**FY 2016 ADMINISTRATIVE STEPS FOR PROCESSING PWR CESU TASK AGREEMENTS AND MODIFICATIONS**

1. ***Start Early!*** The steps for establishing a CESU agreement, outlined below, involve multiple parties and may be very time consuming. Please allow sufficient time for working with your CESU Senior Science Advisor (SA) and add at least 45 to 60 days for agreement action processing by the San Francisco contracting office.
2. ***Contact CESU NPS Science Advisor***. At the earliest possible date, NPS program staff or the Agreement Technical Representative (ATR) notifies the CESU SA of intent to develop a new task agreement (TA) or modification (MOD) to an existing TA. For a new TA, the ATR discusses the project with the SA to make sure it is appropriate for the CESU program, including how NPS will be substantially involved in the project.
3. ***Confirm ATR Certification***. Check the [NPS National ATR Certification Database](http://wcp.den.nps.gov/Policy-Program/FedFinAssist/atrc.htm) maintained by WASO to ensure that certification is current. ATRs must have completed the 24-hour initial ATR training or 8-hour re-certification training within the last 3 years AND be registered in the national database.
4. ***Determine between Competition or Single Source (new TAs only).*** Early in the process, project staff, the ATR, and the SA should consider the appropriate way to select a recipient. Per the DOI Financial Assistance Manual (see 505 DM 2.13), competition is strongly encouraged and expected. There are regulatory time frames for posting awards on grants.gov with the minimum posting of 30 days, however , competition is not as daunting as it sounds; potential recipients can be restricted to a specific CESU network, and other eligibility considerations can be included in a Funding Opportunity Announcement. Remember, a single source justification must be compelling; if you are having trouble crafting a compelling justification, competition may be the appropriate route.
5. ***Complete the online IAGP***. For all anticipated CESU TA and MOD actions, the ATR or other project manager completes the required Individual Agreement Plan (IAGP) on the [PWR Contracting SharePoint Site](http://share.inside.nps.gov/sites/PWR/pwrcontracting/SitePages/Home.aspx), identifying PWRO-San Francisco as the Major Buying Office (MABO). The MABO Lead reviews and assigns the action to an Agreements Specialist/Officer. In the IAGP, for new non-competitive Single Source TAs exceeding $25K, please be sure to provide a thorough response for the single source justification question, which can later be used in the “Notice of Intent (NOI)” document (see below). Please DO NOT attach draft TAs or MODs to the IAGP or mark the IAGP “ready for review”; these will be done later by the CESU Program Assistant.
6. ***Announce Funding Opportunity (new competitive TAs only).***If a Task Agreement is competed, a Funding Opportunity Announcement (FOA) and an Evaluation and Selection Plan must be completed by the ATR and SA, with final approval from the Agreements Officer. Following approval, the Agreements Specialist/Officer will then post the FOA to grants.gov, at which point potential recipients will submit proposals. As outlined in the Evaluation and Selection Plan and once the submission deadline has passed, the ATR will convene a panel of subject-matter experts to evaluate and rank the proposals. Once a selection has been made, the Agreements Officer will notify the successful and unsuccessful applicants in writing. Following the notice, the ATR and SA will begin to draft the Task Agreement.
7. ***Obtain TA, MOD and NOI templates***. Templates can be obtained from the SA or the [PWR CESU SharePoint site](http://share.inside.nps.gov/sites/PWR/PWRCoopecostudyunit/default.aspx). Please do not use previous years’ TA or MOD templates, as there are substantial changes to templates each year.
8. ***Prepare Draft Documents****.*
9. ***Task Agreement***. For new TAs, the ATR uses the current CESU TA template and drafts the TA with help from the cooperating principal investigator (PI). The maximum life span of any TA is 5 years from its effective start date. Please be mindful of expiration dates for funds—we don’t want to risk letting money expire before recipients can draw down the funds.
10. ***Notice of Intent (only for new, non-competitive TAs exceeding $25K)***. The ATR and SA prepare the initial draft using the NOI template. The draft NOI will be included in the TA package submitted to Contracting in Step 11 (below). The assigned Agreement Specialist may ask for revisions before finalizing the NOI and posting it to Grants.gov for transparency purposes in Step 12 (below).
11. ***Modification to Existing TA***. The ATR uses the current MOD template to prepare a draft modification with input from the PI. For MODs that add new funds to the TA, the MOD must contain an itemized budget (with a 17.5% indirect cost rate) for those new funds only. MODs may also be used to extend the project end date, change the ATR, or to change any other terms and conditions, provided such modifications are allowable, per regulations.
12. ***Obtain CESU SA Review***. The SA reviews the draft TA and NOI, or MOD and may make edits or suggest changes to improve the documents. The SA and ATR communicate back and forth until both parties approve the documents.
13. ***Initiate University Internal Review Process***. ATR works with university PI to ensure that the initial departmental proposal and budget review is completed at the time the draft TA or MOD package is submitted to the CESU SA for approval. *The university does not sign the TA/MOD at this time***—**the final TA or MOD will be prepared for signature and transmitted directly to the university by the NPS PWR Contracting Office as part of Step 12 (below). ***CESU Approval.*** Once the draft TA or MOD is agreed to by all parties, the SA sends an approval email to Linda Whitson (PWR CESU Program Assistant) with the approved draft TA and NOI, or MOD attached. The SA also copies the ATR and informs her/him whether a purchase request (PR) is required. A PR is required for every TA or MOD that adds, removes, or otherwise changes the project funding. A PR is not needed for a no-cost MOD that does *not* affect project funding. For a no-cost MOD, the CESU SA adds “No PR Required” to the subject of the approval email, which notifies Linda Whitson to proceed to Step 13 (below). Note: In order to meet PWR fiscal year cooperative agreement cut-off dates, the SA may ask the ATR to submit PR forms to Linda Whitson prior to final approval of TAs & cost MODs.  For such actions, the SAs and Linda will coordinate closely so account numbers and funding amounts are consistent across all documents.
14. ***Create Purchase Request (only TAs or MODs that affect funding)***. Upon receiving CESU SA direction, the ATR completes a [PR form](http://inpniscsfern2:7000/sites/WASO/FBMSPMO/FBMS%20Forms/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=/sites/WASO/FBMSPMO/FBMS%20Forms/Acquisition/PR%20Form%20Documents) (PDF document available on the NPS FBMS Program Management Office SharePoint site) for the amount of funds in the TA or MOD and emails the PR form to LindaWhitson. Include the IAGP ID in the “PR Header Text” section of the PR. Linda is the FBMS Requisitioner for the PWR CESUs and will use the information on the submitted PR form to create the FBMS PR.
15. ***Action Forwarded to San Francisco Contracting Office***. Linda assigns the DUNS # and reviews the CESU-approved TA or MOD that was emailed to her by the SA. She makes additional changes if needed and attaches her final version to the IAGP. This action triggers a notification email to the assigned Agreement Specialist(s). Linda notifies the SA and ATR when the action is forwarded to San Francisco for final processing. Her email will include both the PR number and IAGP ID for reference, and an updated copy of the TA or MOD if additional edits were made.
16. ***Action Finalized by San Francisco Contracting Office and University***. The PR package is reviewed by the assigned Agreements Specialist, who edits and finalizes the TA and NOI, or MOD. The Agreements Specialist may contact the ATR for revisions to these documents. The Agreements Specialist posts the NOI to Grants.gov and creates the award document in FBMS, which assigns the TA number. The ATR and CESU SA are copied when the TA or MOD is emailed to the university sponsored projects office for signature. The signature page of the TA or MOD is signed first by the university, then by the NPS. The Agreement Specialist obligates the funding in FBMS and emails a PDF of the fully executed TA or MOD to the ATR and the CESU SA. **Note: The PWRO-San Francisco Contracting office requires a 45-60 days turn-around for processing actions in Step 14.**

**Pacific West Region Contracting and CESU Web Resources**:

PWR Contracting SharePoint site: <http://share.inside.nps.gov/sites/PWR/pwrcontracting/SitePages/Home.aspx>

PWR CESU SharePoint Site: <http://share.inside.nps.gov/sites/PWR/PWRCoopecostudyunit/default.aspx>

WASO ATR Database: <http://wcp.den.nps.gov/Policy-Program/FedFinAssist/atrc.htm>

Key to Acronyms:

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| ATR | Agreement Technical Representative | NOI | Notice of Intent |
| CESU | Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Unit | NPS | National Park Service |
| FBMS | Financial and Business Management System | PI | Principal Investigator |
| FOA | Funding Opportunity Announcement | PR | Purchase Request |
| IAGP | Individual Agreement Plan | PWR | Pacific West Region |
| MABO | Major Acquisition Buying Office | SA | Senior Science Advisor & CESU Coordinator |
| MOD | Modification (to a Task Agreement) | TA | Task Agreement |