Department of Defense
Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units National Network

How the CESU Formed

In 1998, P.L. 105-391 (Sec. 203) authorized and directed the Secretary of the Interior "*to enter into cooperative agreements with colleges and universities, including but not limited to land grant schools, in partnership with other Federal and State agencies, to establish cooperative study units to conduct multi-disciplinary research…*" In response and under existing cooperative agreement authorities, Interior developed a network of Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU).

Established in 1999, the CESU Network is a national consortium of public and private parties. Its purpose is to provide research, technical assistance, and training to the federal land management, environmental and research agencies and their partners. The scope includes the biological, physical, social, and cultural sciences needed to address natural and cultural resource management issues at multiple scales and in an ecosystem context.

Each CESU is comprised of three key partners: federal agencies, the host university, and partner institutions (with a requirement of at least one minority institution in each region). Agreements provide DoD entities a mechanism by which they can partner with universities, state resource agencies or other federal agencies to comply with federal laws, executive orders, and regulations.

The CESU Network is coordinated by the National CESU Council comprised of representatives from each federal agency that signed the CESU Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The Network is led by a National Coordinator. For more information, visit www.cesu.psu.edu.

Types of Projects

Ecosystem studies are broadly defined to include both natural and cultural resources efforts. Specific topics may include species monitoring, habitat restoration, archeological inventories, R&D, technical support, surveys, historic property or ecological damage assessments, and more.

The CESU Network is organized into 17 biogeographic regions. DoD is a federal member of all 17 regions.

Partnership Objectives

- Provide resource managers with high quality objective and independent research, technical assistance, and training.
- Deliver research and technical assistance that is timely, relevant to resource managers, and needed to develop and implement sound adaptive management approaches.
- Create and maintain effective partnerships to share resources and expertise.
- Encourage professional development of federal scientists, installation personnel, and students.
- Establish collaborative relations with partners and institutions; facilitate student involvement where appropriate.
- Manage federal resources effectively.

DoD's Participation in the CESU Network

The Department of Defense (DoD) became a federal agency partner in the CESU Network through an amendment to the MOU in 2000. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) joined in 2005. DoD is currently a member of all 17 CESU regions.

From fiscal years 2010 to 2019, DoD funded ~1,600 projects through the CESU Network, totaling more than $435 million. These projects have provided DoD access to high quality scientists from the pool of more than 400 partners in the CESU Network. In addition, DoD's CESU projects have netted savings through cost avoidance of more than $84 million.

How to Use CESU Agreements

A single cooperative agreement (CA) provides the basis for initiating cooperative projects among participating federal agencies and partner institutions, a detailed explanation of the conditions, and provisions governing all projects in each CESU. The steps for DoD to initiate a project are as follows:

- A Command's Grants Officer issues a Request for Statement of Interest (RSOI) for each proposed CESU project to be initiated by DoD.
- The RSOI is posted on the host university's website, and sent to DoD's Regional Reps.
- The installation requesting the work and the CESU Project Office evaluate submitted SOIs.
- CESU members found qualified to perform are sent a Request for Proposal (RFP), which is evaluated by the installation and CESU Office.
- The Grants Officer awards the CA to selected partner(s).
- Installations may use the Grants Officer of their choice. USACE is available to installations without an alternative.
- A summary of all funded projects must be sent to the National DoD POC at the end of the FY.

* All partner institutions within a CESU region may submit a proposal directly to DoD (SERDP, ESTCP, Legacy). In such cases, competition is not required.

Benefits to DoD

- Increased opportunities to leverage resources and partnership opportunities among federal agencies, universities, and scientists.
- Increased access to high quality research, technical, and education assistance for both natural and cultural resource issues.
- Broad multidisciplinary problem-solving at several ecological scales.
- Professional development opportunities for agency scientists and employees.
- A reduced, Network-wide Finance and Administration (i.e., overhead) rate of 17.5%.
- Ability to use USACE to manage the CA process.

2020 USACE Deadlines and Fees

- New agreements: June 22
- Bi-lateral modifications-PI initiated: July 15
- Unilateral modifications: September 3
- Funding must be received for new agreements or bi-lateral modifications by September 15

NOTE: Up to 6 option years are allowable for new awards, so please consider adding options to all new awards.

For USACE agreement processing fee schedule, see the third link in the Materials section at https://www.denix.osd.mil/nr/cesu/cooperative-ecosystem-studies-units-national-network/.

DoD National CESU Program Manager

Ryan Orndorff, ryan.b.orndorff.civ@mail.mil

DoD CESU Regional Representatives

- Alaska, Matt Sprau matthew.h.sprau.civ@mail.mil
- Californian, Kim O'Connor kimberly.oconnor@navy.mil
- Chesapeake Watershed, Chris Petersen chris.petersen@navy.mil
- Colorado Plateau, Robert Knight Robert.N.Knight.civ@mail.mil
- Desert Southwest, Vanessa Shoblock (vanessa.m.shoblock@navy.mil) and Mike Lewis (Michael.G.Lewis@usace.army.mil)
- Great Basin, Robert Knight Robert.N.Knight.civ@mail.mil
- Great Lakes-Northern Forest, Ray Rainbolt Raymond.E.Rainbolt.civ@mail.mil
- Great Plains, Zach Rigg zachary.rigg@us.af.mil
- Great Rivers, Zach Rigg zachary.rigg@us.af.mil
- Gulf Coast, James Parker james.m.parker116.civ@mail.mil
- Hawaii-Pacific Islands, Kapua Kawelo (hilary.k.kawelo.civ@mail.mil) and Jennifer Horeg (Jennifer.Horeg@fe.navy.mil)
- North Atlantic Coast, Ray Rainbolt Raymond.E.Rainbolt.civ@mail.mil
- Pacific Northwest, Jeffrey Foster jeffrey.r.foster.civ@mail.mil
- Piedmont-South Atlantic Coast, Chris Petersen chris.petersen@navy.mil
- Rocky Mountains, Alan Anderson alan.b.anderson@usace.army.mil
- South Florida-Caribbean, Michael Andrejko michael.andrejko@us.af.mil
- Southern Appalachian Mountains, Alan Anderson alan.b.anderson@usace.army.mil

USACE CESU Financial Points of Contact

Fort Worth District:
Program Manager - Lori Kruse-Johnson (Lori.M.Kruse-Johnson@usace.army.mil)
Kathy Mitchell (Kathy.S.Mitchell@usace.army.mil)
Zia Burns (Zia.Burns@usace.army.mil)

Navy CESU Financial Points of Contact

Several NAVFAC districts will process CESU agreements. Check with your Navy POC.