

Department of Defense Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units National Network

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 allow each participating federal agency to efficiently transfer funds and duty station employees to university partners while maintaining responsibility for agency-sponsored activities within CESUs.

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.

Partnership Objectives

- Provide resource managers with high-quality 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.
- Ensure the independence and objectivity of research.
- Create and maintain effective partnerships to share resources and expertise.
- Encourage professional development of federal scientists.
- Manage federal resources effectively.



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

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 joined in 2005. DoD is currently a member of all 17 CESU regions: Californian, Chesapeake Watershed, Colorado Plateau, Desert Southwest, Great Basin, Great Lakes-Northern Forests, Great Plains, Great Rivers, Gulf Coast, Hawaii-Pacific Islands, North and West Alaska, North Atlantic Coast, Pacific Northwest, Piedmont-South Atlantic Coast, Rocky Mountains, South Florida-Caribbean, and Southern Appalachian Mountains.

From fiscal year 2002-2015, DoD funded 862 projects through the CESUs totaling nearly \$218 million. These projects have provided access to high quality scientists from the pool of more than 375 partners in the CESU Network. In addition, DoD's CESU projects have netted savings through cost avoidance of approximately \$33 million.



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How to Use CESU Agreements

A single cooperative agreement (CA) provides the basis for initiating cooperative projects among participating federal agencies and partner institutions, as well as 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 (SOI) for each proposed CESU project to be initiated by DoD.
- The SOI is posted on the website maintained by the host university for the relevant CESU region.
- The Grants Officer and the natural or cultural resources manager select the principal investigator and partner institution.
- The Grants Officer awards the CA. All terms and conditions are already negotiated, thus reducing the amount of time for project implementation.

In addition to the SOI process, the host university and all partner institutions within a CESU region may submit a proposal directly to DoD. In such cases, competition is not required.

Benefits to DoD

- Fast access to, and implementation of, CAs with partner institutions.
- Access to high quality science and training for federal employees at universities.
- Opportunities to reduce costs through partnerships and interagency collaboration.
- A reduced, Network-wide Finance and Administration (i.e., overhead) rate of 17.5%.
- A broadened scope of scientific services.
- Multidisciplinary problem-solving at several ecological scales.
- Increased partnership opportunities among federal agencies, universities, and scientists.
- Increased research, technical assistance, and education for resource managers.
- Professional development opportunities for agency scientists and employees.
- Improved collaboration between natural and cultural resource managers.
- An expanded constituency for federal science.

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