11 July, 2003

A 'General System' to help us Accomplish a Mission

(Draft document for discussion only)

We wish to define a 'general system' that can help us understand how to accomplish a 'Mission' – any Mission.

What is a Mission?

A Mission is a challenging objective, for an individual or for a group, that may take considerable time, effort and other resources to accomplish.

Here are some examples of Missions relating to individuals and to groups:

Individual Missions:

- To get myself a good and satisfying job
- To become highly effective at all I do
- To master the 'C' computer language
- To double my income within 12 months

Organisational Missions:

- To launch a new product
- To reach turnover US $ 100 million, with PAT of $ 25 million, by 2005
- To ensure high motivation in Dept. XYZ
- To bring inventory carried down to 50% of current levels within 12 months
- To ensure that we are able to hire and retain talent
- To create intrapreneurs in the company
- To ensure that individuals see the big picture, while they look after the small details

Societal Missions:

- To institute an effective primary education system in the country
- To bring about 90% literacy in our country within 5 years
- To cleanse the Ganga
- To ensure India becomes one of the top 20 nations on the HDI within 10 years
- To tackle, effectively, the scourge of corruption in the country
- To

We outline below the derivation of a 'fundamental system' for accomplishing any Mission (i.e., any Apex Aim):

The description of the general system is shown below in three stages, from general to more specific:

The Fundamental System for Accomplishing a Mission		
SYSTEM DIMENSIONS	'1st Cut' of the general system description**:**	
	Individual/Group + Chosen Mission	**The Universe Outside** (various parts of this outside universe may, from time to time, become part of the 'Mission' as it proceeds)
	'2nd Cut' of the general system description**:**	
	All the 'positives' that may help to accomplish Mission	**All the 'negatives' that may hinder or prevent accomplishment of Mission**
	'3rd Cut' of the general system description**:**	
	THINGS TO DO that may help accomplish Mission	**BARRIERS/DIFFICULTIES/ THREATS & WEAKNESSES that may hinder or prevent accomplishment of Mission**
	'4th Cut' of the general system description (these are the details appearing in ***OPMS*** Dimensions)**:**	
	'Things To Do'	**'Barriers/Difficulties/Threats'**
	'Strengths Available'	**'Strengths Required - not available'**
		'Weaknesses'
	'Opportunities arising'	**'Preparation Required to avail Opportunities arising'**

… **next pages**

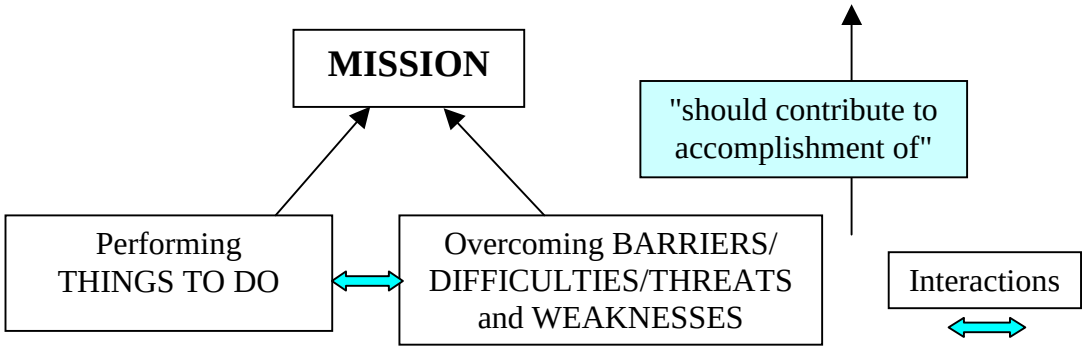
Using the 'general system' to help us accomplish a Mission

(Draft document for discussion only)

Progress towards accomplishing a Mission depends largely on

1. **Performance of Activities that may directly help accomplish the Mission. Within the *OPMS* these Activities are the elements in the 'THINGS TO DO' Dimension.**
2. **Overcoming BARRIERS/DIFFICULTIES/THREATS that may hinder or prevent accomplishment of the Mission or of any of the activities necessary to accomplish the Mission**

Here's an Interpretive Structural Model 'sketch' of the system (model does not show linkages between THINGS TO DO and BARRIERS, etc, which do exist)**:**



Translation:
1. **Performing THINGS TO DO should contribute to accomplishment of Mission**
2. **Overcoming BARRIERS/DIFFICULTIES/THREATS and WEAKNESSES should contribute to accomplishment of Mission**

(There are interactions, to be specified, between THINGS TO DO and BARRIERS, etc.

The way any Mission is successfully accomplished in real life is as follows:

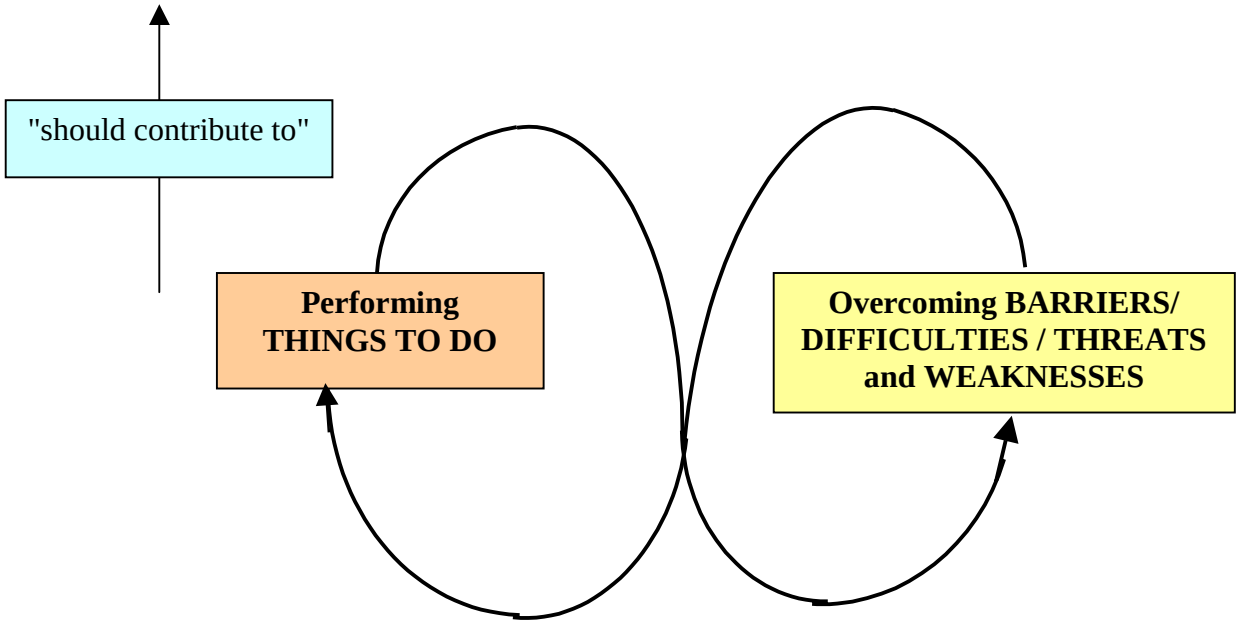
- **We perform some of the THINGS TO DO that we believe would help accomplish (or contribute to accomplishment of) the Mission.**
- **We then generally encounter some BARRIERS / DIFFICULTIES / THREATS or WEAKNESSES that may hinder or prevent accomplishment of the Mission (or of some of the THINGS TO DO).**
- **We work on overcoming the BARRIERS / DIFFICULTIES / THREATS and WEAKNESSES (by identifying further THINGS TO DO so as to be able to continue progress)**

This is an iterative process in which THINGS TO DO are performed, which leads to discovery of BARRIERS / DIFFICULTIES / THREATS and WEAKNESSES that may be hindering or preventing accomplishment of the Mission, which then enables discovery

of further THINGS TO DO that can help overcome those BARRIERS, etc. This is a cycle, on which we elaborate a bit in the following paragraph, because of its importance.

Doing the THINGS TO DO to accomplish a Mission would ENABLE discovery of BARRIERS / DIFFICULTIES / THREATS and WEAKNESSES that may hinder or prevent accomplishment of the Mission and THINGS TO DO to accomplish it. This discovery of BARRIERS / DIFFICULTIES / THREATS & WEAKNESSES hindering or preventing accomplishment of the Mission would further enable us to discover further THINGS TO DO to overcome those BARRIERS / DIFFICULTIES /THREATS.

The above process is encapsulated for convenience in the following sketch of this real-life cycle:



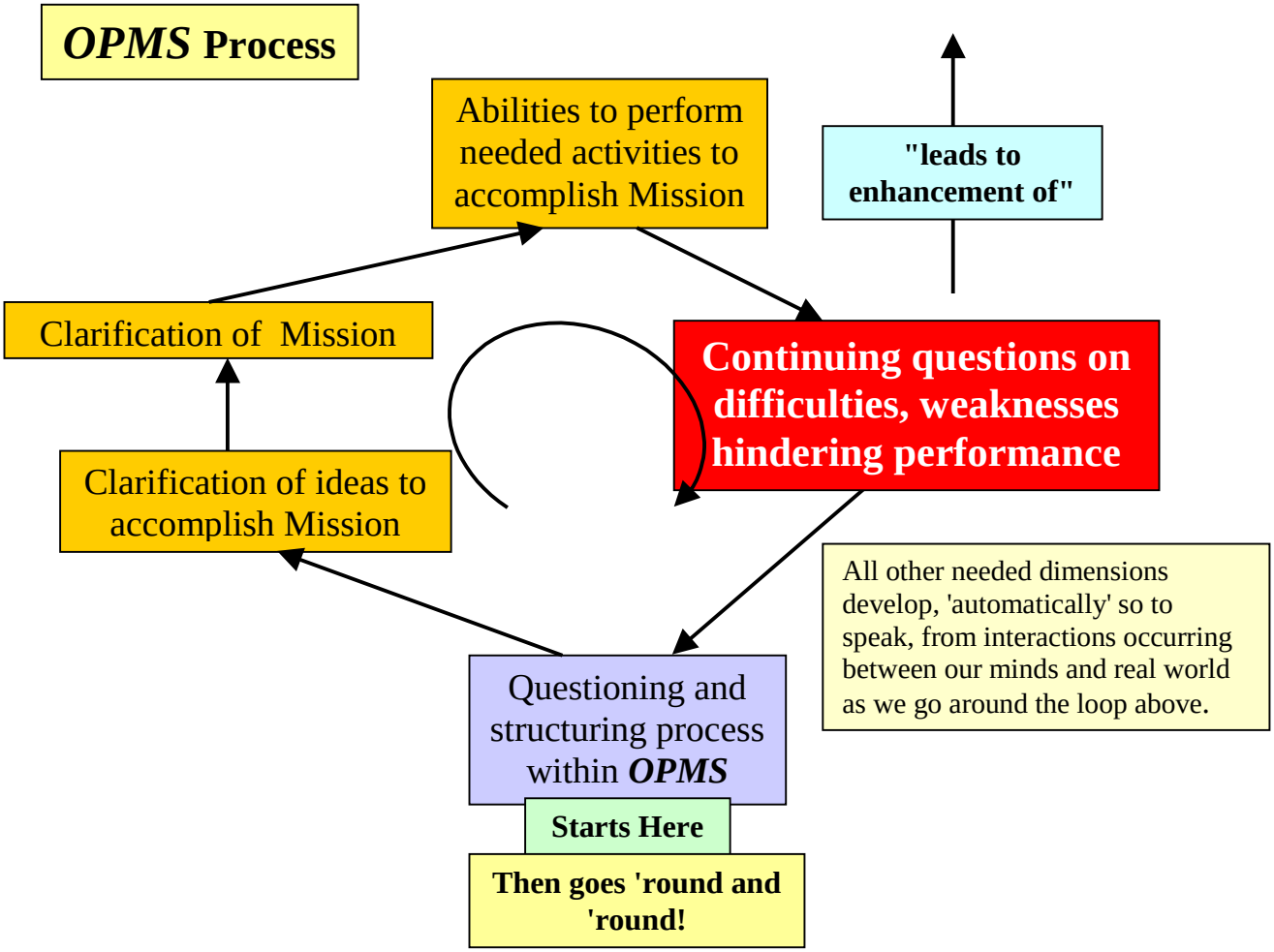
The process illustrated in the above cycle is a highly simplified version of what happens in real life in our (individual and group) minds, which involves very complex interactions between elements perceived in the various Dimensions of the *OPMS*:

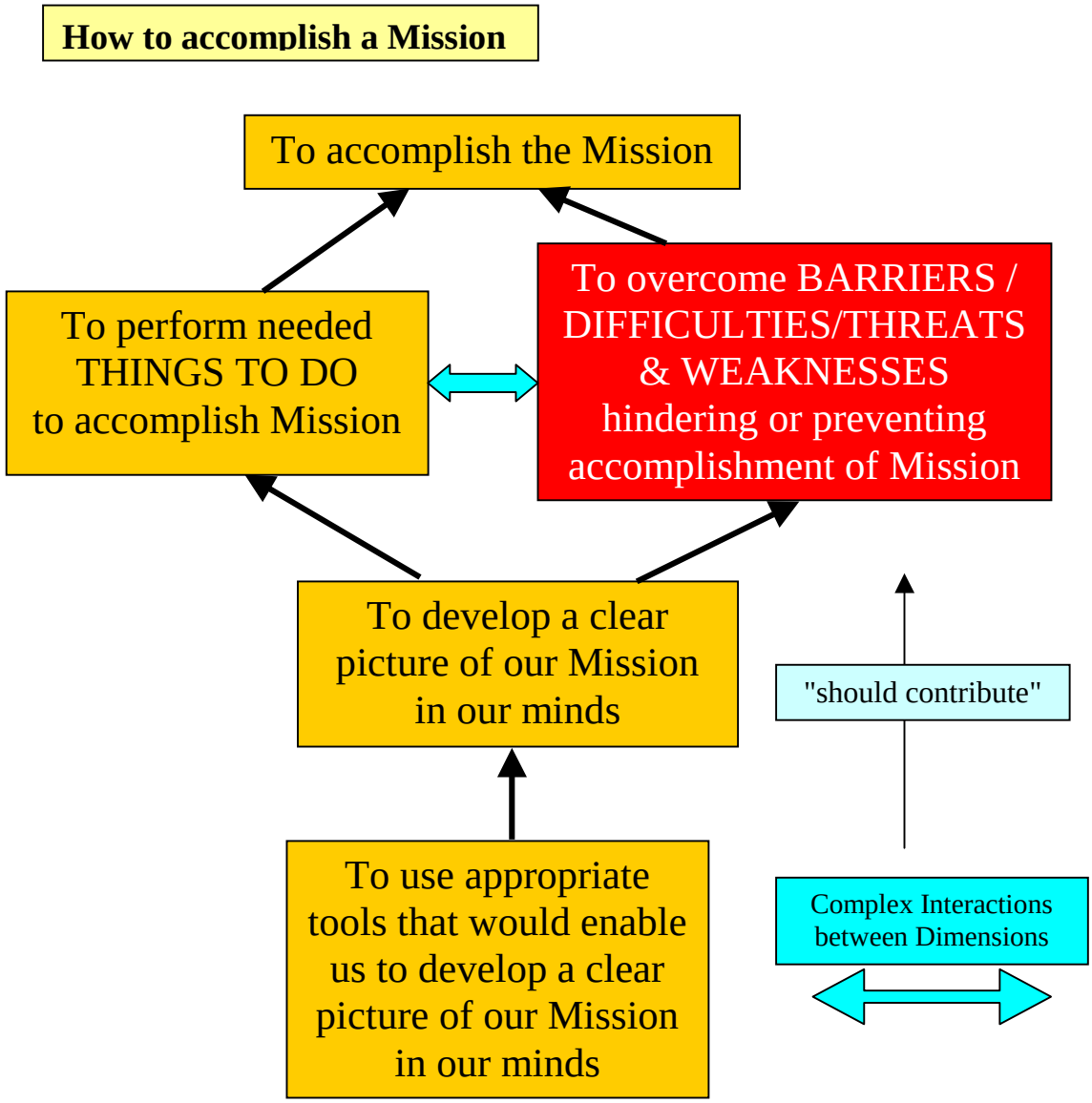
- **THINGS TO DO to accomplish Mission**
- **BARRIERS / DIFFICULTIES / THREATS that may hinder or prevent accomplishment of Mission**
- **STRENGTHS (available / required) to accomplish Mission**
- **WEAKNESSES that may hinder or prevent accomplishment of Mission**
- **OPPORTUNITES (available) that may help accomplish the Mission & Preparation required to ensure that OPPORTUNIES are actually availed of before they disappear**
- **EVENTS / MILESTONES that may be anticipated to occur during progress towards the Mission**

The ***OPMS*** process enables us to cut through all difficulties hindering or preventing accomplishment of a Mission in the most effective possible way - a highly simplified illustration of the process is shown below:

More illustrations of the way things work in the OPMS appear in sketches on the two following pages**:**

(A highly simplified representation):





The ***OPMS*** approach to problem solving and decision making ensures that problem solvers in a complex situation would develop a clear picture of the Mission in all its aspects in their minds. They are thereby enabled to perform effectively the THINGS TO DO to accomplish the Mission and to take appropriate action to overcome BARRIERS/ DIFFICULTIES/ THREATS and WEAKNESSES that may hinder or prevent accomplishment of their Mission.

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