

District Process for Initiating a CESU Cooperative Agreement Project

The following process will be used by USACE District Project Managers to initiate projects with member CESU universities.

Step 1. Identify project and appropriate Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit (CESU).

The Corps' 3 main criteria for utilizing the CESU program are that all projects must have: 1) public benefit, 2) R&D, and 3) Government participation. If these 3 criteria are met, the next requirement is to select the appropriate CESU from the 17 that make up the CESU Network. This can be done in a variety of ways including a review of CESU websites for ongoing or completed projects conducted by member universities. For information about each individual CESU unit visit the CESU National Network's website at <http://www.cesu.psu.edu> Note – The CESU process is a competitive mechanism and is not intended as a means to sole source to a CESU University.

Step 2. Prepare a Statement of Interest and CAAD

After identifying a need, the District Technical POC will prepare a Statement of Interest (SOI) – which is similar to a Scope of Work but less rigid in its description of the work being proposed. A CESU Cooperative Agreement is intended to be a flexible R&D arrangement between the Corps and a University sharing project responsibilities. The SOI briefly describes the effort to be accomplished and materials required for the response. **A full estimate of potential funding should be included for all anticipated option years.** A sample rSOI can be viewed at the end of this document. All items in **Green** should be filled out. A new form is also required for new starts and is called a CAAD. Submit the completed rSOI and CAAD via e-mail attachment to the ERDC CESU PM, Ms. Sherry Whitaker (Sherry.L.Whitaker@usace.army.mil)

Step 3. Transferring Funds

Before ERDC Contracting can post a SOI to the appropriate CESU website, funding must be transmitted to ERDC via a Repositioning of Funds. For those Districts not familiar with setting up a Repositioning of Funds, our ERDC CESU Tech Support team will assist you. Each CESU Project will include a University Overhead rate of 17.5%. In addition, Districts will need to provide a 10% ERDC CESU Admin Support fee (using a Repositioning of Funds) for ERDC's assistance. For example, if a District project is budgeted at \$100K, the actual amount needed to fully execute the project will be \$110K ... to include the 10% ERDC Support fee. NOTE that the minimum charge for any CESU is \$10,000.

Step 4. Posting the SOI

After funding is received and the rSOI has been reviewed/approved for posting, ERDC's Contracting office will post the rSOI to grants.gov for 30 days restricting eligibility to the XXXX CESU IAW 2 CFR 200. In addition, the rSOI will be

posted to the XXXX CESU website for additional visibility. Only members of the XXXXX CESU are eligible to compete. **All correspondence with potential vendors will be made through the ERDC Contracting office or their designated representative until the award is made.**

Step 5. Request for Full Proposal

Since the CESU process must allow full competition between all CESU Universities within the targeted CESU Unit, the District Technical POC must review all CESU University responses to the SOI (if more than one is submitted) and provide a recommendation to the Contracting POC as to which University will best meet their project needs. This decision will be based on technical expertise, ability to work with the Corps, work facilities, etc., but not on the lowest bid. ERDC Contracting will request the full proposal allowing 2 weeks on average for the University's response, but this time can be adjusted as necessary to meet District needs.

Step 6. Technical Evaluation – Contracting Actions

After receipt of the full proposal by the Contracting POC, it will be forwarded to the District Technical POC for evaluation. Upon approval from the District Technical POC to proceed with the award process, the proposed project and budget will be justified/validated by the Contracting POC. Before an award can be made, all budget categories and budget items must be justified and the appropriate documents prepared for legal review. Please see the "Budget & Justification" section of the RFP for more details.

When Contracting has all necessary approvals to award the Cooperative Agreement, an award letter will be sent to the University - along with a copy of the proposed cooperative agreement - for their approval. The University's Sponsored Programs Office must then approve the document and return it to ERDC's Contracting Office to fully execute the Cooperative Agreement. The ERDC Contracting Office will sign the cooperative agreement and distribute a copy of the Fully Executed award.

Once the award is "fully executed", the funding for the agreement will be obligated in CEFMS. NOTE – Cooperative agreements are exempt from the prompt payment Act and must be set up in CEFMS to avoid interest penalties.

Step 7. Average Time to Award

Generally the time required for a CESU cooperative agreement to be completed is about 4-5 months. This time is dependent on the time it takes the District to transmit the funds, the University's responsiveness to ERDC Contracting requests (e.g., full proposal / budget justification), and the workload for ERDC CESU Contracting Specialists.

Step 8. Reporting/Invoicing Schedules

The District Technical POC will determine the reporting requirements for the award recipient. This requirement can range from monthly progress reports to less frequent (semi-annual) progress reports followed by a final report. Invoicing from

the University will be based on their expenditure rate but no more frequently than monthly. District Tech POC's will be notified and asked to approve all invoices/reports. If approval is not received from the District, ERDC will not approve payment.

Step 9. Options for Out-Year Funding

Districts have the option of continuing a project for up to 5 years (60 months) from the date of award of the original CESU cooperative agreement (CA). Each funded time period for a project is called the period of performance (POP). **The continuation work must be within the scope of the original SOW/Proposal objectives.** If the District anticipates wanting to fund continuation work under the CA, they should be careful not to let the POP expire as it will end that CA. The process to award a modification includes many of the same steps as awarding a new CA (requesting SOW and budget, cost justification, etc.)

The District Tech POC must begin working with ERDC Contracting office 90 days ahead of the POP expiration date to begin the process to continue the CESU project. This process will begin when the CESU University submits to Contracting a modification (mod) proposal to the original CA requesting additional funds for follow-on work. If the District approves and has the necessary funds to cover it, the process begins to extend the POP for this CA.

Step 10. Multi-Year Proposals / Awards

A CESU university has the option of submitting a multi-year proposal. This is the preferred method. If a university wanted to submit a 3 year proposal, they would submit a technical proposal covering each proposed period of performance and separate budget for each period of performance and request a base period and options to be funded.

For example, a multi-year budget could include a base period of performance of Jan 2021 – Dec 2021 @ \$100K, Option Year 1 period of performance of Jan 2022 – Dec 2022 @ \$75K, and Option Year 2 period of performance Jan 2023 – Dec 2023 @ \$50K. Budgets can also be comprised of tasks that cover multiple years – it does not have to correspond to a calendar or fiscal year.

The District will only fund the base period at time of award. Sixty days prior to the expiration of the POP of the base period, the District will notify ERDC Contracting if they intend to exercise the Option period. The District will transfer funds in the amount to fully fund the option year and ERDC Contracting will modify the CA to exercise the option.

Contact Info:

For additional information:

ERDC CESU PM: Ms. Sherry Whitaker (601-634-2990)

ERDC DFC MIPR Support: Ms. Carolyn Pettway (601-634-3734)

Request for Statements of Interest
Funding Opportunity Announcement

Federal Awarding Agency:

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers,
Engineer Research and Development Center
3909 Halls Ferry Road
Vicksburg, MS 39180-6199

Funding Opportunity No: W81EWF-20-SOI-000X

CFDA No: 12.630

Statutory Authority: 10 USC 2358

Project Title: Project Title

Announcement Type: Initial announcement or modification of previously announced opportunity

Issue Date: 1 January 2020

Statement of Interest/Qualifications Due Date: Must be at least 30 days from issue date. Include a time and time zone

Full Application Package Due Date, if Invited: Give a reasonable time for full proposal submission. Include a time and time zone.

Estimated Award Ceiling: dollars per single award excluding any options.

Estimated Total Program Funding (optional): dollars for entire announcement (ex. Base and all options)

Expected Number of Awards: How many awards do you expect from this 1 announcement? If you want additional flexibility, state “the government may issue more than 1 award from this announcement”.

Section I: Funding Opportunity Description

Background:

Add background information.

Brief Description of Anticipated Work:

What are our objectives?

Public Benefit:

How does this benefit the public?

Section II: Award Information

Responses to this Request for Statements of Interest will be used to identify potential investigators for studies to be sponsored by the XXX District (or remove) and the Engineer Research and Development Center to provide (sentence summing up the objective). The estimated level of funding for FY20 is approximately \$XXXX. Additional funds of \$XXX/year for XX additional years may be available, providing the potential funding of \$XXXX over XX years to the successful Recipient/Awardee. Depending on findings in the early years of this effort, funding needs may increase above the anticipated \$XXXX/year in subsequent years of this project; however, total funding will not exceed \$XXXX over the life of this cooperative agreement.

Government Involvement:

How will the government be substantially involved?

Section III: Eligibility Information

1. Eligible Applicants – This opportunity is restricted to non-federal partners of the XXXX (or remove) Cooperative Ecosystems Studies Unit (CESU).
2. Cost Sharing – This action will be 100% funded by USACE.

Section IV: Application and Submission Information – Two Phase Process

Phase I: Submission of a Statement of Interest/Qualifications.

1. Materials Requested for Statement of Interest/Qualifications:
 - a. Please provide the following via e-mail attachment to: specialist@usace.army.mil
(Maximum length: 2 pages, single-spaced 12 pt. font).
 1. Name, Organization and Contact Information
 2. Brief Statement of Qualifications (including):
 - Biographical Sketch,

- Relevant past projects and clients with brief descriptions of these projects,
- Staff, faculty or students available to work on this project and their areas of expertise,
- Any brief description of capabilities to successfully complete the project you may wish to add (e.g. equipment, laboratory facilities, greenhouse facilities, field facilities, etc.).

Note: A proposed budget is NOT requested at this time.

The administrative point of contact is [Specialist, phone number; specialist@usace.army.mil](#)

2. Statement of Interest/Qualifications shall be submitted NO LATER THAN **Must be at least 30 days from issue date. Include a time and time zone. Must match cover page.**

Based on a review of the Statements of Interest received, an investigator or investigators will be invited to move to Phase II which is to prepare a full study proposal. Statements will be evaluated based on the investigator's specific experience and capabilities in areas related to the study requirements.

Phase II: Submission of a complete application package to include a full technical proposal including budget, if invited.

1. Address to Request Application Package

The complete funding opportunity announcement, application forms, and instructions are available for download at Grants.gov.

The administrative point of contact is [Specialist, phone number; specialist@usace.army.mil](#)

2. Content and Form of Application Submission

All mandatory forms and any applicable optional forms must be completed in accordance with the instructions on the forms and the additional instructions below.

- a. SF 424 R&R - Application for Federal Assistance
- b. Full Technical Proposal – Discussion of the nature and scope of the research and technical approach. Additional information on prior work in this area, descriptions of available equipment, data and facilities, and resumes of personnel who will be participating in this effort should also be included.
- c. Cost Proposal/Budget – Clear, concise, and accurate cost proposals reflect the offeror's financial plan for accomplishing the effort contained in the technical proposal. As part of its cost proposal, the offeror shall submit cost element breakdowns in sufficient detail so that a reasonableness determination can be made. The SF 424 Research & Related Budget Form can be used as a guide. The cost breakdown should include the following, if applicable:

1. Direct Labor: Direct labor should be detailed by level of effort (i.e. numbers of hours, etc.) of each labor category and the applicable labor rate. The source of labor rates shall be identified and verified. If rates are estimated, please provide the historical based used and clearly identify all escalation applied to derive the proposed rates.
2. Fringe Benefit Rates: The source of fringe benefit rate shall be identified and verified.
3. Travel: Travel costs must include a purpose and breakdown per trip to include destination, number of travelers, and duration.
4. Materials/Equipment: List all material/equipment items by type and kind with associated costs and advise if the costs are based on vendor quotes and/or engineering estimates; provide copies of vendor quotes and/or catalog pricing data.
5. Subrecipient costs: Submit all subrecipient proposals and analyses. Provide the method of selection used to determine the subrecipient.
6. Tuition: Provide details and verification for any tuition amounts proposed.
7. Indirect Costs: Currently the negotiated indirect rate for awards through the CESU is 17.5%.
8. Any other proposed costs: The source should be identified and verified.

3. Application package shall be submitted NO LATER THAN give a reasonable time for full proposal submission. Must include a time and time zone. Must match cover page.

4. Submission Instructions

Applications may be submitted by mail, e-mail, or Grants.gov. Choose ONE of the following submission methods:

- a. Mail one unbound copy of your complete proposal to:

US Army
Corps of
Engineers,
Engineer
Research and
Development
Center
Attn: Specialist
3909 Halls Ferry Road
Vicksburg, MS 39180-6199

- b. E-mail:

Format all documents to print on Letter (8 ½ x 11") paper. E-mail

proposal to specialist@usace.army.mil

c. Grants.gov: <https://www.grants.gov/>:
Applicants are not required to submit proposals through Grants.gov. However, if applications are submitted via the internet, applicants are responsible for ensuring that their Grants.gov proposal submission is received in its entirety.

All applicants choosing to use Grants.gov to submit proposals must be registered and have an account with Grants.gov. It may take up to three weeks to complete Grants.gov registration. For more information on registration, go to <https://www.grants.gov/web/grants/applicants.html>.

Section V: Application Review Information

1. **Peer or Scientific Review Criteria:** In accordance with DoDGARs 22.315(c), an impartial peer review will be conducted. Subject to funding availability, all proposals will be reviewed using the criteria listed below (technical and cost/price). All proposals will be evaluated under the following two criteria which are of descending importance.

a. **Technical (items i. and ii. are of equal importance):**

- i. Technical merits of proposed R&D.
- ii. Potential relationship of proposed R&D to DoD missions.

b. **Cost/Price:** Overall realism of the proposed costs will be evaluated.

2. Review and Selection Process

a. **Categories:** Based on the Peer or Scientific Review, proposals will be categorized as Selectable or Not Selectable (see definitions below). The selection of the source for award will be based on the Peer or Scientific Review, as well as importance to agency programs and funding availability.

i. **Selectable:** Proposals are recommended for acceptance if sufficient funding is available.

ii. **Not Selectable:** Even if sufficient funding existed, the proposal should not be funded.

Note: The Government reserves the right to award some, all, or none of proposals. When the Government elects to award only a part of a proposal, the selected part may be categorized as Selectable, though the proposal as a whole may not merit such a categorization.

b. No other criteria will be used.

c. Prior to award of a potentially successful offer, the Grants Officer will make a determination regarding price reasonableness.

Section VI: Award Administration Information

1. Award Notices

Written notice of award will be given in conjunction with issuance of a cooperative agreement signed by a Grants Officer. The cooperative agreement will contain the effective date of the agreement, the period of performance, funding information, and all terms and conditions. The recipient is required to sign and return the document before work under the agreement commences. **Work described in this announcement SHALL NOT begin without prior authorization from a Grants Officer.**

2. Administrative Requirements

The cooperative agreement issued as a result of this announcement is subject to the administrative requirements in 2 CFR Subtitle A; 2 CFR Subtitle B, Ch. XI, Part 1103; and 32 CFR Subchapter C, except Parts 32 and 33.

3. Reporting

See 2 CFR Sections 200.327 for financial reporting requirements, 200.328 for performance reporting requirements, and 200.329 for real property reporting requirements.

Section VII: Agency Contact

[Specialist](#), Grants Specialist

US Army Corps of Engineers, Engineer Research and Development Center

3909 Halls Ferry Road

Vicksburg, MS 39180-6199

specialist@usace.army.mil

Phone Number

Cooperative Agreement Authorization Document (CAAD)

CEERD-CT

Date

MEMORANDUM FOR GRANTS OFFICER

SUBJECT: Proposed Cooperative Agreement for [*short title of requirement*].

1. Synopsis of Requirement: This agreement represents an opportunity to enter into a cooperative agreement for [*Enter a brief description of general goals and objectives of the project. The Statement of Work (SOW) is not included in this section. The SOW should be included as an attachment for additional information*].
2. Public Purpose: [*State the public purpose of the requirement. What population is intended to be served? EXAMPLE - The Corps manages public land and the ORGANIZATION provides job training and education to students in natural resource management within the same community. ELABORATE HOW THE PARTNERSHIP ENTAILS A PUBLIC PURPOSE.*]
3. Method of information dissemination: [State how the results from the agreement will be transferred to the public.
4. Historical Data: [State how requirement was addressed in past, if applicable.]
5. Bona Fide Need: [Describe the bona fide need for the work in the current fiscal year/period to be included and when it is required. Is there a need to begin this research immediately/this FY? Will this work cross fiscal years? Is the work severable? Do you plan to use FY19 funds for the entire POP or do you plan to add current year funds of each project period?]
6. Statutory Authority: 10 U.S.C. 2358, Research and Development Projects
7. Applicability of Statutory Authority: [*Explain how this is research and development.*]
8. Substantial Involvement: [*State how the Government will be involved in the agreement other than providing funding and oversight. EXAMPLE – The government will provide a work site for the school to practice stewardship and ecological education and study, guidance in the form of educational presentations and review of protocols and reports, advice and final approval for restoration activities, etc.*]
9. Period of Performance: [*State the performance period of the agreement.*]
10. Competition: The rSOI will be posted to grants.gov for 30 days IAW 2 CFR 200. Only members of the XXXXXX CESU are eligible to compete.

11. Fee/Profit: Consistent with the rules applying to cooperative agreements, fee and/or profit is an unallowable charge.
12. Funding: *EXAMPLE - The funds available for this Cooperative Agreement are Army Environmental Restoration Funds and the maximum available amount is _____*
13. Recommendation: That the Grants Officer authorize development of cooperative agreement for [*short title of requirement*].

Requiring Activity

Grants Specialist

Concur

Non-concur

Office of Counsel

Approve _

Disapprove _

Grants Officer