



Memorandum

To: CESU Directors and Partners
Through: CESU Network National Coordinator
From: CESU Council
Subject: CESU New Partner Application and Approval Process
Date: 01 September 2023

As of September 2023, the CESU Network includes 19 federal agency partners and more than 500 nonfederal partners (e.g., institutions of higher education; tribal, state, and local government agencies; nongovernmental organizations;). The CESU Council welcomes the addition of new partners to the network. Periodic announcements may be issued (e.g., Federal Register Notice) to enhance program awareness and direct interested parties to additional information.

In accordance with the 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 new partner application, approval, and enrollment for all CESUs. Each CESU is expected to implement these steps from this date forward.

Step 1: New Partner Application

Interested parties are welcome to contact the CESU Network National Office at any time with inquiries. For each individual CESU, the CESU Director shall set the deadline(s) for soliciting and accepting applications (e.g., accepts new partner applications on a rolling basis throughout the year or on a semi-annual or annual basis). Additionally, the CESU Director may invite an applicant to attend their annual CESU partner meeting for an in-person or virtual presentation and interview as part of the application process.

The following outlines required elements for the application for enrollment in a particular CESU.

Federal Agency Partners

Federal agency applicants must be existing members of the CESU Council¹ and signatories on the CESU Network interagency Memorandum of Understanding. These federal agency partners are eligible for enrollment in any individual CESU, to support collaborative activities aligned with the mission and goals of the CESU Network and individual CESU. The steps for the federal agency partner application process are as follows:

1. Notify the CESU Network National Coordinator of intent to enroll in a particular CESU.
2. Establish initial contact with the host university CESU Director to begin dialog regarding enrollment as a new federal agency partner.
3. Submit a formal letter of interest and application (e.g., no more than 10 pages) to the host university CESU Director (with “cc” to CESU Network National Coordinator), including:

¹ See CESU Council new federal agency process at cesu.org.

- Expression of desire to enroll in the CESU as a new federal agency partner.
- Confirmation that the agency is a member of the CESU Council.
- Confirmation that the agency has read the CESU multi-partner agreement and agrees to support the CESU mission and goals and fulfill the roles and responsibilities of a federal partner, as described in the CESU agreement.
- Description of the federal agency, its mission, and the primary focus of collaborative activities to be supported through the CESU in the context of the CESU mission.
- Description or list of the primary agency programs, departments, or other institutional divisions that will likely be engaged in CESU activities. Include website addresses for further information, as appropriate.
- Agreement to commit agency financial resources to support host university CESU administration in accordance with CESU Council annual host university support guidelines, as described in the CESU agreement.
- Designation of a technical representative (with full contact information – name, title, full address, phone, fax, email) to serve on the CESU’s federal managers committee, participate in CESU annual/semi-annual partner meetings, and facilitate internal and external communication, promotion, and response to CESU correspondence and administrative actions (e.g., announcements, new partner applications, processing agreements/amendments, five-year reviews, periodic reporting).
- Designation of an administrative or grants and agreements representative (with full contact information – name, title, full address, phone, fax, email) to serve as financial assistance point of contact.
- Agreement to relay agency-specific research, technical assistance, and educational needs among CESU partners.
- Signature (or endorsement) from an appropriate agency official, with authority to commit agency resources in a binding multi-year federal cooperative and joint venture agreement (e.g., agency administrator, regional director, division or branch chief).

Nonfederal Partners

Tribal, state, and local governments, academic institutions, nongovernmental conservation organizations, and other nonfederal organizations are eligible to apply for enrollment in any individual CESU, to participate in collaborative activities aligned with the mission and goals of the CESU Network and individual CESU. The steps for the nonfederal partner application process are as follows:

1. Establish initial contact with the host university CESU Director to begin dialog regarding enrollment as a new nonfederal partner institution.
2. Submit a formal letter of interest and application (e.g., no more than 20 pages) to the CESU Director, including:
 - Expression of desire to enroll in the CESU as a new nonfederal partner institution/organization.
 - Confirmation that the institution/organization has read the CESU multi-partner agreement and agrees to support the CESU mission and goals and fulfill the roles and responsibilities of a nonfederal partner, as described in the CESU agreement.
 - Description of the institution/organization, its mission, and the primary focus of collaborative activities to be supported through the CESU in the context of the CESU mission. Enrollment is expected at the level of the entire institution – enrollment by

subordinate institutional units (e.g., individual college, school, or department within a university; individual division, branch, or program within a nonacademic organization) is not appropriate. However, a partner may elect to designate a specific institutional unit with primary technical or administrative responsibilities for participation in a CESU.

- Description or list of the primary programs, departments, or other institutional units of relevance to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies that will likely be engaged in CESU activities. Include website addresses for further information, as appropriate.
- A list of and brief description of the staff or faculty with expertise in disciplines and subject matter areas of relevance to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies (do not submit CVs).
- For academic institutions, include a description of student demographics and the institution's status as a minority-serving institution (e.g., as defined by the U.S. Department of Education).
- Description or list of facilities, equipment, centers, or institutes that would provide support to the research, technical assistance, or educational activities of relevance to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies that will be engaged in CESU activities.
- Description or list of past research, technical assistance, and educational services supported through federal financial assistance awards that are of relevance to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies that will be engaged in CESU activities.
- Description or list of current formal agreements and informal relationships with federal agencies that are of relevance to federal land management, environmental, and research agencies that will be engaged in CESU activities.
- Confirmation of the institution's/organization's willingness to accept the CESU programmatic indirect cost (IDC) rate and cost items to which this rate is applicable for activities conducted through the CESU, including research, technical assistance, and educational activities (this IDC rate applies to the entire institution/organization for CESU activities).
- Designation of a technical representative (with full contact information – name, title, full address, phone, fax, email) to serve on the CESU Executive Committee, participate in CESU annual/semi-annual partner meetings, and facilitate internal and external communication, promotion, and response to CESU correspondence and administrative actions (e.g., announcements, new partner applications, processing agreements/amendments, five-year reviews, periodic reporting).
- Designation of an administrative or grants and agreements representative (with full contact information – name, title, full address, phone, fax, email) to serve as financial assistance point of contact.
- Agreement to relay agency-specific research, technical assistance, and educational needs and associated funding opportunities to other institutional/organizational members (e.g., faculty, students, staff).
- Signature (or endorsement) from an appropriate official, with authority to commit institutional resources in a binding multi-year federal cooperative and joint venture agreement (e.g., president, executive director, chief financial officer, vice president for research, authorized organizational representative, director of sponsored programs).

- Letter(s) of support from one or more CESU federal agency partners to verify satisfactory performance by the applicant in the execution of federal financial assistance awards (i.e., cooperative agreements or grants). Letter(s) of support may include factual description of past collaborative project work supported through federal financial assistance awards, but shall not include language constituting an endorsement of any product, service, or enterprise in accordance with 5 CFR § 2635.702(c).

Step 2: New Partner Application Distribution and Review

Following submission of an application for enrollment, the CESU Director distributes the application package (via email) to all existing federal and nonfederal partner technical representatives for consideration. The CESU Director shall determine the timeline and method for review (e.g., comments via email or in person at the annual meeting).

Step 3: New Partner Approval (Nonfederal Applicants Only)

Once existing partners have reviewed the new partner application, the CESU Director solicits a vote in favor/not in favor of selection of the applicant for enrollment. The CESU Director shall determine the timeline and method of voting (e.g., via email or in person at the annual meeting). Approval is determined by a super majority (i.e., two thirds or greater) of votes from existing partners in favor of selection for enrollment. The CESU Director informs the applicant of the outcome of the review and approval process.

Step 4: Amending the Cooperative and Joint Venture Agreement

Upon enrollment of a new federal partner or approval of a new nonfederal partner applicant for enrollment, the CESU Director sends notification and new partner application materials (via email) to the CESU Network National Coordinator with request to prepare an amendment to the CESU agreement. The CESU Network National Office prepares an amendment to the CESU agreement, officially adding the new partner(s). The amendment shall be prepared within four weeks of receipt of materials from the CESU Director.

Step 5: Amendment Review and Signature Process

The CESU Network National Office distributes the amendment to the new partner(s) and Host University for review and signature. The new partner(s) and Host University process the amendment, returning their respective completed signature pages by email to the CESU Network National Office. The amendment must be signed by an appropriate official, with authority to commit institutional resources in a binding multi-year federal cooperative and joint venture agreement (e.g., for federal partners – agency administrator, regional director, division or branch chief; for nonfederal partners – president, executive director, chief financial officer, vice president for research, authorized organizational representative, director of sponsored programs).

The amendment is fully effective upon receipt of the new partner and Host University signature pages. Once the amendment is in effect, the CESU Network National Office works with the CESU Director to distribute a digital copy of the fully executed amendment to all existing partners for their files and posts the amendment to the CESU Network national website.

Step 6: New Partner Actively Participates

Once the amendment is in effect, the new partner is expected to actively participate in the CESU and CESU Network activities, in fulfillment of the roles and responsibilities of a nonfederal or federal partner as described in the CESU agreement.