

# **PDS Policy Statement on Data Release Dates and Announcements**

[Approved by the PDS Management Council 9-0-0 (1 absent) on 10-8-2019]

## **1. Release Dates and Purpose**

The Planetary Data System (PDS) defines “released” data as those data that have been made publicly available online after being formally validated and certified by a PDS Node. Therefore, a data “release date” is the date when a given certified data set is made publicly available online. Please refer to the PDS “Policy on Defining Certified Data” for the definition of certified data (<https://pds.nasa.gov/datastandards/documents/policy/PolicyOnDefiningCertifiedData03302011.pdf>). Each Node is responsible for determining when data are valid and ready to be released and that Node is responsible for communicating any associated release information to the Engineering Node (EN).

EN is responsible for making PDS data release announcements to the community on behalf of the Nodes. The purpose is to create a consistent, centralized interface for the public to obtain news on current PDS data releases. The purpose is also to help EN and the PDS maintain a registry of all data releases and to maintain a PDS Data Release Calendar, which is the single official point of reference for the community and PDS to track and obtain information about upcoming and recent data releases.

In order to realize the benefits of a unified data release announcement and calendar, the PDS MC has adopted the following policies regarding PDS data release announcements. EN shall work with the PDS Nodes and Project Office to develop and maintain a detailed Procedures Document for carrying out the policies described herein. Exceptions to this policy may be made with the approval of the MC on a case-by-case basis.

## **2. Parties Responsible for Announcing or Posting Data Releases**

All PDS data release announcements, including mission and non-mission data, must be coordinated and announced by EN through the PDS website, the PDS subscription service (for mission data), and other mechanisms (e.g., the Planetary Exploration Newsletter). All data released will be compiled by EN with input from the Nodes in a PDS Data Release Calendar on the main PDS website. Anticipated release dates for mission data having scheduled releases throughout the year will also be added to the PDS Data Release Calendar to assist users with their proposals (Section 4).

The ultimate goal of this policy is to ensure that all PDS data releases are announced to the community in a consistent and timely manner. Therefore, Nodes are encouraged to link to the main PDS website when posting data release information on Node main webpages. However, the MC recognizes that there is value in having accessible release information close to the data. Therefore, Nodes are responsible for verifying that any data release information posted on Node websites is consistent with that provided to and posted by EN on the main PDS website. If a Node finds inconsistencies, then the Node shall immediately notify EN, and EN shall work with the Node to

resolve the inconsistency. In either case, the release dates posted on the main PDS website (pds.nasa.gov) will supersede those on the Node website if there is disagreement. Users proposing to NASA ROSES programs should therefore consult with the main PDS site at pds.nasa.gov when determining the suitability of recently released data for use in their proposals.

### **3. Release Announcement Timing and Information**

Data releases will be announced for both mission and non-mission datasets according to the Procedures Document that accompanies this policy. In brief, when data releases are imminent, Nodes will send release information to the EN Point of Contact (POC). This release information will include (at a minimum) the following information:

- Mission and instrument name(s) or name(s) of non-mission data set(s)
- Data release number(s) or name(s)
- Observation or data range
- Data release date
- Description of data products, including level (raw, calibrated, etc.)
- URL where users can download the dataset(s)
- (For mission data) Any changes from the anticipated data release schedule (e.g., an instrument data set is not included in the data release because it is delayed)

Once received, EN will format the release information into a release announcement that will be distributed through the PDS website (main page and/or PDS Data Release Calendar), PDS data subscription service (for mission data), and/or relevant list-servers (e.g., Planetary Exploration Newsletter).

### **4. Anticipated Data Releases**

Data users often need to know when to expect a data release for planning proposals or other research activities. As such, EN will maintain a list of anticipated data release dates for planetary missions in the PDS Data Release Calendar. Quarterly, the PDS Project Office will coordinate with the Nodes to collect and compile anticipated mission data release dates for the upcoming calendar year. The Project Office will then work with EN to incorporate anticipated release dates into the PDS Data Release Calendar. The updated calendar will be posted on the PDS website by the end of the current calendar year. Nodes will immediately notify the Project Office and EN of any additional anticipated data releases throughout the year.

**All parties should understand that an anticipated release date is a best estimate for the completion of a sequence of actions by instrument providers and PDS nodes, each one of which could be subject to delay if unforeseen technical issues arise.**

## **5. Policy for Scheduled Data Releases Falling on a Weekend or Holiday**

When, due to previously scheduled mission data deliveries, scheduled release dates fall on a weekend or holiday, the lead Node for that mission, with assistance from the Project Office, shall work with the mission Data Archive Working Group (DAWG) to agree to change the release date. By default, the new release date shall be the closest non-holiday business day prior to the original date. For example, if the anticipated release date falls on Sunday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>, the new release date shall be on Friday, November 1st, assuming this day is not a holiday. This policy is to allow the Nodes to release data during business hours and to avoid potential conflicts with proposal deadlines. However, the new release date is subject to negotiation with mission data providers should other conflicts arise.