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PDI Staff Roles

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ABSTRACT

This is a description of PDI Staff, their roles and responsibilities as of March 2023. This is subject to evolution as everything else.



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PDI Staff Roles

Coordinator

Collects, organizes and prioritizes requirements from researchers and communicates them to the Tech Team. Individual coordination team members provide project management expertise to ensure jobs reach satisfactory completion. In concert with the DO and tech team members, they facilitate cadence calls with PDI customers, monitor individual task progress, and work to maintain overall job workflow within the specified timeline. Coordinator responsibilities currently include the following:

- Coordinate with PDI leadership and Partner to draft and submit formal Task requests to the Operations Director
- Coordinate regular virtual "cadence" meetings for key operational stakeholders, take notes, record when appropriate, and provide meeting minutes upon request;
- Provide logistical support for Job activities as needed;
- Liaise with PDI tech team and leadership to arrange technical capacity and maintain progress on product development;
- Facilitate information flows and communication between tech team and clients pertaining to Job

Technology Team

Configures or customizes existing software products to meet the needs of the researchers. This includes working with or developing GIS tools, writing code, and maintain databases, among others.

This group of GIS analysts, data scientists, programmers, and other computer specialists perform specific job tasks. Contingent upon individual expertise and workload, tech team members work individually, or in small groups, to complete each task. They work closely with the DO and Coordination Team members to ensure job goals are accomplished. Depending on complexity and scope, Jobs may have one or multiple Technicians assigned. Tech responsibility currently includes but are not limited to:

• Providing ad-hoc technical support on Job components, as described in submitted Task requests.

Director of Operations (DO)

Recommended to be stationed in ARS CSIO. Provides high-level oversight of the PDI processes and operations, working closely with the Director of Development. A Director of Operations (DO) guides the PDI job approval process, including authorization of individual tasks to meet job goals. Both positions report to the Board. At full staff, the DO also supervises an Operations Manager (OM) who manages daily PDI activities. Specifically, the DO position responsibility include:

- Implements government data management and IT policies and directives.
- Sets PDI objectives, milestones, near-term strategy, and assists the Director of Development (DD) develop longterm PDI strategy.
- Develops and manages PDI contracts, agreements, and technology purchases for distribution to field units.
- Ensures maintenance of critical PDI infrastructure, e.g., PDI cloud instance.
- The DO is required to participate in all hiring processes for PDI staff and serves on hiring panels.
- Works with Operations Manager (OM) to resolve operational issues and provide accountability for deliverables and timelines for project completion.
- Manages PDI Leadership Board (LB) meetings as non-voting member of the PDI LB.
- Works with DD, PDI LB, and Operations Manager (OM) to strategically improve operational efficiency of workflow.
- Performs OM tasks, as necessary, to ensure efficient workflow.
- Assists DD and PDI SFDT develop and review PDI-related publications, outreach materials, grant proposals, and presentations; makes PDI presentations as needed.
- Lead discussions on Job scope changes
- Facilitate Technician assignments for Job and Task Requests
- Consult regularly with coordinator to provide leadership and support to Job as needed

Operations Manager (OM)

An Operations Manager provides direct oversight of PDI day-to-day processes and operations. To ensure proper functioning their responsibilities include:

- Providing direct oversight of PDI processes and operations to stakeholders
- Ensuring government data management and IT policies and directives are followed in day-to-day PDI operations.
- Ensuring all PDI team members provide excellent customer service to all Customers/Stakeholders.
- Providing initial contact with Customers/Stakeholders.
- Developing job requests in consultation with Coordination Team (CT) and TT members, submitting job request to PDI LB for approval.
- Approving /disapproving task requests (subcomponents of job requests).
- Assigning project Coordinators and Tech Team (TT) members to tasks.
- In consultation with DO, they resolve operational issues and provides accountability for deliverables and timelines for project completion.
- Ensuring implementation of improvements to operational workflow.
- Knowing who to reach out for tech support.

Director of Development (DD)

Recommended to be a National Program Leader with PDI duties. Champions the vision and long-term strategy; pursues, prioritizes, and develops new partnerships and opportunities. The Director of Development (DD) is focused on identifying data management needs within USDA-ARS and aligning resources behind PDI efforts to meet them. His responsibility entails:

 Advising on organizational agreements, funding arrangements, and other high level administrative activities as needed

Leadership Board (LB)

Comprised of voluntary ARS national and regional leaders, ARS field staff and University officials that set the future vision, mission, strategy, and scope of PDI. The Board sets the future vision, mission, strategy, and scope of PDI. Job proposals from potential customers are submitted to the Board for approval prior to start. Current Board members are voluntary USDA-ARS personnel and University partners:

- Tala Awada Professor, Physiological Plant Ecologist, Assoc. Dean Agricultural Research Division, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, NE
- Phil Heilman Research Leader, USDA-ARS SW Watershed Research Center, Tucson, AZ; President-elect, USDA-ARS Long-Term Agricultural Research Network
- Melinda May Biological Science Technician (Insects), USDA-ARS Livestock Arthropod Pests Research, Kerrville,
 TX
- Robert Miller National Program Leader, USDA-ARS Animal Production & Protection, Beltsville, MD
- Dana Miles Chemical Engineer, USDA-ARS Genetics & Sustainable Ag. Research, Mississippi State, MS
- Todd Silver Branch Chief, USDA-ARS External Communication Branch, Beltsville, MD
- Jeff Vallet Associate Area Director, USDA-ARS Office of the Area Director, Peoria, IL
- Steve Young USDA-ARS National Program Leader, Weeds & Invasive Pests, Beltsville, MD

Strategic Field Development Team (SFDT)

Consists of ARS Research Leaders, scientists, and support staff with a target of 6 member representing field data management needs. This group serves as an advisory committee for the entire PDI organization and ground PDI's work with their expertise in field data collection and management needs. This group, with a target of six members, consists of USDA-ARS Research Leaders (RLs), scientists, and support staff.

- Chris Delhom Acting Research Leader (Mechanical Engineer), USDA-ARS Cotton Structure & Quality Research,
 New Orleans, LA; Acting Research Leader, USDA-ARS Sustainable Water Management Research Unit, Stoneville,
 MS
- Kim Lohmeyer Acting Lab Director (Entomologist), USDA Livestock Arthropod Pests Research, Kerrville, TX
- Kyle Mankin Research Leader (Ag Engineer), USDA-ARS Water Management & Systems Research, Fort Collins,
 CO
- Phillip Owens Research Leader (Soil Scientist), USDA-ARS Dale Bumpers Small Farms Research Center,
 Booneville, AR; former PDI Director of Operations
- Beto Perez de Leon Center Director (Entomologist), USDA-ARS San Joaquin Valley Ag Sciences Center, Parlier,
 CA
- Michelle Reba Acting Research Leader (Hydrologist), USDA-ARS Delta Water Management Research Unit, Arkansas State University, Jonesboro, AR
- Dan Roberts Research Leader (Microbiologist), Sustainable Ag Systems Lab, Beltsville, MD; former PDI Director of Operations

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