



Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units National Network



Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units

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).

In 1999, the CESU Network was created with the signing of an interagency Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). The objective of the CESU network is to provide research, technical assistance, and training to federal land management, environmental and research agencies and their partners. The CESU Network’s broad 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.

Three key elements comprise each CESU: federal agencies, the host university, and partner institutions (with a requirement of at least one minority institution in each region). Each CESU has a managers’ committee with the responsibility of defining the CESU’s role and mission statement, a strategic plan, and annual work plans. CESU agreements allow each of the participating federal agencies to efficiently transfer funds and duty station employees to university partners while maintaining responsibility for agency-sponsored activities within CESUs.

CESUs 17 biogeographic regions are linked together to form the CESU Network. The Department of Defense became a federal agency partner in the CESU network through an amendment to the MOU in 2000. The US Army Corps of Engineers joined in 2005 to use CESU on USACE managed lands.

DoD’s participation in the CESU Network

The CESU Network is led by the National CESU Council comprised of representatives from each federal agency signatory of the CESU MOU.

As of 2006, DoD has joined in the Californian, Chesapeake Watershed, Desert Southwest, Gulf Coast, Upper and Middle Mississippi Valley, Hawaii-Pacific Island, Colorado Plateau, and the Southern Appalachian Mountain CESUs.

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The CESU Network is organized through 17 Biogeographic Regions. DoD is a Federal member of the Desert Southwest, Gulf Coast, Chesapeake Watershed, Upper and Middle Mississippi Valley, Hawaii-Pacific Island, Colorado Plateau and Southern Appalachian Mountain CESUs.

How to use CESU Agreements

Each CESU is competitively established under a single cooperative agreement. Each CESU’s cooperative agreement provides a detailed explanation of the conditions and provisions governing all CESU projects; each CESU agreement provides the basis for initiating cooperative projects between the participating federal agencies and partner institutions. An installation’s natural or cultural resource manager is responsible for developing a SOW for the desired project and for coordinating with the DoD CESU Regional Coordinator regarding the selection of a partner institution and the project’s principal investigator.

After selection of the principal investigator and partner institution, a grants officer is responsible for creating the modification to the existing Cooperative Agreement. All the terms and conditions of the agreement are already negotiated, thus reducing the amount of time for project implementation.

Partnership Objectives

- Provide resource managers with high-quality scientific 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.

Benefits to DoD

DoD's participation in CESUs allows all DoD Services to benefit from:

- Fast access to, and implementation of, cooperative agreements with partner institutions.
- Access to high quality science and training of Federal employees at universities.
- Opportunities to reduce cost through partnerships and interagency collaboration.
- A reduced, Network-wide 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.

DoD's Participation

From 2001-2006 DoD has funded over 57 projects through CESU totaling nearly \$6.3M. These projects have provided access to high quality scientists from a number of universities in the pool of over 180 member institutions in the CESU Network. In addition, DoD's CESU projects have resulted in savings through cost avoidance of approximately \$2 million in the past four years.

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DoD's expansion through CESU

As of June 2006, the Department of Defense is exploring the possibilities of expanding its presence in the CESU Network. Future plans for DoD may include membership in the Rocky Mountains, North Atlantic Coast, and Great Basin CESUs.

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The US Army Corps of Engineers-Civil Works joined the CESU Network in June 2005. The Corps is a separate entity from DoD in the Network. Prior to 2005, the Corps access to CESUs was permitted only for work on military installations through DoD participation. The Corps plans to join the Upper and Middle Mississippi Valley, Gulf Coast and the Great Lakes-Northern Forest CESUs in the near future.

For more information on how to contact your DoD Regional CESU Coordinator please contact

ODUSD(I&E)EM-CO
Attn: DoD CESU National Coordinator
1225 South Clark Street, Suite 1500
Arlington, VA 22202-4336

For a list of all Biogeographic regions and partner institutions visit:
<http://www.cesu.org/index.html>

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