

GOES-18 ABI L2+ Aerosol Optical Depth (AOD) and Aerosol Particle Size (APS) Release
Provisional Data Quality
November 21, 2022
Read-Me for Data Users

The GOES-R Peer Stakeholder - Product Validation Review (PS-PVR) for GOES-18 Advanced Baseline Imager (ABI) L2+ Aerosol Optical Depth (AOD) and Aerosol Particle Size (APS) Provisional Maturity was held on November 9, 2022. As a result of this review, the PS-PVR panel chair declared that the ABI AOD and APS products have reached Provisional maturity.

The ABI L2+ AOD product file includes the total column aerosol optical depth (AOD) at 550 nm over land and over water. The AOD is a measure of the columnar extinction (scattering + absorption) of radiation by aerosols. It is proportional to the amount (number or mass concentration) of aerosols in an atmospheric column. The AOD product file also includes the Aerosol Particle Size (APS) over water. APS is reported as the Ångström Exponent (AE). It is derived only over water from the aerosol optical depth retrieved in two pairs of the ABI spectral bands, resulting in two values, AE1 and AE2, corresponding to the pairs of ABI bands in the visible and near-infrared spectrum (AE1: 0.47, 0.86 μm and AE2: 0.86, 1.61 μm). Thus, AE describes the wavelength dependence of aerosol optical depth; it does not provide a value of particle size in units of length, instead it is only a proxy for it. Large/small values of the Ångström Exponent indicate small/large particles, respectively.

- *AOD Measurement range:* -0.05 to +5.00
- *Ångström exponent Measurement range:* -1.0 to +3.0
- *Spatial resolution:* The AOD and APS products are provided on a 2-km fixed grid
- *Spatial coverage:* Full Disk (FD) and Continental United States (CONUS). The AOD and APS products are not generated for the Mesoscale domain.

Retrieval of AOD, and thus APS, is performed only for clear-sky (cloud-free) pixels.

Because the current algorithm restricts retrievals to dark surfaces only AOD is not retrieved for desert, most non-vegetated, sparsely vegetated land surfaces, snow- or ice-covered surfaces, and for water surface in the sun-glint region.

Low sun (solar zenith angle larger than 80°) and/or low satellite (satellite zenith angle larger than 60°) elevation reduces the spatial coverage in medium- and high-quality AOD data.

- *Temporal coverage:* The AOD and APS products are produced only during daytime with view and solar zenith angles less than 90 degrees.
- *Refresh:* Temporal resolution of the product depends on the mode ABI operates in. Data over the Full Disk (FD) of the Earth is available every 10 minutes and over the Continental United States (CONUS) region every 5 minutes in operational mode 6. In mode 4, FD observations are taken every 5 minutes, from which the CONUS domain is extracted.

- Quality*: Based on the results of internal tests, which are designed to measure the level of compliance of pixels with algorithm assumptions, four quality levels (no retrieval, low, medium and high) are assigned to the AOD and AE retrievals. GOES-18 ABI AOD and APS were compared to corresponding GOES-16 and -17, S-NPP, NOAA-20 and MODIS products, which showed reasonable consistency with data from those satellites. A limited evaluation of the AOD product with ground-based sun photometer measurements indicates that biases are smaller than 0.06, 0.04 and 0.12 respectively for $AOD < 0.04$, $0.04 \leq AOD \leq 0.8$ and $AOD > 0.8$ over land, about 0.02 for $AOD < 0.4$ and somewhat larger than 0.1 for $AOD \geq 0.4$ over water. For the above stated ranges of AODs, the standard deviations of biases are less than 0.13, 0.25 and 0.35 over land, and less than 0.15 and 0.23 over water. Relative to the reference AERONET data, the mean GOES-18 AE1 value for the period 7/26-10/26, 2022 is smaller by about 0.5, suggesting aerosol particles larger than those indicated by AERONET. Agreement between GOES-18 and AERONET AE2 values is better; the difference is about 0.2 on average, GOES-18 AE2 being smaller. The standard deviation of AE1 and AE2 biases (precision) is about 0.3.

In general, the high-quality retrievals are recommended for quantitative applications due to their better overall performance; however, the lower quality retrievals also have their merit for qualitative examination of local episodic events due to their greater spatial coverage. The performance is expected to be further improved by updating the spectral land surface relationships and internal test thresholds used in the retrieval algorithm.

The AOD product quality is sensitive to upstream processing, such as the quality of calibration, navigation, cloud mask, snow mask and total precipitable water.

Full description and format of the AOD product is in the Product Definition and User's Guide (PUG) document (<http://www.goes-r.gov/products/docs/PUG-L2+-vol5.pdf>). The algorithm used to derive AOD and APS from ABI observations is described in the "GOES-R Advanced Baseline Imager (ABI) Algorithm Theoretical Basis Document for Suspended Matter/Aerosol Optical and Aerosol Size Parameter" (https://www.star.nesdis.noaa.gov/goesr/documents/ATBDs/Baseline/ATBD_GOES-R_Aerosol_Optical_Depth_v4.2_Feb2018.pdf). Based on the results summarized above under *Quality*, the GOES-18 AOD and APS products starting July 26, 2022 meet the Provisional maturity definition.

Provisional maturity, by definition, means that:

- Validation activities are ongoing and the general research community is now encouraged to participate;
- Severe algorithm anomalies are identified and under analysis. Solutions to anomalies are in development and testing;
- Incremental product improvements may still be occurring;
- Product performance has been demonstrated through analysis of a small number of independent measurements obtained from select locations, periods, and associated ground truth or field campaign efforts;
- Product analysis is sufficient to establish product performance relative to expectations (Performance Baseline);

- Documentation of product performance exists that includes recommended remediation strategies for all anomalies and weaknesses. Any algorithm changes associated with severe anomalies have been documented, implemented, tested, and shared with the user community;
- Testing has been fully documented; and
- Product is ready for operational use and for use in comprehensive calibration/validation activities and product optimization.

Users bear all responsibility for inspecting the data prior to use and for the manner in which the data are utilized. Persons desiring to use the GOES-18 ABI AOD and APS products for any reason, including but not limited to scientific and technical investigations, are encouraged to consult the NOAA algorithm working group (AWG) scientists for feasibility of the planned applications.

Known product issues:

1. When reading AOD product data, note that 'AOD', 'AE1' and 'AE2' and their valid ranges are stored as unsigned integers.
2. The AOD algorithm look-up-tables, gas-correction coefficients, spectral surface-reflectance relationships and internal tests have not yet been "tuned" to GOES-18.
3. Blocks of missing values can occur randomly in mode 6 and in even larger numbers in mode 4.
4. The variable "algorithm_dynamic_input_data_container", meant to list names of dynamic input data files required to run the AOD algorithm, is currently not set (null).
5. Latitude band percentage metadata are incorrect.
6. Long names of variables "lat_band_aod550_percent_..." indicate values are in percent but they are fractions.
7. The long name of variable "aod_outlier_pixel_count" is set as "number of aerosol optical depth at 550 nm pixels over land whose value is outside valid measurement range"; it should read "number of aerosol optical depth at 550 nm pixels over land **and ocean** whose value is outside valid measurement range".

Known PUG issues:

1. The PUG defines the valid AOD range as [-1, 5] in Table 5.10.1; it should be [-0.05, 5].
2. The Aerosol Particle Size over water, AE1, AE2 are not listed in the Vol 5 Revision 2.2 version (December 17, 2019) of the PUG. APS was added to the GOES-R aerosol portfolio on September 4, 2020 after the latest version of the PUG was released. The valid AE range is [-1, 3]; accuracy and precision requirements are 0.3 and 0.6, respectively.

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