

Part 606 – Working Agreements

Subpart A – General Information

606.0 Definition

Working agreements are a basis of understanding for cooperative work with other agencies and organizations. These agreements include memoranda of understanding (MOUs) and reimbursable agreements. NRCS or any public agency may initiate working agreements relating to soil survey and ecological site activities. If another Federal agency initiates a working agreement, the name of the document and the format may be different from those used by NRCS. Cooperators operate within their own sphere of authority. Title 120, General Manual, Part 401, provides policy guidelines on agreements. An MOU is not a contract, and the plans and specifications agreed upon and contained therein are not legally binding for the agencies that sign it. The MOU may provide for other working agreements, such as cooperative agreements or interagency agreements, for transfer of funds, services, space, or equipment.

606.0 Policy and Responsibilities

- A. Soil survey and ecological site inventory projects will reference working agreements whenever substantial involvement from a cooperator is required. This includes, but is not limited to:
 - (1) Initial soil survey projects.
 - (2) Field-oriented soil survey and ecological site projects on Federal lands.
 - (3) Sponsored soil survey and ecological site projects with financial assistance, or in-kind contributions.
- B. MOUs record the intent of collaboration between NRCS and one or more cooperators on making and updating soil survey and ecological site information as outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations Section 611.10.
- C. Reimbursable agreements may be initiated to direct funds to soil survey, ecological site inventory, or other projects. When NRCS is to receive outside funds, services, or office space, the director of the Soil and Plant Science Division ensures the preparation of a reimbursable agreement. Common types of reimbursable agreements include:
 - (1) Interagency agreements between Federal agencies if program funding authority for each agency provides specific authority.
 - (2) Cooperative agreements between NRCS and states, counties, soil conservation districts, tribal governments, Cooperative Ecosystem Studies Units (CESU), planning agencies, other local government units, or non-governmental organizations (NGO) if program funding authority for each agency provides specific authority.
- D. A Statement of Commitment (see part 606B for template) will be prepared for all soil survey and ecological site inventory projects on Federal lands and/or requiring significant interagency cooperation (and not otherwise directed by a reimbursable agreement). The Statement of Commitment identifies agreed to items and points-of-contact on active cooperative projects.

E. Other Documents Required for Planning and Managing Soil Survey Projects

(1) Soil survey offices are required to have—

- (i) Soil survey and ecological site inventory project plans prepared, reviewed, and approved in accordance with administrative guidance. These plans describe the work to be accomplished in addressing priority needs through the duration of the project.
- (ii) A long-range plan. This plan describes what is needed throughout the assigned area to address soil survey needs and bring all previous work up to a common, modern standard. The highest priority needs are identified and used to develop specific project plans.
- (iii) An annual plan of operations.

(2) See parts 608 and 610 of this handbook for additional information about these documents.

F. MOUs of national scope reference a Statement of Commitment (see part 606B for template) to document more unique details and technical specifications for specific soil survey and ecological site inventory projects. In circumstances where a national MOU cannot be referenced, a regional MOU may be formed that reference a Statement of Commitment.