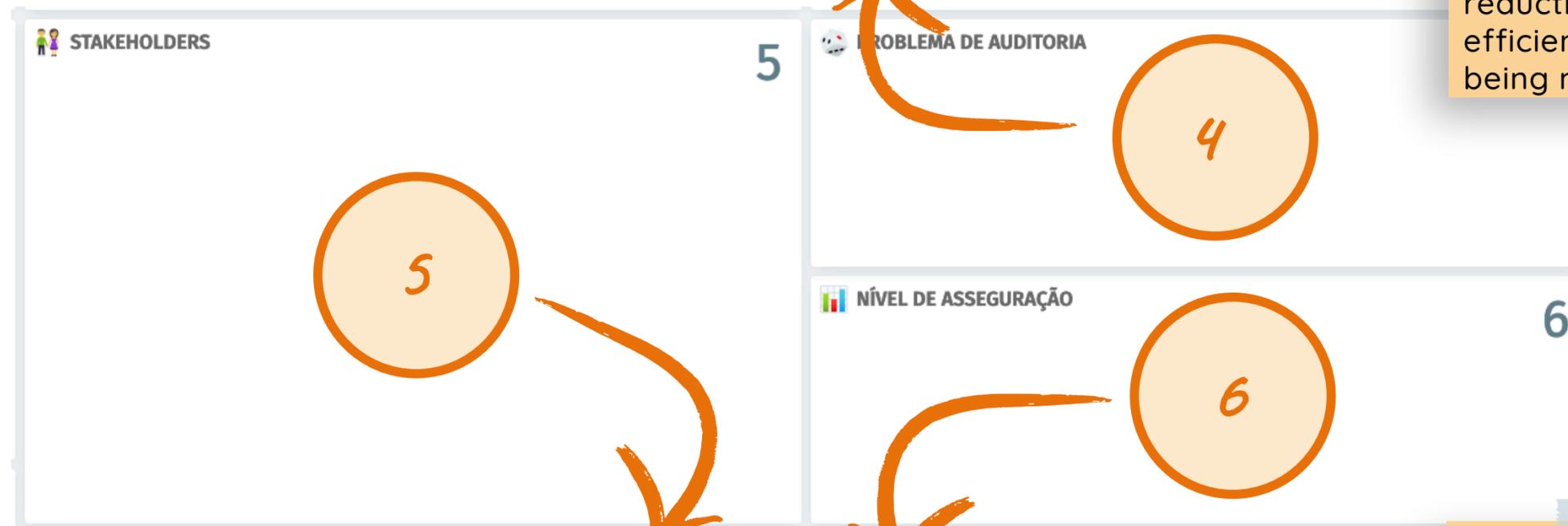
EXPECTATIONS

WHY IS IT BEING AUDITED?

Audit Problem:

Indicate the reason why the object was selected. This definition should reflect the origin of the audit, the context of the problem, and the key questions to be examined.

Example: Given the growing demand for clean energy, it is necessary to evaluate the effectiveness of public policies and transition programs to ensure that emission reduction and energy efficiency targets are being met.



Example: Government agencies responsible for implementing energy policies: interest in demonstrating progress; direct impact on planning and resource allocation.

Stakeholders: Identify the stakeholders, their roles, interests, and the potential impact of these interests on the progress and outcomes of the audit.

Level of Assurance:

Define the type of assurance (limited or reasonable), justifying the choice based on the clients' needs and the complexity of the object.

Reasonable level of assurance: stakeholders require reliable answers regarding the public sector's ability to implement policies and programs that promote an efficient and sustainable energy transition.

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Audit Objective

Key Question

Which objectives will address the needs of the requester and stakeholders, considering the audit risks?

Objective setting is the core of planning, as it guides evidence collection, analysis, and the development of conclusions.

Objectives should be “SMART”:

- **Specific (S)** – clear and focused on a central issue;
- **Measurable (M)** – with defined indicators and parameters;
- **Agreed (A)** – developed with the consensus of key stakeholders;
- **Realistic (R)** – achievable within time and resource constraints;
- **Time-bound (T)** – with defined deadlines and monitoring milestones.



The team can define both a primary objective, closely linked to the audit problem, and secondary or specific objectives aimed at meeting the needs of different audiences and audit clients.

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OBJECTIVES

Out of scope:

Key Question

Which processes, products, locations or periods will not be covered by the audit?

Defining what is **outside the scope** of the work is essential to ensure focus, clarity, and alignment of expectations.

Assumptions

When there is limited knowledge about the audit object at the start of the work, questions and gaps may arise. The team should formulate hypotheses and preliminary definitions as close to reality as possible to guide initial discussions and prevent delays in planning.

Constraints

Consider limitations of authority, deadlines, team capacity, available information, and access to stakeholders. The report must be timely and useful for decision-making, respecting the operational conditions of the team and the authorized scope.



! **Important:** Clearly defining what is out of scope is as important as defining the scope itself, as it reduces ambiguities and prevents unrealistic expectations.

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Audit Scope

Key Question

Which work processes, and to what depth and extent, will be included in the audit?

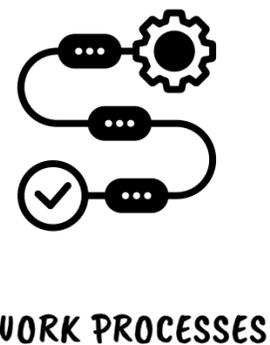
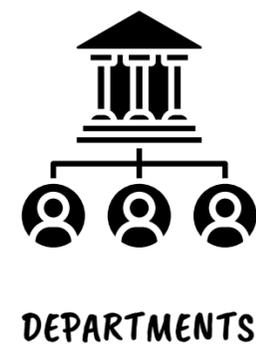
The scope defines the audit's field of action, setting the boundaries and extent of the analyses.



Extention:

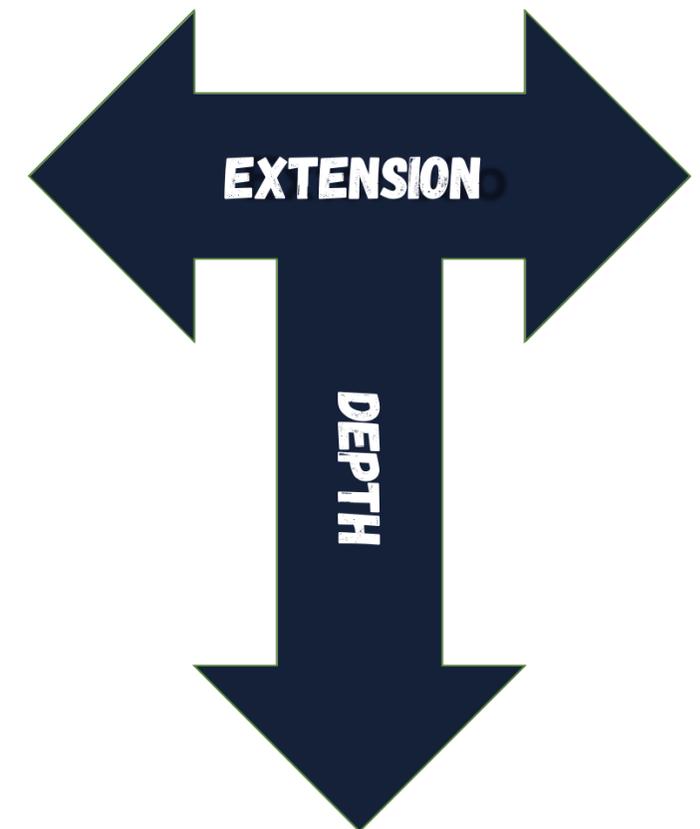
Define which areas, units, programs, policies, or organizational components related to the object will be included.

Also establish the period to be analyzed, indicating how far back the audit will go and/or whether it will follow ongoing events.



Depth:

Determine the amount and level of detail of the information, records, processes, and controls to be examined, in a manner compatible with the chosen level of assurance.



The scope should allow for an adequate understanding of the object and ensure that audit results are relevant, timely, and consistent with the defined objectives.

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OBJECTIVES

WHAT IS INTENDED TO BE ACHIEVED?

Out of scope:

Specify what will **not** be addressed in the final report – for example, processes, documents, areas, or periods that, although related to the topic, will not be part of the analyses.

Example: State or private renewable energy policies will not be assessed, nor infrastructure aspects not directly linked to federal energy transition policy.



Objective:

Indicate the primary and secondary objectives of the audit, explaining how they will help address the audit problem and add value for the responsible parties and stakeholders.

Example: Assess the implementation stage of energy transition policies and programs in strategic agencies and sectors, identifying opportunities for improvement and gaps in planning and execution.

Scope:

Describe the elements to be evaluated, representing the extent (coverage) and depth (level of detail) of the examinations – such as organizations, time periods, processes, or systems.

Example:

- Federal agencies responsible for energy transition policies;
- National clean energy plans and programs;
- Processes for monitoring, oversight and reporting on policy implementation.

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RISKS

Identification and Classification

Key Question

Which risks should be considered during the audit planning and execution?

Inherent Risk

The natural vulnerability of the object to errors, irregularities, or deficiencies, assuming no effective internal controls exist. This is related to the complexity and nature of the processes being evaluated.

Control Risk

The possibility that existing internal controls may not function effectively, and therefore fail to prevent or detect significant misstatements or deviations.

Detection Risk

The possibility that audit procedures may not identify significant errors or issues. The team should anticipate situations that could compromise the effectiveness of testing and implement appropriate mitigating measures to reduce this risk.



Audit risk should be maintained at a low level through measures that balance the object's complexity, known problem history, and the desired level of assurance.

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HOW SHOULD THE TEAM ADDRESS THE IDENTIFIED RISKS?

During the Canvas session, audit risks should be discussed and recorded objectively and collaboratively.

Audit Risks:

List the identified inherent, control, and detection risks.

Examples of Risk:
Low engagement from public organizations in the initiative: plan communication and outreach actions (presentations, campaigns, use of traditional and digital media).



Mitigating Measures:

When the team has sufficient experience and time for a more detailed analysis, it may also propose preventive or corrective measures associated with each risk.

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Deliverables

Key Question

Which products will be produced and made available to clients, managers, and decision-makers, and what are their minimum requirements?

Planning Products

- Object Overview
- Risk Inventory
- Controls Review
- Risks and Controls Matrix
- Planning Matrix or Audit Program
- Audit Plan

Execution Products

- Collected evidence
- Analyses and preliminary conclusions
- Findings matrix
- Responsibility matrix

Report Products

- Report structure
- Executive summary, introduction, conclusion
- Main chapters
- References and annexes

Monitoring Products

- Monitoring scope
- Manager's action plan
- Monitoring plan
- Monitoring reports
- Observed benefits



The list of deliverables and their requirements does not need to be complete when the Canvas is discussed. It is possible to start with the most obvious items and then detail the products and their requirements as the overall view of the object develops and the team gains a better understanding of the associated risks.

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Dates and Deadlines

Key Question

What are the delivery dates for the products to meet the expectations of clients and stakeholders?

Clients' expectations

Identify when audit products will be most useful to support decisions.

Key Deliverables

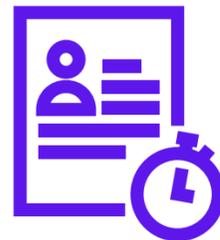
Determine milestones and intermediate deliverables that represent significant progress toward completing the audit.

Description of Stages

Detail the activities that make up each delivery, with time estimates and dependencies.

Team capabilities

Consider the team's experience, workload, and skill level when setting appropriate deadlines.



The schedule should be defined realistically, prioritizing the timely delivery of information to support clients' decision-making, while considering the complexity of the work and the resources available.

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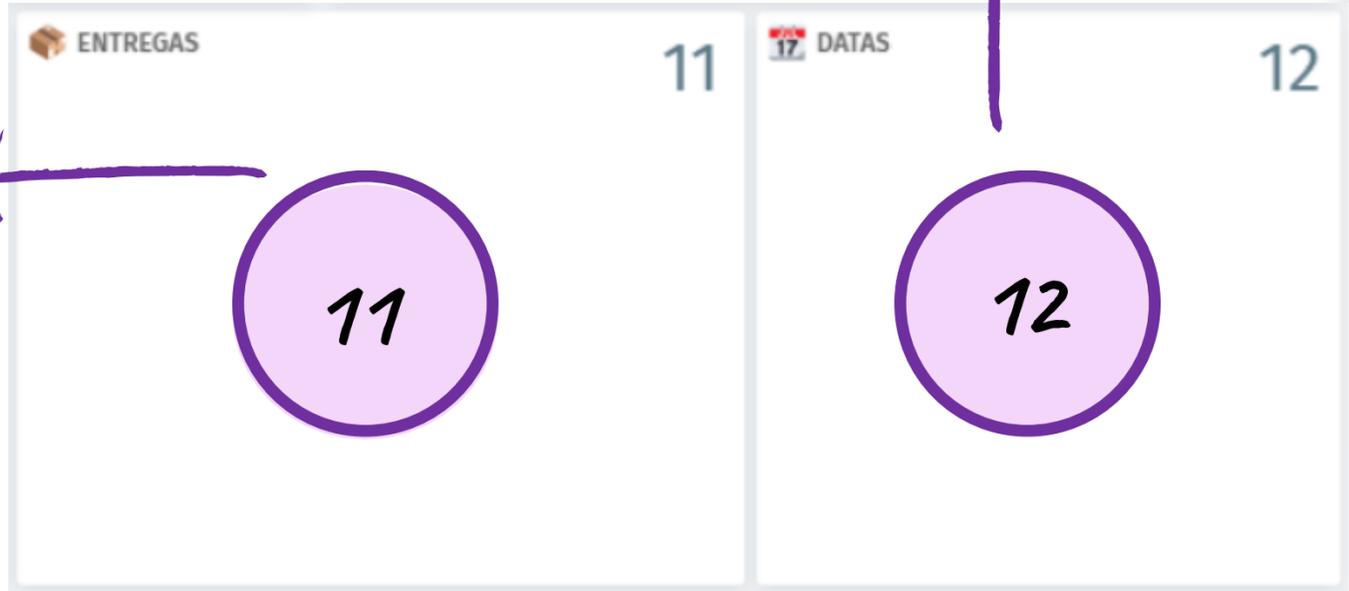


TARGETS

WHAT WILL BE THE AUDIT'S FINAL OUTCOME?

Dates:
Indicate the estimated completion dates for the main deliverables.

Example:
Object overview: March 18-21
Risk inventory: March 26-30
Evidence and document collection: April 2-6
Preliminary findings and recommendations report: April 10-14
Final audit report: April 22



Deliverables:
List the products and requirements necessary to achieve the defined objectives, taking into account risks and client expectations.

Example:
Object overview incorporated into the Audit Plan, containing:

- object objectives
- applicable legislation
- stakeholders
- map of products and processes
- systems and databases linked to the implementation of energy transition policies

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Visualize your ideas

Increase trust

Focus on the client

Bring in past experiences!

Gain trust

Define the product

Balance the diverse ideas!

Collect feedback from partners!

Get that audit out of your head and make it happen!

Be agile

Give the customer what they want!

Consider the interests!

Innovate!

Reinforce results

Define Targets

Involve the leadership

Facilitate decisions

Collect feedback from partners!

Brainstorm