

HOW TO USE COOPERATIVE ECOSYSTEM STUDIES UNIT (CESU) COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS

CESU Cooperative Agreements:

The CESU Network facilitates interagency collaboration among the Department of Defense (DoD), other federal agencies, and partner institutions. There is one Master Cooperative Agreement per CESU, and it establishes the terms and conditions for all CESU projects. Master Cooperative Agreements are effective for five years, and have no associated funding commitment.

Each new, approved CESU project is a modification of that unit's Master Cooperative Agreement. The DoD CESU Network National Coordinator's Office uses a Grants Officer to obligate CESU project funding. The Grants Officer uses the Scope of Objectives (SOO) to prepare a project award with the partner institution. DoD's CESU Program Manager currently serves as Grants Officer for most project awards; however, the CESU Network may use any certified Grants Officer.

Funding Sources:

Funding for DoD's CESU projects must originate from within DoD and/or the Military Services (e.g., Operations and Maintenance), or a competitive source, such as the DoD Legacy Program, Strategic Environmental Research and Development Program (SERDP), or Environmental Security Technology Certification Program (ESTCP). The funding source and SOO authorship play a major role in determining the need to compete a CESU project. Sometimes, CESU projects may receive funding without competition.

Competition Requirements for CESU Projects:

In general, there are three different scenarios that determine whether a CESU project requires competition:¹

- 1) *An installation manager or other DoD representative prepares the scope of objectives.* In this instance, DoD, in coordination with the Regional Coordinator and the Grants Officer, competes the SOO. The Grants Officer ensures that the CESU host university publishes the Request for Statements of Interest (RSOI) on its website and, as reasonably appropriate, informs each known partner point of contact about the RSOI at least 10 business days prior to the due date. In such cases, the partner that submitted the best response to the RSOI receives funding.
- 2) *A CESU Partner Institution submits an unsolicited proposal.* Under the terms and conditions of all current CESU Master Cooperative Agreements, the host university and all partner institutions within a CESU region may themselves submit a proposal to DoD. In such cases, competition is not required and an RSOI is unnecessary.
- 3) *Funding for CESU projects is already competitively awarded.* DoD CESU Regional Coordinators are not required to issue an RSOI for projects that are submitted to DoD

¹ DoD guidance on CESU project competition requirements is available at www.denix.osd.mil/nr/CESU.cfm.

as part of a competition-based funding program such as the DoD Legacy Program, SERDP, or ESTCP. For projects that receive funds through such a program, the awarding organization may administer the award as a CESU project if the awarding organization and the award recipient agree to the terms and conditions of the current CESU five-year agreement.

Support Requirements:

A Grants Officer supports the DoD CESU Network National Coordinator's Office by preparing, administering, and executing CESU Cooperative Agreements. DoD's CESU Program Manager fills this role for most DoD projects.²

There are two basic actions required of the Grants Officer:

- 1) Preparing and executing each CESU agreement on behalf of the installation(s) wishing to use the CESU, and invoicing and paying bills submitted by the partner in coordination with the Project Manager.
- 2) Announcing the RSOI to DoD's CESU partners, when necessary, to determine a principal investigator. In coordination with the Project Manager and the Regional Coordinator, the Grants Officer determines the best suitable partnering institution and principal investigator. The Grants Officer then undertakes the actions detailed in #1 above.

CESU Membership:

Federal agencies seeking to join a CESU must be accepted through a competitive process. If accepted, the agency must pay a flat entrance fee to cover the cost of implementing the partnership and, beginning in 2015, an annual sliding scale maintenance fee. The number of CESUs in which the agency participates, as well as the number of projects it generates, will determine the fee. Federal agencies receive a significant benefit because partners agree to cap their overhead rate at 17.5% in exchange for reduced competition when responding to requests for proposals, and for the opportunity to present the federal agencies with their own SOOs for consideration.

DoD's Participation:

DoD's Natural Resources Program Director³ oversees all activities related to the CESU Network. The NR Program Director is also DoD's representative to the National CESU Council. Regional Coordinators for each CESU organize DoD's participation. All Regional Coordinators work on a volunteer basis, and their primary responsibility is to ensure that the SOO for each potential CESU project qualifies under the terms and conditions of the CESU Cooperative Agreement. Regional Coordinators also help installation managers, in coordination with a Grants Officer, select principal investigators and partner institutions to lead CESU projects.

For background information on the CESU Network and DoD's involvement, visit www.denix.osd.mil/nr/upload/CESU-Fact-Sheet.pdf.

² Currently, Christopher Evans (Christopher.L.Evans@usace.army.mil) serves as DoD's CESU Program Manager.

³ Currently, the NR Program Director is Alison Dalsimer (allyn.a.dalsimer.civ@mail.mil).