

Overview of a Planetary Science Decadal Survey

SURVEY BACKGROUND: Required by language in the NASA Authorization Acts of 2005 and 2008 to engage with the National Academies and conduct decadal surveys in all major space science disciplines.

SURVEY GOAL & PURPOSE: Conducted by the National Academies, independently of sponsoring agencies and organizations. The decadal survey reviews the status of planetary science in the United States and develops a comprehensive strategy that could provide a steady stream of important new discoveries about the solar system in the coming decade.

SURVEY DEVELOPMENT: Priorities are selected through a rigorous review that includes input from expert panels. The steering committee also seeks extensive input from the planetary sciences community through town hall meetings and white papers. Space and ground-based capabilities, along with the necessary infrastructure for the coming decade and the state of the profession, are carefully assessed.

SURVEY RECOMMENDATIONS: The decadal survey provides a list of prioritized space-based missions, ground-based facilities, infrastructure, and supporting research for the coming decade that will continue to revolutionize discoveries in planetary science. The sponsors (standardly, NASA and NSF) provide budget estimates for the coming decade and decision rules are often developed to give the agencies more information when dealing with a changing budgetary environment.

SURVEY IMPACT: Sponsoring Agencies and Congress views Surveys as the formal statement of priority by the US space science community, and have repeatedly stated their intent to give highest priority to the missions identified in the survey.

