



## Purpose

Each Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit (CESU) cooperative/joint venture agreement has a term of five years from the effective date of execution, which is usually the date of the last signature. Each CESU agreement states that the activities of the CESU can be continued for another five-year period by mutual consent of the parties to the agreement (Article III B).

## Objectives

The objectives of the review and decision on renewal are:

- assess mutual consent in continuing the activities of the CESU,
- evaluate the activities, strengths, and weaknesses of each CESU over the last five years, including collaborative responsibilities described in each agreement, and
- renew each agreement, as appropriate, including suggested or required changes.

## The Review Process and Due Dates

CESU Council staff will coordinate the review through the host university and federal managers committee. This review includes four key elements:

1. The host university prepares a letter of interest describing the interest and intent of the host university and each of its nonfederal partners to renew the CESU. The letter is due **20 January 2012**.
2. The host university, working with its nonfederal partners, prepares a CESU self-assessment, which is due **20 January 2012**.
3. The CESU federal managers committee prepares a brief review and specific recommendation to the CESU Council concerning renewal. This is due **01 March 2012**.
4. The CESU federal managers committee appoints two to three external reviewers, who prepare an independent assessment of the CESU. The federal managers committee will email to the CESU Network National Coordinator the names of the external reviewers no later than **15 December 2011**. The external reviewers will receive a copy of the CESU self-assessment and submit their independent review and recommendation to the CESU Council. External reviewers' assessments are due **01 March 2012**.

CESU Council staff will assemble these materials and forward them to the CESU Council. After the Council has examined the review materials, it will decide on the renewal of each CESU in April 2012. CESU Council staff will then coordinate the renewal of the agreements, as appropriate, from April-August 2012.



## **Instructions for the Host University**

All review materials should be assembled electronically and emailed to the CESU Network National Coordinator by **20 January 2012**.

### **1. Letter of Interest and Intent**

A key part of the CESU review and renewal process is for the host university and nonfederal partners to declare their interest in continuing the activities of the CESU. The host university should contact each of its current nonfederal partners about their continued participation. Then, the host university will prepare a brief letter of intent to the CESU Council, addressed to the CESU Network National Coordinator that includes:

- the host university's interest in and intent to continue hosting the CESU;
- the interest in and intent of each partner institution to continue participating in the CESU; and
- the interest and intent of other universities/institutions that the current CESU host, partners, and federal agencies would like to include as new additions to the CESU agreement.

The letter of interest should specifically identify partners that want to continue and partners that do not. Separate letters from each of the nonfederal partners may be included, but are not required. If new members are joining, the host university should also send the new member application(s).

### **2. CESU Self-Assessment**

The host university, working with its nonfederal partner institutions, prepares a self-assessment that includes:

- a three to five page self-assessment reflecting on the five-year agreement period (see guidance below);
- a list of the total number of projects and funding by agency and the total number of projects and funding provided to the host and to each partner institution (the project title, funding agency, funding level, and collaborating partner institution(s)); and
- additional information and insights about the CESU that they deem useful to share with the CESU Council for the development of the CESU Network.



## **Criteria and Questions for the Assessment**

For each question, provide quantitative and/or qualitative details/examples in support of your answer (e.g., numbers/types of meetings and participation, student involvement on projects, tangible and intangible benefits).

### **Criterion 1:**

Were the formal commitments identified in the CESU agreement (and amendments) fulfilled?

1. Did the host university and partner institutions conduct with participating federal agencies a program of research, technical assistance and education related to the CESU objectives?
2. Explain how the host university and partner institutions fulfilled their CESU role and mission statement
3. What is the date of the most current version of the CESU's strategic plan?
4. When were periodic meetings of the CESU convened for the purpose of collaboration and coordination of CESU activities?
5. Did the participating federal agencies, host university, and partner institutions develop and follow annual work plans to guide the activities of the CESU?
6. How did students participate in the activities of the CESU?
7. Did the host university and/or partner institutions offer educational and training opportunities to participating federal agencies' employees?
8. Did the host university provide basic administrative and clerical support, access to campus facilities, suitable office space and basic services for federal agencies' personnel to be located at the host university?
9. Did the host university coordinate activities, as appropriate, with the partner institutions and develop administrative policies for such coordination?
10. Did the unit convene annual CESU Federal Managers Committee meetings?



**Criterion 2:**

Were the projects successfully completed, and was there effective delivery of relevant and high quality project results to managers, consistent with the mission of the CESU?

1. What percentage of projects were projects conducted successfully, with all project deliverables accepted by collaborating federal agency(s) providing project funds?
2. What percentage of projects were unsuccessful, with project deliverables rejected by collaborating federal agency(s) providing project funds? If projects were unsuccessful or difficult, why?
3. How did the host university and partner institutions provide effective delivery of relevant and high quality project results to managers, consistent with the mission of the CESU?

**Criterion 3:**

Was there involvement of the partner institutions as appropriate in the activities and projects of the CESU?

1. Did partner institutions participate in activities (such as meetings, signing amendments, strategic planning, etc.) of the CESU?
2. Did partner institutions participate in projects of the CESU?

**Criterion 4:**

How did the CESU facilitate collaboration and substantial involvement among its participants?



## **Instructions for the Federal Managers Committee**

The CESU Network National Coordinator will provide the federal managers committee and the external reviewers with a copy of the CESU self-assessment 01 February 2012. The managers committee is encouraged to seek additional information relevant to the review criteria, as appropriate. The federal managers committee has the flexibility to develop its own process by which it conducts the reviews and formulates its recommendation.

All review materials should be assembled electronically and emailed to the CESU Network National Coordinator by **01 March 2012**. The federal managers committee is responsible for the following two items:

### **1. Federal Managers Review and Recommendation**

The federal managers committee should evaluate activities during the five year agreement period and prepare a three to five page report. This review should reflect the four general criteria of the self-assessment.

The managers committee should prepare a specific recommendation to the CESU Council regarding the renewal of the CESU agreement. This recommendation should clearly state whether the managers committee recommends for or against renewal of the CESU agreement for another five year term.

### **2. External Review and Recommendation**

The federal managers committee will develop the process for the external review. External reviewers should be selected to avoid conflict of interest and unnecessary cost. All costs of the external review are the responsibility of the federal managers committee and its representing agencies, and hence a low cost or *pro bono* review is encouraged. The managers committee should ensure that the external reviewer(s) are appropriately briefed about (1) the CESU, (2) the purpose of the review, and (3) the criteria upon which the review is based. The external reviewer(s) will receive a copy of the host university and nonfederal partners' self-assessment to assist in preparing the external review.

The external reviewer(s) should evaluate activities during the 5-year agreement period and prepare a three to five page report. This review should reflect the four general criteria of the self-assessment.

The external reviewers should prepare a specific recommendation to the CESU Council regarding the renewal of the CESU agreement. This recommendation should clearly state whether the external reviewers recommends for or against renewal of the CESU agreement for another five year term

For more information, contact:

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