

Doctrine 07 — The Lifecycle: Dream → ORBITAL → World

One durable concept: organizations grow the way stars do — from dust to orbit to a world.

Every organization in this market started the same way: an idea with no structure, a pulse, a hunch. This doctrine is about the lifecycle that idea travels as it becomes a pursuit, a win, and eventually a living entity. The vocabulary is deliberately cosmological, because the shape of the story — small and loose, then structured and fast, then stable and gravitational — is the shape of everything that grows.

The three states

DREAM —(structure)→	ORBITAL —(momentum)→	WORLD
seed idea	pursuit with	fully realized
(loose, early)	a skeleton and	enterprise
	a budget	(people, revenue, reputation)

- **Dream.** A seed idea. It might be an opportunity someone noticed in the market, a capability the team has that no one has packaged, a mission a partner cares about. Dreams are cheap and abundant. They have no budget and no owner. Most should stay dreams.
- **ORBITAL.** The Dream gets structured — the seven axes of Doctrine 06 — and gets a budget, an owner, and a deadline. Now it has momentum and it is a real pursuit: something is spent on it, something is expected of it. This is the state of *almost every object in the pursuit pipeline*.
- **World.** The ORBITAL that wins and delivers becomes an entity: revenue, a track record, a reputation, people whose jobs depend on it. In the wider doctrine a World is what the market calls a *company* or a *business unit*. Worlds attract their own moons: teams, departments, sub-projects, repeat customers.

The lifecycle is not a one-way street in the poetic sense — an ORBITAL can fail and return to dream; a World can spin off new Dreams. But the *direction of growth* is always the same: structure creates momentum, and momentum creates mass.

The lifecycle inside the pipeline

Notice how the lifecycle and the pipeline (Doctrine 03) are the same story at two altitudes:

- **Pipeline altitude** — a single pursuit moves through sense → qualify → score → pursue → design → audit → submit → deliver → learn. This is the *tactical* view: what is happening to this one opportunity right now?

- **Lifecycle altitude** — the pursuit is an ORBITAL that either fails (back to dream) or wins and becomes a World. This is the *strategic* view: what is the organization becoming as its ORBITALS resolve?

A healthy organization runs both altitudes at once. It is executing this week's pipeline while consciously shaping which ORBITALS are growing toward Worldhood. The **governance gates** of Doctrine 04 are the joints between the two: the gate that advances a pursuit is also the gate that decides which ORBITALS get the organization's future.

The growth-stage view

There is a third vocabulary for the same lifecycle, and this course uses it because it is so practical for planning the *work* of a pursuit. The **GROWTH** stages describe the production arc of a single ORBITAL:

Stage	Letter	The work
Gauge	G	Capture and qualify the opportunity. Is it real, eligible, worth it?
Research	R	Discover the possibilities: the customer, the competition, the path.
Organize	O	Assemble the material: past performance, team, certifications, evidence.
Write	W	Tell the story: the proposal that answers the evaluation criteria.
Target	T	Measure the outcome: score against the plan, learn from the result.
Health	H	Post-submission: monitor, deliver, and keep the relationship alive.

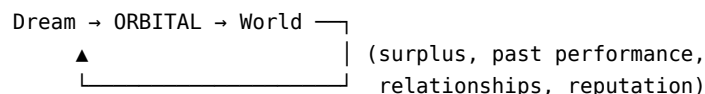
Gauge through Health is the same pipeline you already learned, told from the point of view of *what work gets done this week*. Keep both frames: the pipeline is the shape, GROWTH is the work plan, the lifecycle is the meaning.

The winning state: cosmology and compounding

Here is where the cosmological vocabulary earns its keep. The **Dream** → **ORBITAL** → **World** lifecycle compounds:

1. Every World you build produces **past performance** — the evidence that wins the next pursuit.
2. Every delivery produces **relationships** — customers who trust you and tell the next program office about you.
3. Every successful World produces **surplus** — the revenue and attention that re-seed the next Dream.

A mature organization is not running one lifecycle; it is running dozens, and the Worlds are feeding the Dreams. This is the **cosmology loop**: winning creates the resources that buy the next sensing, the next qualification, the next pursuit. The organizations that escape the scramble are the ones that built the loop.



What this means for your career

Lifecycle literacy is the ability to answer two questions about anything you work on: *What state is this in?* and *What would move it to the next state?* That framing works on a proposal, a business unit, a nonprofit program, even your own career. Most people operate only inside the current state; the people who move things forward are the ones who can see the next state and the work required to reach it.

For the MBA student, the lifecycle is the portfolio and the venture: which ORBITALS deserve capital, and which Worlds become businesses. For the MPA student, it is the program life cycle: how public programs are born, funded, matured, and wound down. For the Strategic Initiative student, it is the architecture: how the organization deliberately shapes what it is becoming.

Self-check

1. What are the three states of the lifecycle, and what moves a thing from one state to the next?
2. How are the pipeline, the GROWTH stages, and the lifecycle the same story at different altitudes?
3. What is the cosmology loop, and why does it compound?