



Memorandum

To: CESU Directors and Partners
Through: CESU Network National Coordinator
From: CESU Council
Subject: CESU Host University Transition
Date: 01 November 2020

In accordance with the Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) Network interagency Memorandum of Understanding, the CESU Council shall establish policies and standard operating procedures guiding the activities of the network. This memo, thereby, establishes a standard process for transition of CESU Host University designation and responsibilities within an existing CESU. Each CESU is expected to implement these steps from this date forward.

CESU Structure and Operations

Each CESU comprises a host university and numerous federal agencies and nonfederal partner organizations, structured as a working collaborative and focused on a particular biogeographic region. *“Each CESU is maintained through a five-year, renewable, multi-partner cooperative agreement, which details the roles and responsibilities of its Federal and non-Federal partners and the provisions for collaborative activities supported through discrete Federal financial assistance awards under the program (i.e., in accordance with agency authorities and OMB Circulars).”* (DOI-AAAP-0007)

Host University

Each CESU is based at a doctoral university (e.g., Carnegie Classification R1 or R2) within its biogeographic region. The host university provides active leadership for the unit, as well as providing physical space, administrative support, and access to faculty, students, and other resources. The host university designates a CESU Director, responsible for coordinating CESU activities as outlined in the CESU multi-partner agreement, and representing the CESU, on behalf of its partners and the host university, with the CESU Network National Office, other CESU Directors, and the CESU Council.

Federal Agencies

Federal agencies participate in CESUs within the scope of their respective missions and authorities to engage in collaborative projects with nonfederal partners aligned with agency science, stewardship, and education related needs and priorities. Each agency designates technical and administrative representatives, who serve on behalf of their respective agencies to actively participate in CESU-related actions. Agency representatives collectively comprise the CESU’s Federal Managers Committee, fulfilling the roles and responsibilities as outlined in the CESU multi-partner agreement. At least one federal representative is located at the host university.

Nonfederal Partners

CESU nonfederal partners include tribes, state and local governments, postsecondary academic institutions (including minority serving institutions), and nongovernmental and nonprofit organizations. CESU participation connects federal agencies to the full complement of subject matter and technical expertise present among the nonfederal partners (e.g., from anthropology to zoology), which can be leveraged through CESU projects to foster interdisciplinary problem-solving and inform natural and cultural resource stewardship. Each nonfederal partner designates technical and administrative representatives, who serve on behalf of their respective organizations to actively participate in CESU-related actions, fulfilling the roles and responsibilities as outlined in the CESU multi-partner agreement.

Executive Committee

Each CESU maintains an Executive Committee comprising one representative from each federal and nonfederal partner organization. Executive committee representatives are expected to communicate information about their respective organization's needs and opportunities, expertise and qualifications, and activities conducted under the auspices of the CESU. The CESU executive committee meets at least once each year.

CESU Host University Transition

Upon determination of need for transition of host university designation and responsibilities within an existing CESU, the current CESU Director shall execute the transition actions listed below. The transition will preferably align with the CESU five-year review and renewal process, to facilitate timely transition from the outgoing host university to the incoming host university coinciding with the end of one CESU five-year term and the beginning of the subsequent five-year term. The CESU Director should inform and consult with the CESU Network National Office, as appropriate.

Transition Actions

- *Notify current CESU partners of host university's intention to cease serving as host university – six to twelve months prior to expiration of the CESU multi-partner agreement*
- *Solicit expressions of interest from current partners – minimum six months prior to expiration of the CESU multi-partner agreement*
- *Invite proposals from eligible partner universities – minimum two months prior to expiration of the CESU multi-partner agreement*
- *Facilitate proposal review by current partners – one to two weeks following proposal submission deadline*
- *Identify external reviewer (i.e., not actively engaged in the CESU) to verify review results*
- *Notify CESU Council of new host university selection (as CESU renewal package addendum)*
- *Jointly develop transition plan with new host university (e.g., migration/hand-off of host university responsibilities)*

Proposal Elements

The following outlines the required components for a proposal developed by a prospective new host university. The proposal should focus on the institution's qualifications to successfully fulfill the host university roles and responsibilities. The proposal must be concise, follow the

outline below, and include all requested information. Formatting requirements – proposals must be prepared in ten-point or larger type, stay within specified page length guidelines, and not include unnecessary materials. The proposal must be submitted to the current CESU Director by the proposed host university (i.e., not an external third party).

1. Letter of Interest and Intent

(1 page)

The proposal must include a formal letter on behalf of the university, clearly expressing the institution's interest and intent to serve as the CESU host university. The letter must also include confirmation that the university is a current Partner Institution within the CESU as well as confirmation of doctoral university status (e.g., Carnegie Classification R1 or R2). The letter must include a signature (or written endorsement) from an appropriate official with authority to commit the university in a binding multi-year federal cooperative agreement (e.g., president, vice president for research, authorized organization representative). Note, the host university must participate in the CESU at the level of the entire institution. However, the host university may designate a specific institutional unit (e.g., individual college, school, or department) with primary administrative responsibilities for the CESU.

2. Executive Summary

(2 pages)

The executive summary should identify the CESU biogeographic region to be served, briefly describe key attributes, capabilities, and resources that the proposed host university will contribute to the partnership in furtherance of the CESU, acknowledge the current complement of partners, and identify a primary point of contact for the institution submitting the proposal.

3. Mission and Goal Statement

(2 pages)

The mission and goal statement should provide an overview of the proposed host university, its mission, and the primary focus of collaborative activities to be supported through the CESU. The statement should briefly describe research, technical assistance, educational, and other services that the institution is especially qualified to provide within the context of the CESU objectives. In keeping with the CESU concept, a regional approach to ecosystem science and adaptive management is encouraged, with particular emphasis on the landscape/seascape scale. Therefore, the mission and goal statement should also include emphasis regarding how the proposed host university will facilitate activities relevant to the CESU biogeographic region (e.g., natural, cultural, social, built environment), reflect the missions and related science, stewardship, and educational needs and priorities of the participating agencies and partners, and outline the value proposition and benefits the proposed host university will generate and provide to best serve the partners and advance the impact and success of the CESU.

4. Capacity and Qualifications

(5 pages)

The proposed host university should develop a detailed description of its capacity and approach to achieve the objectives of the CESU for the specific biogeographic region, including unique institutional qualifications or specialties particularly well-suited to the furtherance of the CESU and its mission. This section should include a written narrative response (e.g., examples, brief descriptions) for each of the elements listed below.

- Programs, departments, or other institutional units likely to be engaged in CESU activities.
- Facilities, equipment, centers, or institutes likely to be engaged in CESU activities.
- Research, technical assistance, and educational activities in fields relevant to ecosystem management (e.g., across the biological, physical, social, cultural, engineering, and humanities disciplines) that provision the university to facilitate activities by and on behalf of the partners in achieving the CESU mission.
- Existing partnerships with federal, state, and local government agencies, tribes, academic institutions, and nongovernmental organizations relevant to the CESU mission and partners.
- Current practice and potential for engagement with minority serving institutions and minority students toward increasing diversity and inclusion in the scientific workforce.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

(5 pages)

The proposed host university should develop a detailed description of its intention and strategy to provide administrative leadership for the CESU in accordance with the roles and responsibilities as outlined in the CESU multi-partner agreement and CESU host university support agreement. This section should include a written narrative response for each of the elements listed below.

- Experience managing and coordinating long-term multi-partner (e.g., federal-nonfederal) projects, groups, and collaborative efforts.
- Confirmation of acceptance and fulfilment of the host university roles and responsibilities as outlined in the CESU multi-partner agreement (see Appendix A).
- Confirmation of acceptance and fulfilment of the host university roles and responsibilities as outlined in the CESU host university support agreement (see Appendix B).
- Confirmation of the university's internal controls and satisfactory record of performance executing programs or activities under federal financial assistance awards in accordance with the provisions under 2 CFR 200.205 (e.g., integrity and business ethics, financial stability, management systems, compliance and conformance with award terms and conditions).
- Confirmation of the university's willingness and intention to provide space and basic administrative support for at least one participating CESU federal agency representative (e.g., research coordinator) and involvement in university activities as outlined in the CESU multi-partner agreement.
- Name and contact information for the designated technical (e.g., CESU Director) and administrative (e.g., sponsored programs) representatives for the proposed host university.

6. Partner Organizations

(2 pages)

The proposal must include a list of current CESU federal and nonfederal partners. This information is available from the CESU host university and/or the CESU Network national

website. Letters confirming continued participation in the CESU from each of the current partners are not required.

Presentation to CESU Partners

Each host university applicant must provide a presentation (e.g., virtual or in-person) to current CESU partners as part of the application process. The CESU Director shall determine the specific logistics and related details (e.g., dates, format, length) for proposal presentations. The presentation should clearly and succinctly convey the elements included in the written proposal, while providing the applicant additional time to emphasize specific examples and adequate opportunity for CESU partners to ask questions (Q&A).

Proposal Submission and Review

Proposals must be submitted to the current CESU Director by the specified deadline. Proposal authors may be contacted for clarification or additional information, as necessary. Proposals will be reviewed by the CESU Director and current CESU partner technical representatives using the criteria described below. (Note, institutions submitting proposals will not participate in the proposal review.) Proposal reviews will be rank ordered by each CESU partner based on total score. The CESU Director and external reviewer will review and verify the results. The highest overall ranking proposal will be identified as the new CESU host university. The CESU Director shall submit a notification to the CESU Council as an addendum to CESU renewal package.

Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation criteria are listed by category aligned with the individual proposal sections. A brief list of corresponding elements and allotted points (where appropriate) is provided for each category for reference. An example proposal review sheet is provided in Appendix C.

1. Mission and Goal Statement (25 points)

- Provides overview of the institution, its mission, and focus of collaborative activities (5)*
- Identifies research, technical assistance, educational, and other services that the institution is especially qualified to provide within the context of the CESU objectives (5)*
- Describes how the institution will facilitate activities relevant to ecosystem science and adaptive management for the CESU biogeographic region (5)*
- Demonstrates understanding of science, stewardship, and educational needs and priorities for the CESU biogeographic region (5)*
- Presents value proposition and benefits the proposed host university will generate and provide to best serve the partners and advance the impact and success of the CESU (5)*

2. Capacity and Qualifications (25 points)

- Describes the institution's capacity and approach to achieve CESU objectives (5)*
- Describes the institution's qualifications and specialties that demonstrate how it is particularly well-suited to the furtherance of the CESU (5)*
- Describes the institution's programs, facilities, partnerships, and/or faculty relevant to the CESU mission and biogeographic region (5)*
- Describes the institution's experience with federally supported research, technical assistance, and educational activities that provision it to facilitate activities by and on behalf of the partners in achieving the CESU mission (5)*

- Describes potential for engagement with minority serving institutions and minority students toward increasing diversity and inclusion in the scientific workforce (5)*

3. Roles and Responsibilities (25 points)

- Describes the institution's strategy to provide administrative leadership in furtherance of the CESU mission (5)*
- Describes institution's experience managing multi-partner collaborative efforts relevant to the CESU mission (5)*
- Confirms acceptance and describes plans for fulfilling host university responsibilities in accordance with the CESU multi-partner and CESU annual support agreements (5)*
- Describes the institution's internal controls and satisfactory performance executing programs and activities under federal awards (5)*
- Describes the institution's intention to provide space and basic administrative support and involvement for duty stationed CESU federal agency representative(s) (5)*

4. Presentation to Partners (10 points)

- Clearly and succinctly conveys the elements included in the written proposal (5)*
- Provides adequate opportunity for CESU partners to ask questions (5)*