## 1. MAO: Mission, Aims and Objectives

### TERMINOLOGY

**Mission** refers to one of the long term changes that your organisation’s strategy pursues.

**Aims** are the changes you hope to achieve as a result of your work.

**Objectives** are the results of the activities you undertake and the services you offer to bring these changes about.

**Mission**

**Aims**

**Objectives**

Fig1: MAO triangle in project planning: Mission; Aims and Objectives

### SETTING A MISSION

Setting a mission is considered to be outside the project manager’s remit. For this reason, this topic is not addressed in this document.

### SETTING AIMS – Key Points

How would you go about setting the aims of your MRes project?

### SETTING OBJECTIVES **– Key Points**

Objectives should be setjointly by a project manager and staff. This is most easily done when both parties have given the matter some thought prior to the Performance Review interview.  
  
In setting objectives there are a number of key points which must always be addressed:   
  
**1. The objective:** what am I trying to achieve?  
 **2.** **The method:** how should I set about achieving it?  
  
**3. The schedule:** what needs to be done and when  
  
**4. The resources:** what will I need to achieve the objective?  
  
**5. The result:** how will I know that I have succeeded?

**6. The risks:** i) Events, cause, consequences, ii) Mitigation measures, iii)Contingency plan?

**7. The impact:** Whatwill be the impact of my project? What is my impact plan?

#### OBJECTIVES MUST BE S.M.A.R.T.:

Objectives have most value when they are as precise as possible rather than vague statements with limited benefits for staff or manager. Wherever possible quantifiable measures should be used and, where this would be inappropriate for a particular objective, some other way needs to be found for determining progress and achievement.

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| **S**pecific | Clearly identify the task or outcome which needs to be achieved. |
| **M**easurable | Use factors such as quality, quantity, time, cost, and where necessary other measures of success and progress. |
| **A**chievable | Ensure that goals are reachable. Objectives should not be too easy or too few to be challenging nor so difficult that success is unlikely. Numbers may range from 1 (for a big project) to 10 (where objectives are based on routine duties) but are unlikely to be more. |
| **R**ealistic | Base objectives within the normal range of duties or experience for that individual and ensure the resources necessary are available |
| **T**ime-bound | Provide time-frames for completion of objectives, with benchmarks along the way for longer or more extensive goals |

#### FRAMEWORK:

The following stages constitute a framework that can be used to define your objectives:

1. Generalize the question

2. Develop a descriptive scenario – describe the situation as it is

3. Develop a normative scenario – describe the situation as it should be when the project is finished

4. Prepare an objectives tree – a graphical presentation of the project’s objectives and sub-objectives.

5. Develop an axiological component (e.g. system of values)

6. Validate, and

7. Iterate

## Exercise

Are the objectives of the “coffee-making project” SMART? Justify.

1- Select one of the objectives of the project

2- Propose 4 or 5 alternative tactics that could have been used to meet this objective.

3- Build an objectives tree.

4- Identify the positive and negative elements of the various tactics, including the tactic you have selected.

5-Discuss