For instructions on using this template, please see Notes to Author/Template Instructions on page 14. Notes on accessibility: This template has been tested and is best accessible with JAWS 11.0 or higher. For questions about using this template, please contact [CMS IT Governance](mailto:IT_Governance@cms.hhs.gov) ([IT\_Governance@cms.hhs.gov](mailto:IT_Governance@cms.hhs.gov)).



<Project Name/Acronym>

# Release Plan

Version X.X

MM/DD/YYYY

Document Number: <document’s configuration item control number>

Contract Number: <current contract number of company maintaining document>

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## Introduction

### Purpose

Instructions: Provide full identifying information for the automated system, application, or situation for which the Release Plan applies, including as applicable, identification number(s), title(s)/name(s), abbreviation(s)/acronym(s), part number(s), version number(s), and release number(s). Describe the purpose of the Release Plan.

The intended audience of the <Project Name (Acronym)> Release Plan (RP) is the Business Sponsor and the Integrated Project Team (IPT).

### Overview

Instructions: Briefly describe the purpose and context for the system or situation, and summarize the history of its development. Include the high-level context diagram(s) for the system and subsystems previously provided in the High-Level Technical Design Concept/Alternatives, Requirements Document, and/or System Design Document (SDD), updated as necessary to reflect any changes that have been made based on more current information or understanding. If the high-level context diagram has been updated, identify the changes that were made and why.

## Assumptions/Constraints/Risks

### Assumptions

This section identifies the statements believed to be true for the release of the product or information technology (IT) system.

Instructions: Describe any assumptions about the current capabilities and use of the system when it is released in accordance with this plan. Include any information regarding external circumstances or commitments that may impact the release of the system.

Describe any dependencies that can affect the deployment of the system. Be sure to identify any other systems or subsystems that are impacted directly as a result of this Release Plan. Describe any dependencies including staffing, divisional/group participation, external system dependencies or dependencies due to specific business cycles that can impact this Release Plan.

### Constraints

This section identifies any limitation that must be taken into consideration prior to the release of the product or IT system.

Instructions: Describe factors that limit the ability to deploy the system or have some impact to the release of the system in accordance with this plan (e.g., budget and schedule constraints). Be sure to include constraints due to group/divisional involvement or any other external system or infrastructure constraints that impact the environment.

### Risks

Instructions: Describe any risks associated with release of the system in accordance with this Release Plan. Identify any adverse impacts to stakeholders (e.g., end users) during the release cycle. Be sure to include any factors that may adversely impact a successful deployment. Also provide a mitigation strategy for each identified risk that describes specifically the fallback position if a risk is realized. This information should also be documented in the project’s Risk Log or Risk Register and managed in accordance with the Project Management Plan (Risk Management Plan).

## Release Approach

Instructions: Describe the strategy and activities that will be addressed in the planning for the release.

The RP outlines the activities necessary to ensure that the project’s product is available for use by its end-users as originally planned.

### Rationale

Instructions: Describe the rationale for establishing this release approach. Reference any information or other deliverables (e.g. Requirements Document, Design Document, Project Management Plan (Communication Management Plan, Acquisition Management Plan, Risk Management Plan), and Project Process Agreement (PPA)) that may have influenced the development of the release approach. Include key considerations such as how the assumptions, constraints, and risks from the previous section impact the Release Plan. Also consider lessons learned from other deployments.

### Release Plan

Instructions: Describe at a high level the overall strategy for segmenting the delivery of the Business Product/Code into specific releases. Identify if the Release Plan is for a phased function rollout/deployment or for a phased user base rollout/deployment.

### Release Content

Instructions: Identify each specific release, including a description of the functionality to be delivered in each release. Explain what the proposed system will do (and not do, if necessary). Map individual requirements from the Requirements Document to the specific release(s) that will provide that functionality, as appropriate. Provide any additional rationale for dividing the content into the specific releases.

### Release Schedule

Instructions: Provide a high-level schedule for planned delivery of the releases and the significant milestones associated with transitioning each release through the life cycle to production.

### Release Impacts

Instructions: Describe any business and/or system impacts associated with each release and the business processes that will be modified as a result of the deployment specified in this Release Plan. Identify any systems and interfaces that are directly impacted by the Release Plan and any impacts to end users during the release cycle. Describe the relevant benefits, objectives, and goals to be met with each release.

### Release Notification

Instructions: If there is release-specific communication that needs to occur that is not already described in the Project Management Plan (Communication Management Plan), please describe here. Specify the individual stakeholders and/or groups requiring notification of an impending release. Also describe the method for providing notification prior to and/or following successful release of the system/application. Specify the information required by each person or group and the timeframes for receipt of the information, prior to release. For example, the help desk may require that a notification be received 10 days prior to release and provide the release date, a user impact assessment, and a help desk impact assessment.

### Release Management

Instructions: Identify the activities to manage the planning, organization, development, testing, and implementation of new features and functions, defects, change requests, etc. into the application being developed. Identify the individuals involved in a typical release process.

Develop a release checklist that can be used to help the project team identify when the product is ready for release for use by the client.

### Release Numbering

Instructions: Identify a standard for numbering and naming releases that follows any established standards if available. Software release numbering may appear trivial but is critical to the overall success of any effective Release Plan.

Appendix A: Record of Changes

Instructions: Provide information on how the development and distribution of the Release Plan will be controlled and tracked. Use the table below to provide the version number, the date of the version, the author/owner of the version, and a brief description of the reason for creating the revised version.

Table - Record of Changes

| Version Number | Date | Author/Owner | Description of Change |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| <X.X> | <MM/DD/YYYY> | CMS | <Description of Change> |
| <X.X> | <MM/DD/YYYY> | CMS | <Description of Change> |
| <X.X> | <MM/DD/YYYY> | CMS | <Description of Change> |

Appendix B: Acronyms

Instructions: Provide a list of acronyms and associated literal translations used within the document. List the acronyms in alphabetical order using a tabular format as depicted below.

Table - Acronyms

| Acronym | Literal Translation |
| --- | --- |
| <Acronym> | <Literal Translation> |
| <Acronym> | <Literal Translation> |
| <Acronym> | <Literal Translation> |

Appendix C: Glossary

Instructions: Provide clear and concise definitions for terms used in this document that may be unfamiliar to readers of the document. Terms are to be listed in alphabetical order.

Table - Glossary

| Term | Acronym | Definition |
| --- | --- | --- |
| <Term> | <Acronym> | <Definition> |
| <Term> | <Acronym> | <Definition> |
| <Term> | <Acronym> | <Definition> |

Appendix D: Referenced Documents

Instructions: Summarize the relationship of this document to other relevant documents. Provide identifying information for all documents used to arrive at and/or referenced within this document (e.g., related and/or companion documents, prerequisite documents, relevant technical documentation, etc.).

Table - Referenced Documents

| Document Name | Document Location and/or URL | Issuance Date |
| --- | --- | --- |
| <Document Name> | <Document Location and/or URL> | <MM/DD/YYYY> |
| <Document Name> | <Document Location and/or URL> | <MM/DD/YYYY> |
| <Document Name> | <Document Location and/or URL> | <MM/DD/YYYY> |

Appendix E: Approvals

The undersigned acknowledge that they have reviewed the Release Plan and agree with the information presented within this document. Changes to this Release Plan will be coordinated with, and approved by, the undersigned, or their designated representatives.

Instructions: List the individuals whose signatures are desired. Examples of such individuals are Business Owner, Project Manager (if identified), and any appropriate stakeholders. Add additional lines for signature as necessary.

Table - Approvals

| Document Approved By | Date Approved |
| --- | --- |
| Name: <Name>, <Job Title> - <Company> | Date |
| Name: <Name>, <Job Title> - <Company> | Date |
| Name: <Name>, <Job Title> - <Company> | Date |
| Name: <Name>, <Job Title> - <Company> | Date |

Appendix F: Additional Appendices

Instructions: Utilize additional appendices to facilitate ease of use and maintenance of the document.

Appendix G: Notes to the Author/Template Instructions

This document is a template for creating a Release Plan for a given investment or project. The final document should be delivered in an electronically searchable format. The Release Plan should stand on its own with all elements explained and acronyms spelled out for reader/reviewers, including reviewers outside CMS who may not be familiar with CMS projects and investments.

This template includes instructions, boilerplate text, and fields. The developer should note that:

* Each section provides instructions or describes the intent, assumptions, and context for content included in that section. Instructional text appears in blue italicized font throughout this template.
* Instructional text in each section should be replaced with information specific to the particular investment.
* Some text and tables are provided as boilerplate examples of wording and formats that may be used or modified as appropriate.

When using this template, follow these steps:

1. Table captions and descriptions are to be placed left-aligned, above the table.
2. Modify any boilerplate text, as appropriate, to your specific investment.
3. Do not delete any headings. If the heading is not applicable to the investment, enter “Not Applicable” under the heading.
4. All documents must be compliant with Section 508 requirements.
5. Figure captions and descriptions are to be placed left-aligned, below the figure. All figures must have an associated tag providing appropriate alternative text for Section 508 compliance.
6. Delete this “Notes to the Author/Template Instructions” page and all instructions to the author before finalizing the initial draft of the document.

Appendix H: Template Revision History

The following table records information regarding changes made to the template over time. To provide information about the controlling and tracking of this artifact, please refer to the Record of Changes section of this document.

Table - Template Revision History

| Version Number | Date | Author/Owner | Description of Change |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1.0 | 07/29/2020 | Alex Smith  CMS/OIT/ICPG/DIIMP | Baseline document |
|  |  |  |  |
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