

Economic Research Service – Agreements Information Management System (ERS-AIMS)

Instruction Manual



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Economic Research Service – Agreements Information Management System (ERS-AIMS)

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Introduction

The Agricultural Research Information System (ARIS) is the key program management information system for the Agricultural Research Service (ARS). The system is a project documentation and retrieval system, containing information on all in-house research as well as all extramural research and projects in cooperation and collaboration with outside institutions. There are numerous subsystems within ARIS that are used throughout the Research Education and Economic (REE) Agencies. The Economic Research Service Agreements Information Management System (ERS-AIMS) is one of these subsystems. The ERS-AIMS is used to produce the agreement award package and to serve as a management tool for the extramural agreement specialists.

ERS-AIMS is a secure system, therefore a User ID and password is required to access the system from your office and/or offsite.

ERS-AIMS Symbols and Features

The following symbols and features are used throughout ERS-AIMS on the tool bar as well as on the search screen, and data input screens. They are all uniform in functionality throughout the system.

* Indicates a required field.



Indicates a List of Values (LOV) is available for the field. The LOV can be queried for the appropriate value.



Indicates a LOV is available for the field. The list contains all the available values for the field and **must** be used to select the appropriate value.



Tabs

Tabs allow you to select different data screens within a selected (highlighted) project to enter data or view project information. Tabs are available in “Work,” “Status,” and “Active” data, search, and report screens.

Copy, Cut, Paste

These buttons are located on the Tool bar throughout ARIS and work the same in ARIS as in any other Windows-based program; because a separate window opens when entering or editing an abstract or interpretive summary, you must use the keyboard to cut (Control (Ctrl) X), copy (Ctrl C), paste (Ctrl V), to perform these functions. **Note: It is always preferable to use Ctrl C/X/V.**



Add Button

The “**Add**” button is available throughout ERS-AIMS to enter data. When an “**Add**” button is displayed, click the button to display a blank data entry line and activate the “?” to search the LOV for the data to enter. If needed, click the “**Add**” button again to add another blank data line and search the LOV for additional data. **Note: Do not click the “Add” button after completing the last data entry line. ERS-AIMS will add another blank data line and you will have to delete this blank data line before continuing to the next data entry screen.**



Save

Use this button to save any changes at anytime.

**Exit Screen**

Use this button to exit the current screen.

**Editor Box**

Opens an editor box for easier viewing or editing text in a field without having to use the horizontal scroll bars.

**Print Screen**

Prints the current screen.

**Clear Search**

Clears the current search criteria.

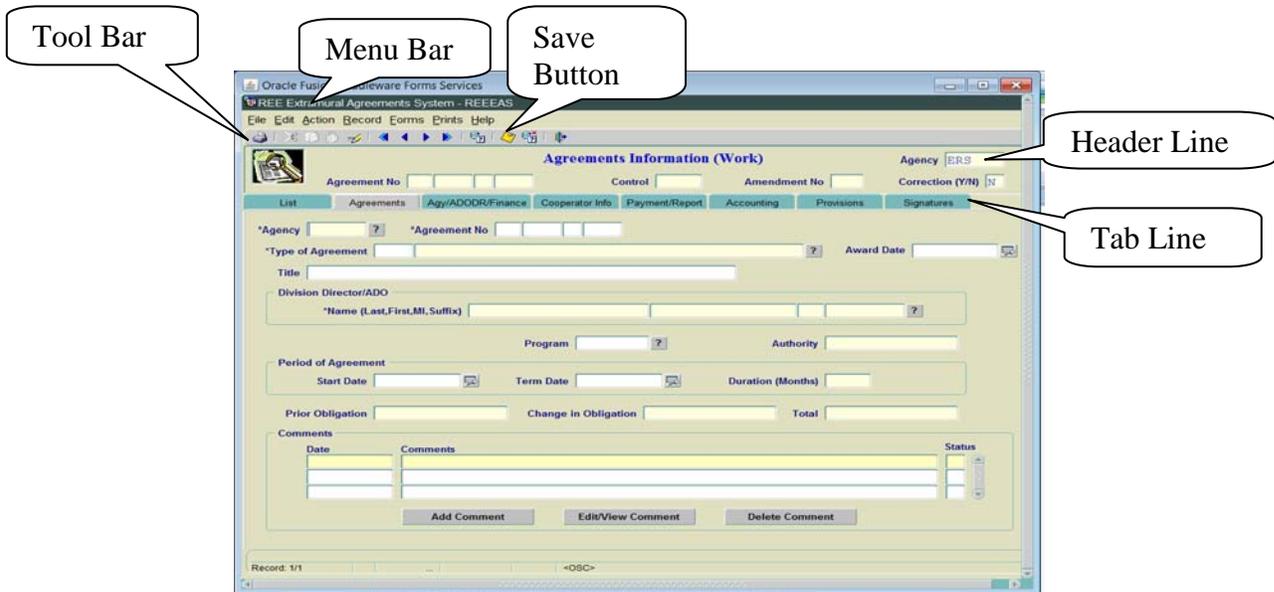
Search Symbols

The following table lists and describes the symbols used to search in ERS-AIMS. Searching capabilities are available in all fields on the search screens, and LOVs are available wherever there is a “?” next to the field data entry box.

Search Symbol	Meaning and Use
: (colon)	Range/Between: Used as a separator between the start and end values in a range. Can be used for all data types, including dates. (Example - 10/1/11:9/30/12 retrieves all records with values on or between the two dates)
; (semicolon)	Or: Used as a separator in a list of search items in a single line, i.e. potato;tomato. Retrieves all records with potato or tomato. Note: A line cannot end with a semicolon, i.e. tomato;potato;
! (exclamation point)	But Not: Used to narrow search criteria, i.e. A:X!E;U searches queries for all projects A (active) through X (expired), but not E (terminated) or U (unfunded). Note: Cannot be used in every searchable field.

Search Symbol	Meaning and Use
<p>% (percent)</p> <p>Note: It is always preferable to use the % at the end of every search string.</p>	<p>Used as a “wildcard” to broaden search criteria. The % is used before, after, or before and after the search string.</p> <p>The search for “germ%” retrieves all documents that contain “germ” as the first 4 letters in any word, i.e. germplasm, germination, and germicide, etc.</p> <p>The search for “%type” retrieves all documents that contain “type” as the last 4 letters in any word in the document, i.e. phenotype, genotype, type.</p> <p>The search for %plasm% retrieves all documents that contain the letters “plasm” in any word, i.e germplasm or plasma.</p> <p>The search for %biological%control% retrieves all documents that contain the word “biological” and the word “control” in any order, i.e biological control of plant diseases, biologically-based disease control, etc.</p> <p>The search for %biological control% retrieves only documents that contain the string “biological control”.</p>

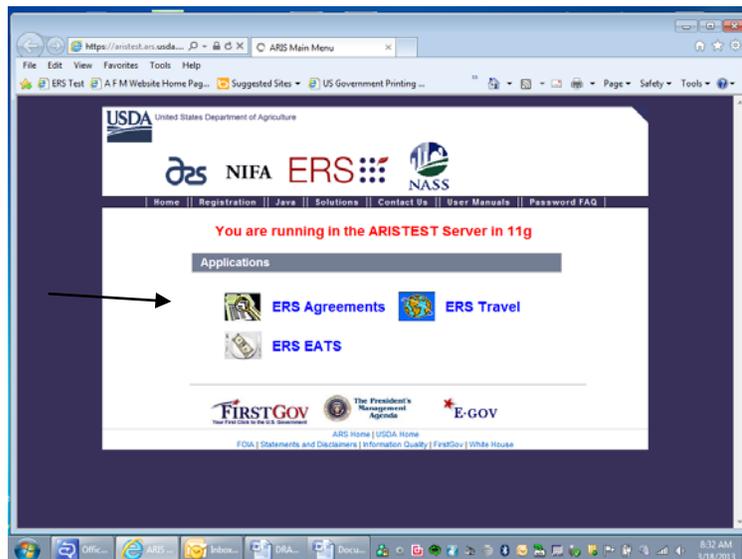
Menu Bar and Tool Bar



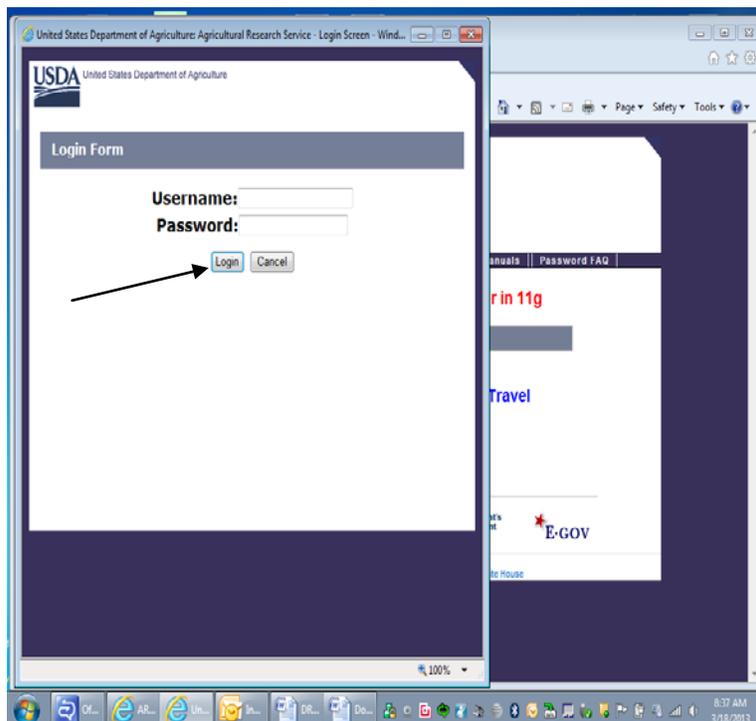
There is usually more than one way to perform an action in ERS-AIMS. In many cases, the menu bar and tool bar have options that will perform the same functions. **Note:** Throughout ERS-AIMS the menu and tool bars are available.

How to Log Into ERS-AIMS

To enter a new agreement, review or approve an agreement, click the “ERS Agreements” icon on the Main Menu.

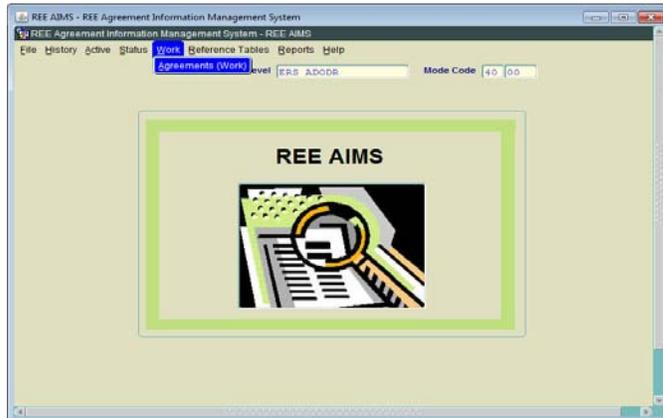


Enter your Username and Password and click Login.



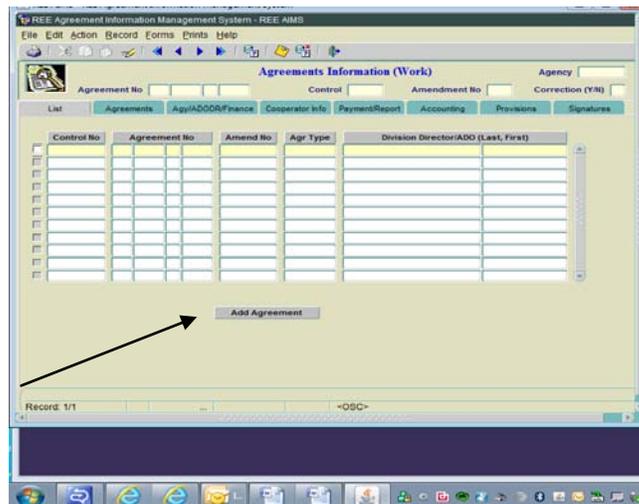
Entering a New ERS Project

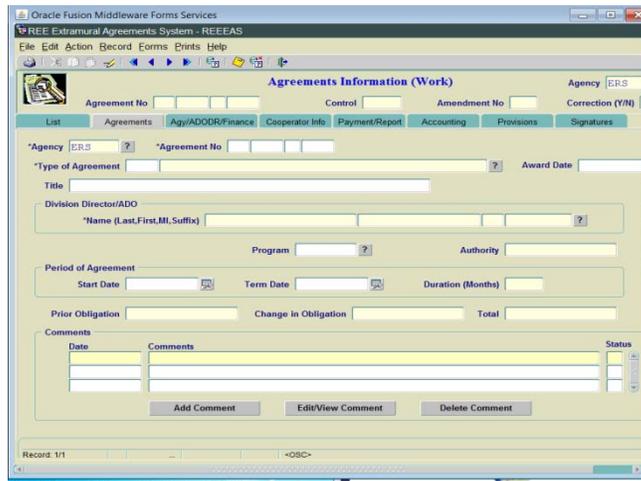
To enter a new project, click “**Work**” from the “**REE AIMS**” screen Menu Bar. A drop-down menu will display.



From the “**Work**” list, click “**Agreements (Work)**” to display the ERS Agreements List screen.

Records that are currently in the ERS Work file for the Division Code of the ERS personnel that logged in will be listed. To add a new project, click the “**Add Agreement**” button at the bottom of the screen and a blank “**ERS Agreements**” screen will be displayed.

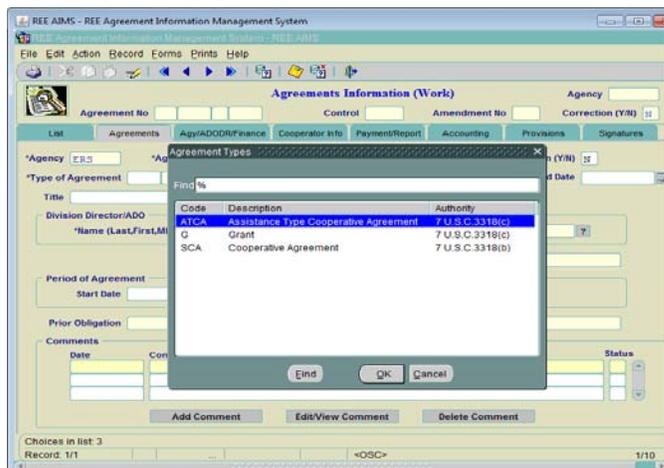




Enter all the project information on the “Agreements” Tab starting with the agreements number. Enter the information in the data entry area, not in the “Header” line. List of Values (LOVs “▼”) and search capabilities (“?”) are available wherever you see these symbols. The “?” on the search screen indicates either a searchable LOV or a selection LOV. The searchable LOV contains all the available data for that field.

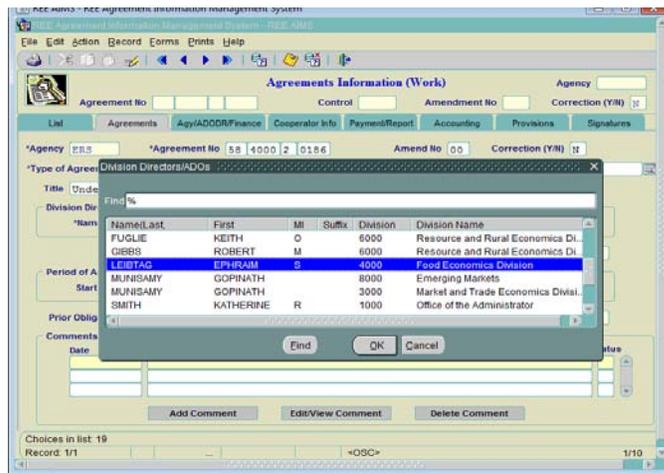
In the LOV search screen, the % acts as a “wildcard” and as a column separator. It is not necessary to use the % if you are searching the first column. However, if searching other columns, you should always use the % before and after the data.

- *Agreement Number:* Enter Agreement Number. The Agreement Number must be obtained from EAD by sending an e-mail to Deborah.Watson@ARS.USDA.GOV and cc: ERS-AgreementsHelp@ARS.USDA.GOV with the following information:
 - Cooperator’s Information: Institution, address, phone, fax, and email addresses
 - Division: ex – FED-4000, MTED-3000, RRED-6000, FANRP-5000
 - The amount of the agreement.
 - Type of agreement: ATCA, Grant, SCA
- *Type of Agreement:* : click the “?” and choose from the LOV - ATCA - Assistance Type Cooperative Agreement; SCA- Cooperative Agreement; or G-Grant;



- *Award Date:* Should be left blank until the agreement is officially awarded. After signature, click on the calendar and select date signed.

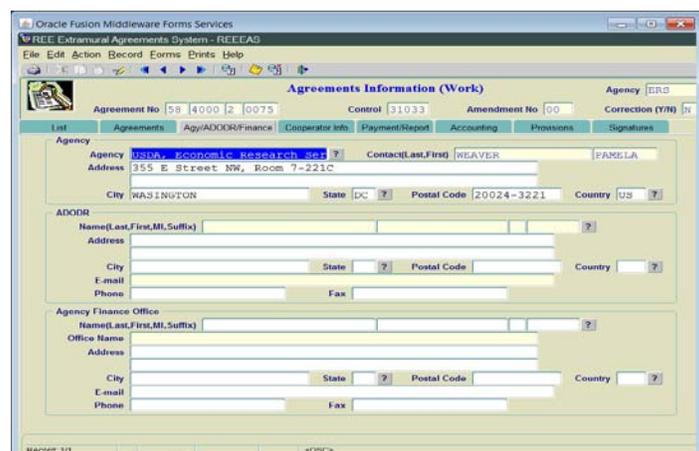
- *Title:* Is the title of the agreement.
- *Division Director/ADO:* Select the Division Director by clicking the “?” and choosing from the LOV



- *Start Date:* Should be left blank until the agreement is signed. After signature, click on the calendar and select date signed.
- *Term Date:* Click on the calendar and select proposed end date of award.
- *Comments:* (if applicable): Any comments typed in the Comments field will print on Page 2 of the REE-451.

Note: When entering a new project, ERS-AIMS does not prompt you to save as you move from the List Screen to the next screen. However, after moving from the initial List Screen, ERS-AIMS will prompt you each time you move to another screen. In addition, if you have to go back to the Project Info screen to make modifications, ERS-AIMS will then prompt you to save. You can always click the “Disk” icon on the Tool Bar to save the data at any anytime.

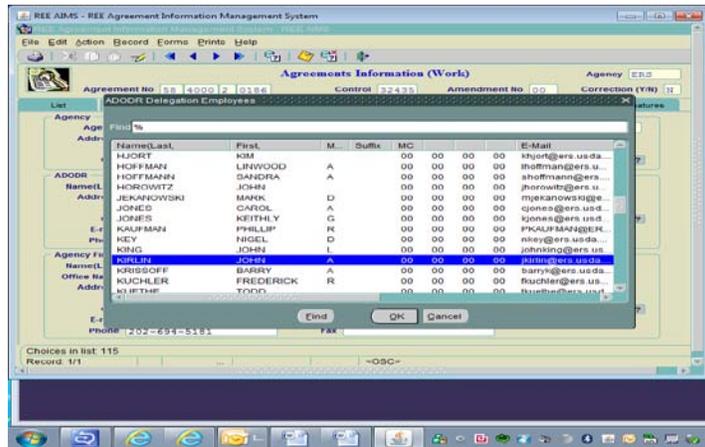
When data entry on the “Agreements” screen is complete, click the “Ag/ADODR/Finance” Tab



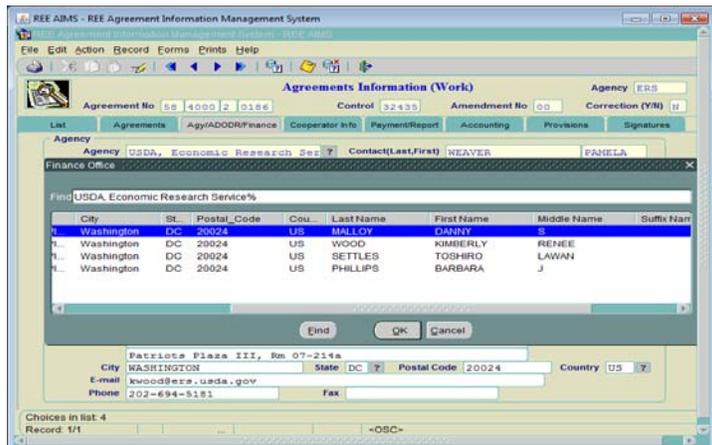
Enter all the project information on the “Ag/ADODR/Finance” Tab starting with the Agency Contact Person. Search capabilities (“?”) are available wherever you see these symbols.

- *Agency Contact:* The Agency Contact will auto-populate in for you.

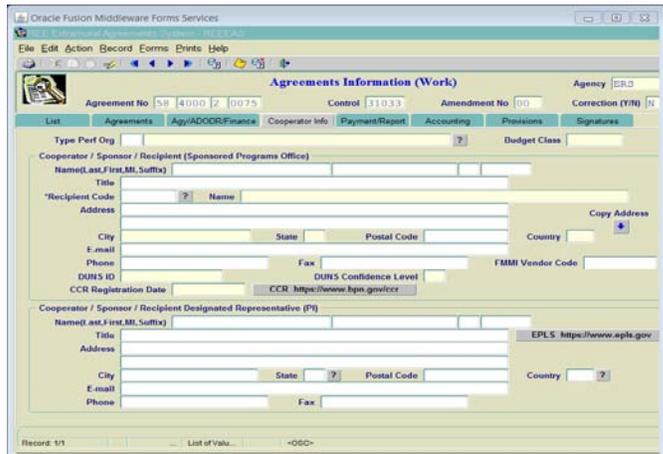
- *ADODR*: Select the ADODR by clicking the “?” and choosing from the LOV.



- *Agency Finance Office*: Select the Agency Finance Office by clicking the “?” and choosing from the LOV.

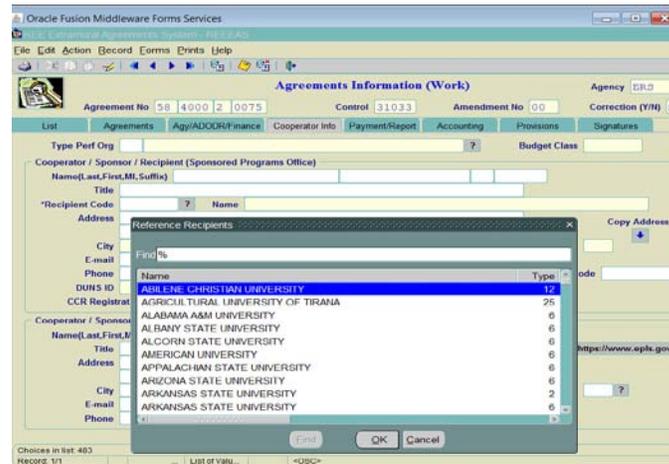


When all data is entered, proceed to the **Cooperator Info** screen by clicking on the “Cooperator Info” tab



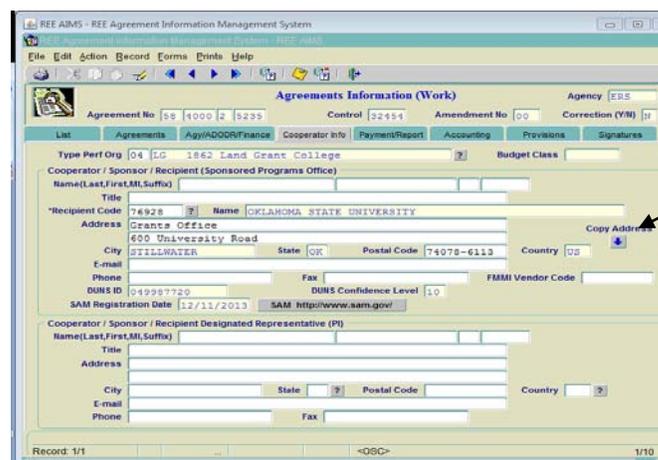
Enter the following Cooperator information:

- *Type of Performing Organization*: Select an Organization type by clicking the “?” and choose from the LOV.
- *Cooperator/Sponsor/Recipient Code (C/S/R)*: Select a recipient code by clicking the “?”. In the **Find** field, enter all or part of the recipient’s name with a “%” before and after (e.g. %University %) and click the “Find” button. Highlight the appropriate recipient and click “OK.” Complete the address information for the recipient.



If the C/S/R is not in the table, email a request for a new C/S/R code to: ERS-Agreements_HELP@ARS.USDA.GOV and include the following information:

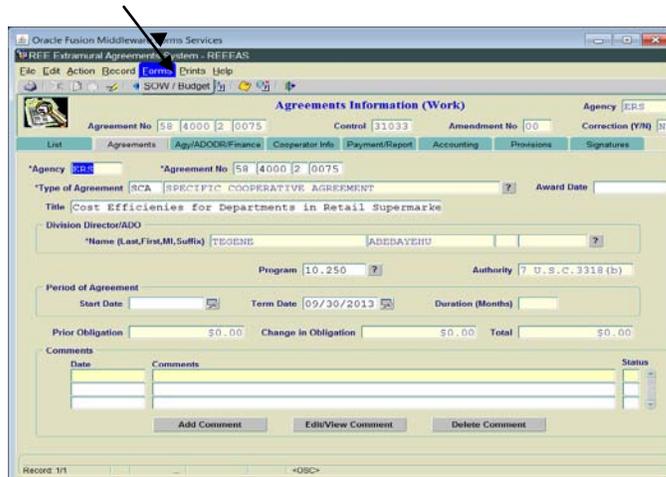
- Cooperator/Sponsor/Recipient Name
 - Type of Performing Organization
 - City, State, and Zip Code (9 digits required)
 - DUNS Number (not applicable on awards with individuals)
- Use the Copy Address (↓) to copy the address from the C/S/R to the C/S/R Designated Representative (PI) box if the addresses are the same.



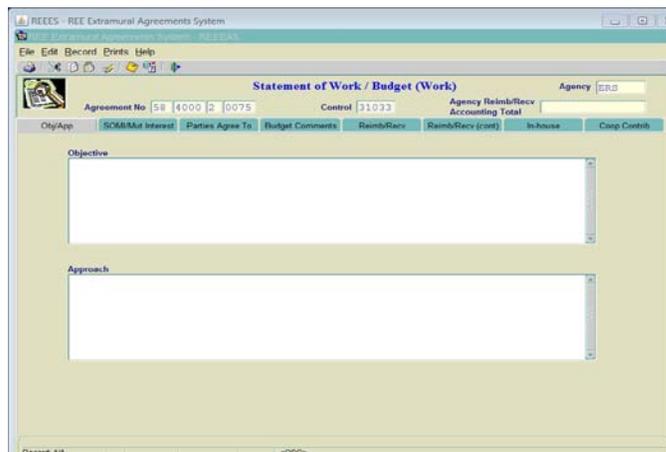
- *FMMI Vendor Code*: Enter the FMMI Vendor Code for Cooperator.

When the data entry has been completed on the **Cooperator Info** screen, the next step in the data entry process is to add the Statement of Work, the Budget, and the REE-451 information.

From the current screen or any screen in the agreement, proceed to the SOW/Budget entry by clicking “**Forms**” and “**SOW/Budget**” from the Menu Bar.



Statement of Work / Budget (Work)



Type and or paste the following information under the following tabs:

- **Obj/App** – Objective and Approach
- **SOM/Mu Interest** – Statement of Mutual Interest and Mutual Agreements

Any Mutual Agreements entered on this screen in the “**Mutual Agreements**” field will be preceded by the following paragraphs on the REE-451:

- **Paragraph 1** - Estimated Budget
- **Paragraph 2** - Payment Type
- **Paragraph 3** - Applicable Provisions
- **Paragraph 4** - Correspondence Instructions (Agreement Number)
- **Paragraph 5** - Correspondence Instructions (ADO Address Information)

- **Parties Agrees To** – Cooperator Agrees to: and Agency Agrees to:

When data entry is complete, click the “**Parties Agree To**” tab to proceed to the “**Parties Agree To**” portion of the SOW.

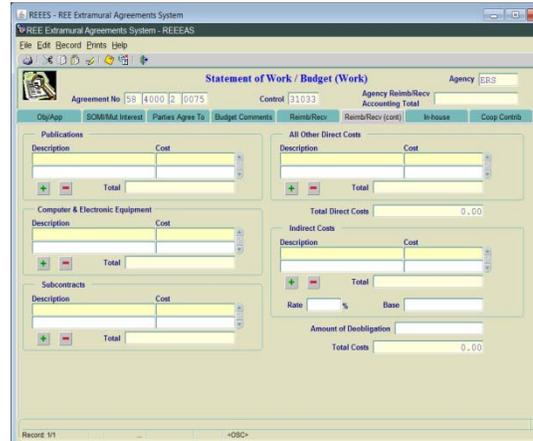
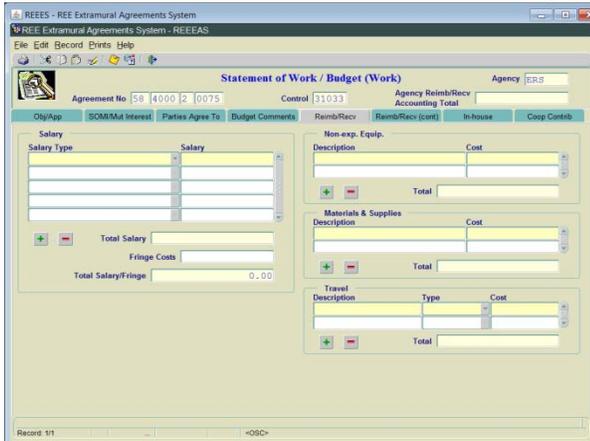
For Grants and ACTAs:

- Type/paste the proposed work to be accomplished or completed by the Recipient.

For SCAs,

- Type/paste in the Cooperator/Recipient/Sponsor’s responsibilities.
- Type/paste in ERS’ responsibilities.

When data entry is complete, proceed to the Budget screens by clicking the “**Reimb/Recv**” tab.

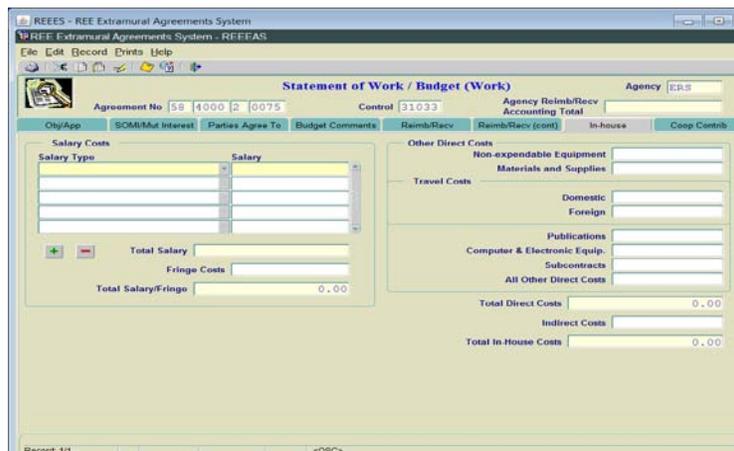


The ERS to Reimburse or Receive budget information is captured on two (2) tabs.

For SCAs, Grants, and ATCAs:

- Enter the budget information as applicable.
- Click “calculate” to total categories.
- All fields with a dollar amount must have a description.
- Type of travel (Domestic or Foreign) must be identified.
- Verify that the budget’s total and proposed amounts match.

Proceed to the “**In-house**” budget information, by clicking the “In-house” tab



For SCAs:

- Enter the budget information as applicable.
- Provide cumulative totals in all categories, except salaries. All salary costs must be itemized.

Proceed to the “Coop Contributes” screens, by clicking the “Coop Contrib” tab

The screenshot shows the 'Statement of Work / Budget (Work)' screen in the REEAS system. The 'Coop Contrib' tab is active. The screen is divided into several sections: 'Salary Costs' with a table for 'Salary Type' and 'Salary', 'Other Direct Costs' with sub-sections for 'Non-expendable Equipment', 'Materials and Supplies', 'Travel' (with 'Description', 'Type', and 'Cost' columns), 'Publications', 'Computer & Electronic Equip.', 'Subcontracts', and 'All Other Direct Costs'. At the bottom, there are summary fields for 'Total Direct Costs', 'Indirect Costs', 'Less Residual Funds', and 'Total Coop. Costs'. The status bar at the bottom indicates 'Record: 1/1'.

- Enter the Cooperator contributions and indirect cost rate information as applicable.
- All descriptions must be complete.
- Type of travel (Domestic or Foreign) must be identified.

Data entry of the SOW and Budget are now complete.

Save your record by clicking “Save” from the toolbar, or “Record” and “Save” from the menu bar.

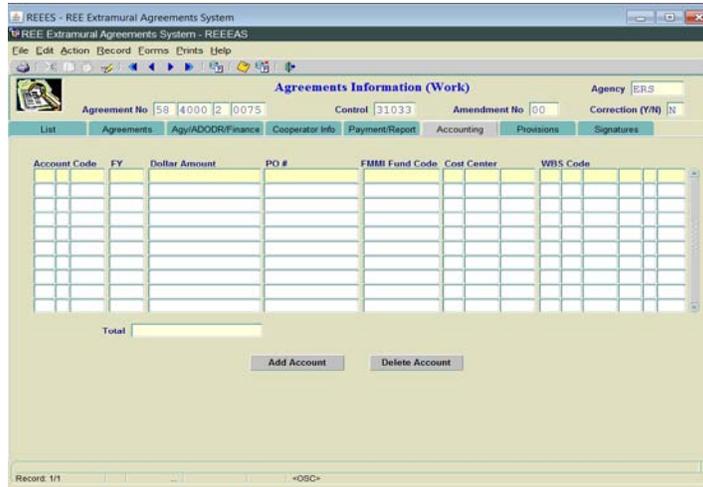
Click the “Exit” icon once from the tool bar to return to the Agreements screens in ERS-Agreements.

Proceed to the Payment/Report screen by clicking the “Payment/Report” tab.

The screenshot shows the 'Agreements Information (Work)' screen in the REEAS system. The 'Payment/Report' tab is active. The screen contains several sections: 'Payment' with checkboxes for 'Agency Receives Funds', 'Pre-Award Costs Authorized', 'Treasury Check / EFT', and 'Advance Payment Authorized'; 'Performance Report' with radio buttons for 'Quarterly', 'Semi-annual', 'Annual', and 'Final'; 'Financial Report' with radio buttons for 'Quarterly', 'Semi-annual', 'Annual', and 'Final'; 'Report of Inventions and Subcontracts' with a checkbox for 'Report of Inventions and Subcontracts via iEdison Web Interface at http://www.iEdison.gov'; and 'Forward Reports To:' with checkboxes for 'ADOUR', 'Sponsoring Organization', and 'ADO'. At the bottom, there are 'FIPS Codes' fields for 'City', 'County', 'State', and 'Congressional District'. The status bar at the bottom indicates 'Record: 1/1'.

- ERS-AIMS will automatically check the appropriate box on the Payment/Report tab.
- The “Payment/Report” section can be modified if necessary.
- Modify the Payment/Report section as necessary.

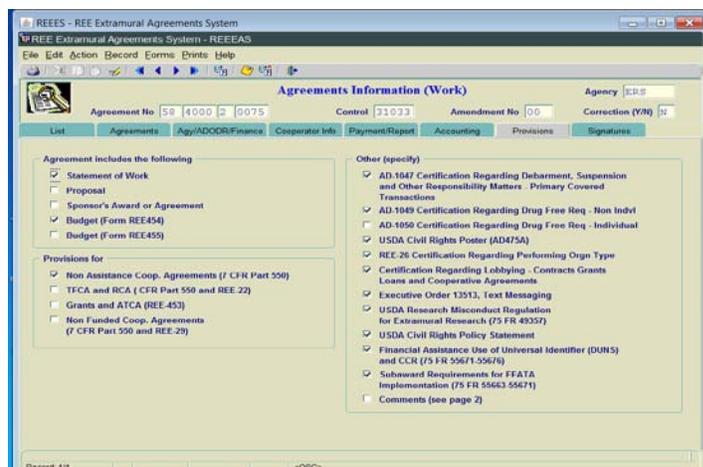
When data entry on the Payment/Report screen is complete, proceed to the “Accounting” tab.



On the “Accounting” tab Enter the following:

- Accounting Code(s)
- Fiscal Year
- Dollar amount
 - Note: The Dollar amount must match the “Total Costs” under the “Reimb/Rec (cont)” tab
- PO# (To be inputted by Budget)
- FMMI Fund Code (To be inputted by Budget)
- Cost Center (To be inputted by Budget)
- WBS Code (To be inputted by Budget)

When data entry is complete, proceed to the Provisions screen by clicking the “Provisions” tab.

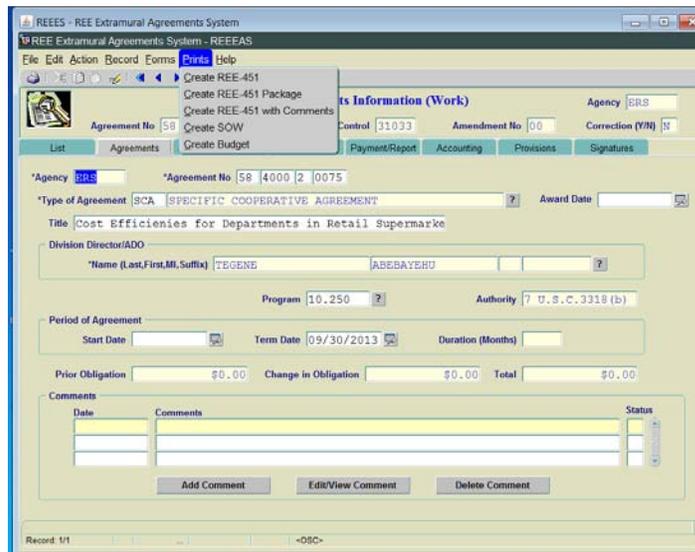


ERS-AIMS will automatically check the appropriate boxes on the Provisions tab based on the type of Agreement selected on the “Agreements” tab.

- The “**Provisions**” section can be modified if necessary.
- Modify the Provisions section as necessary.

Printing

From the “**List**” screen or in the agreement click “**Prints**” and a list of options will be displayed.



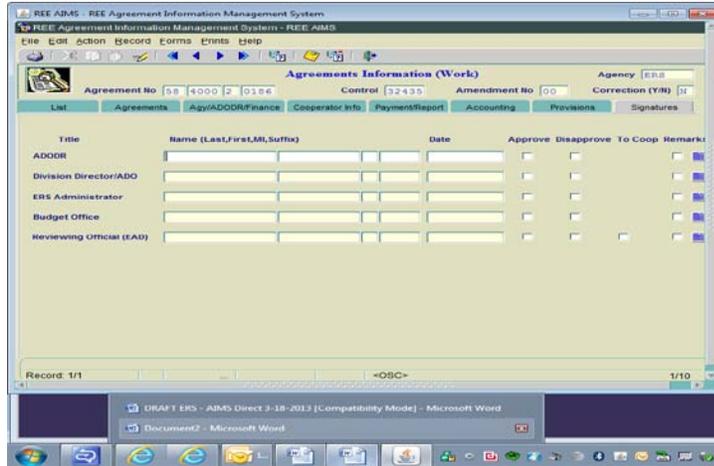
Select the option you would like. Once your selection is made, Adobe Acrobat opens and displays the print file. To print, click the “**Print**” icon on the Tool Bar or click “**File**” and “**Print**” on the Menu Bar.

Listed below is a description of each print option:

ERS -AIMS Agreement Information:	
▪ REE-451	REE-451 only (2 Pages)
▪ REE-451 Package	REE-451 Package (SOW, Budget, 451, and all forms marked on the 451)
▪ REE 451 with Comments	REE-451 with Comments only
▪ Create SOW	Statement of Work only
▪ Create Budget	Budget page only (REE-454 or 455) and budget narrative. The Budget narrative provides an itemized description by category and corresponds to the REE budget form.

Approving ERS-AIMS Records

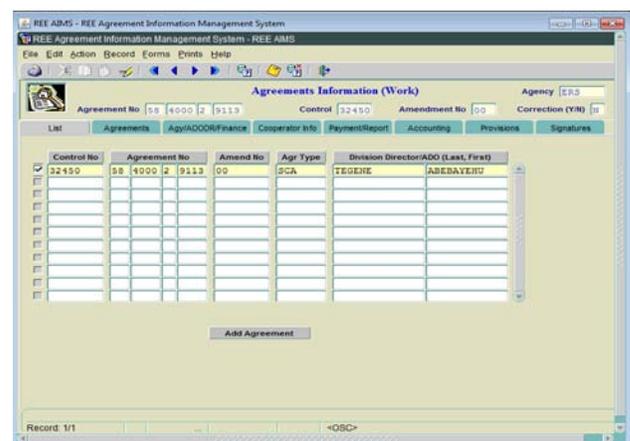
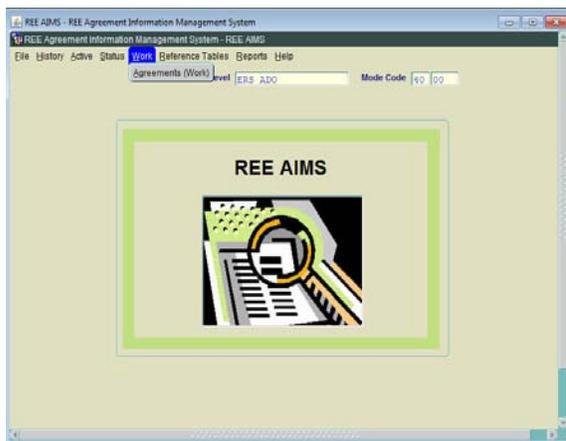
The next step, once the project has been entered into ERS-AIMS the next step is to have the agreement approved by the ADODR. The ADODR will need to approve the agreement by selecting the “**Signature**” tab while in the agreement or by selecting the agreement from the Work file List screen, and marking the project to be approved, then click the “**Signatures**” tab. The Signature screen will be displayed.

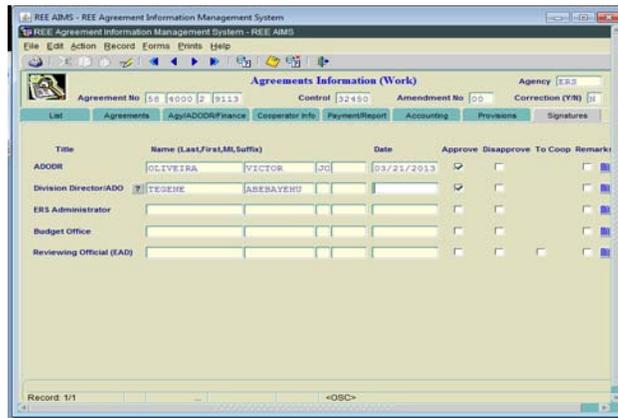


- The ADODR’s Name from the “**AGY/ADODR/Finance**” tab will autopopulate into the signature block. To approve the agreement select the “**Approve**” box, save, and the current date will autopopulate. After approving, click the “**List**” tab and the project will no longer be in their work file.
- The record will now move to the work file of the next level which is the ADO listed on the “**Agreements**” tab for approval.

ADO Approval

- The ADO will need to access the agreement to be approved from the Work file List screen and mark the project to be approved and click the “**Signatures**” tab. The Signature screen will be displayed.

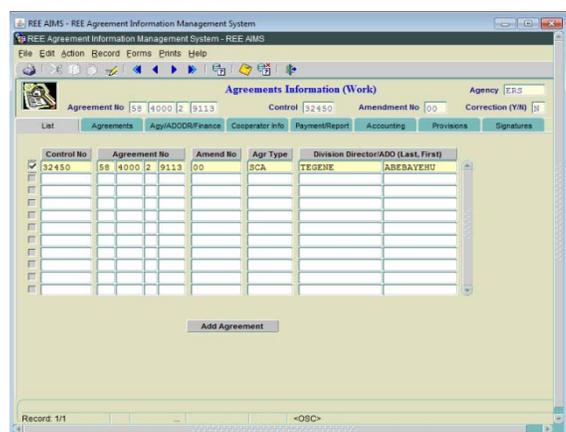
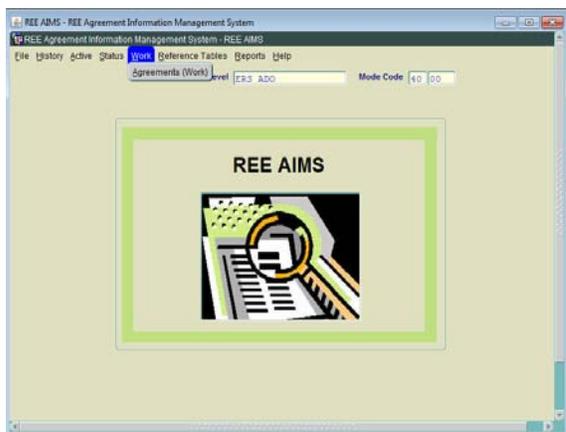


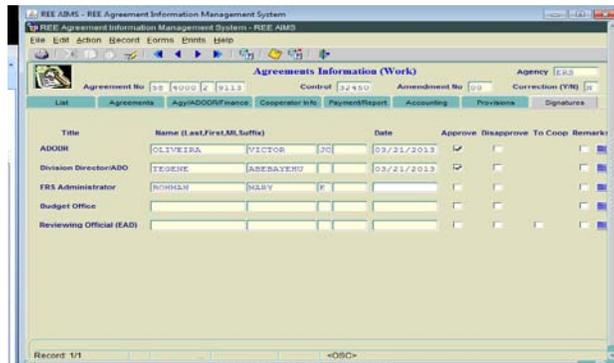


- The ADO/Division Director’s Name selected from the “**Agreements**” tab autopopulates into the signature block. To approve the agreement select the “**Approve**” box, click save and the current date will autopopulate. After approving click the “**List**” tab and the project will no longer be in your work file.
- The record will now move to the work file of the next level based on the total amount of the agreement.
- If the agreement is less than \$100,000 the record will move to the Budget Office work file and is not required to be approved by the ERS Administrator.
- If the agreement total is greater than \$100,000 the record will move to the ERS Administrator’s work file for approval.

ERS Administrator Approval

- The ERS Administrator will need to access the agreement to be approved from the Work file List screen mark the project to be approved and click the “**Signatures**” tab. The Signature screen will be displayed.

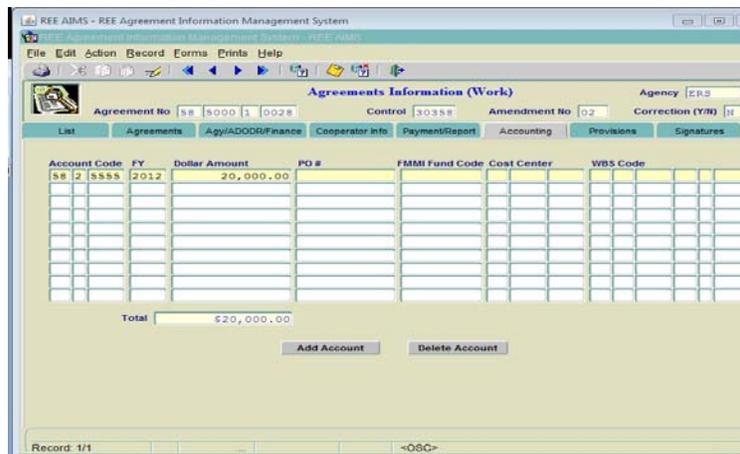
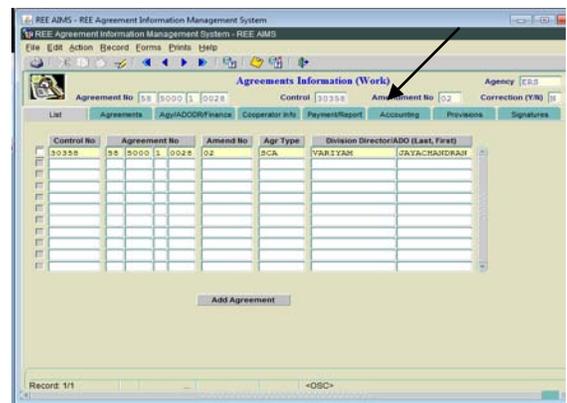




- To approve the agreement select the “**Approve**” box, click save and the current date will autopopulate. After approving click the “**List**” tab and the project will no longer be in the ERS Administrator’s work file.
- The record will now move to the work file of the Budget Office work file.

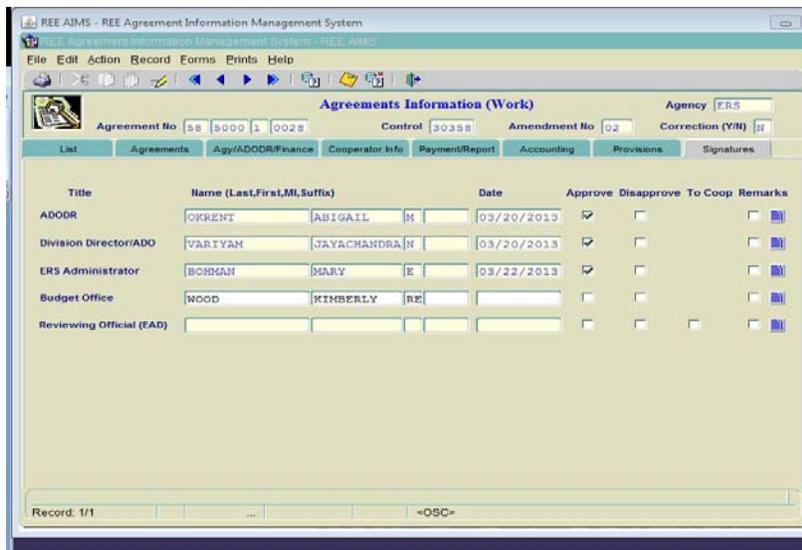
ERS Budget Approval

- The ERS Budget Office will need to access the agreement to be approved from the Work file List screen mark the project to be approved and click the “**Accounting**” tab.



- On the “**Accounting**” tab enter the following data:

- PO#
- FMMI Fund Code
- Cost Center
- WBS Code
- When the data entry is complete, click save and proceed to the “**Signatures**” tab. The Signature screen will be displayed.



- The name listed selected under the “**Agency Finance Office**” under the “**Agency/ADOR/Finance**” tab autopopulates into the signature block. To approve the agreement select the “**Approve**” box, click save and the current date will autopopulate. After approving click the “**List**” tab and the project will no longer be in ERS Budget work file.
- The record will now move to the work file of the next level which is the EAD approval.

Remarks

- Remarks can be entered by clicking the “**Remarks**” notepad icon. A text box will be displayed to add remarks (optional, not required).

When all remarks are added, click “**Save**” and you will be brought back to the signature screen. When all approvals and remarks are complete, click the “**Save**” icon from the Tool bar. A message will be displayed at the bottom of the screen, “transaction complete.”

Click the “**List**” tab and the project will no longer be in your work file. The record will now move to work file of the next level for approval.

Amending or Correcting an Agreement

All changes to an ERS extramural agreement during the life of the project should be documented in ERS-AIMS. To amend, correct, or close-out an agreement, a work record must be created for the ERS agreement located in the Active file. The Active file contains all existing approved projects. Modifications can be made to an agreement

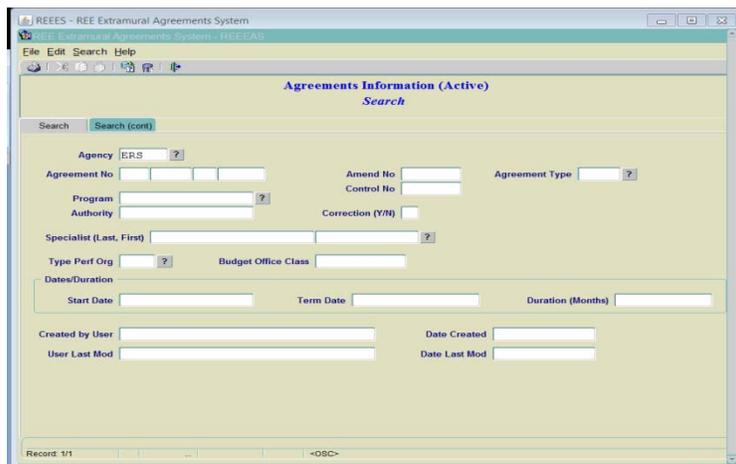
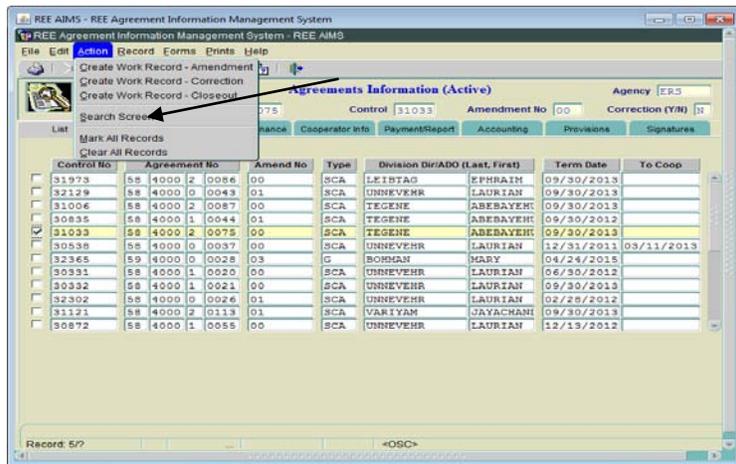
by creating a Work record (copy) of the agreement from the Active file. There can only be one agreement action (work record) in progress at a time. To modify a project, the first step is to create a work record.

Creating a Work Record Amendment or Correction:

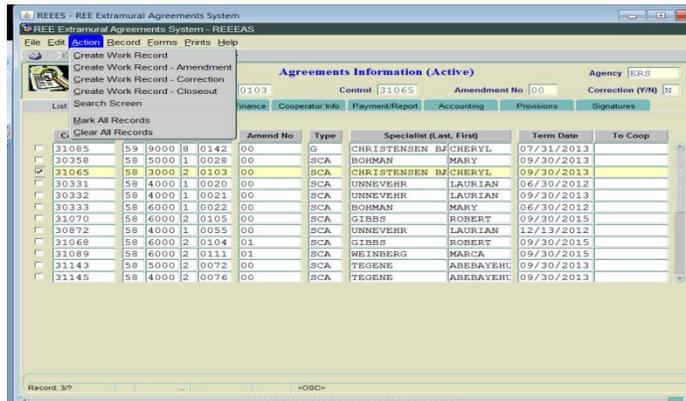
From the Main Screen Click “Active” click “Agreements (Active)” to display the ERS Agreements List screen.



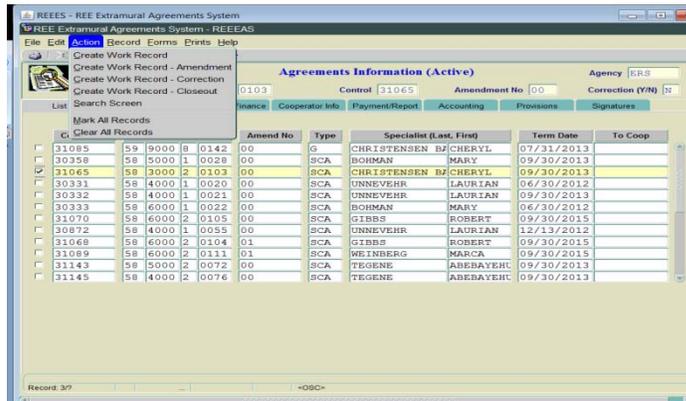
Records that are currently in the ERS-AIMS file will be listed. If you do not see the record you are searching for you may use the search feature to locate the record. Click “Action” “Search Screen”



On the “Search” screen, enter the agreement number or control number, to find the agreement, and click “Search Execute” or press “Enter.” The agreement will then be displayed on the list screen.



Select the agreement to modify by placing a check in the box to the left of the agreement number or by moving your cursor over the agreement.



Click “Action” and select the “Create Work Record - Amendment” from the Menu Bar. The system will prompt to questioning if you really want to create a work record. Click “Yes” and record will be created. Once the work record is created, exit out of the Active file and go to the Work file.

From the “Work” list, click “Agreements (Work)” to display the ERS Agreements List screen.

Records that are currently in the ERS Work file will be listed:

- Select the project to modify by placing a check in the box to the left of the project number or by moving your cursor over the project.
- Make any necessary changes to the ERS-AIMS data.

Approving Amendment Records:

- When all modifications are complete, follow the same procedures for approving an amendment record as a new agreement.

Correcting an Agreement

To create a Correction record, follow the same procedures as if you were creating an Amendment. However, when creating your Work record, click **“Create Work - Correction”** to create a Correction instead of an Amendment.

This process will not give you a new Amendment number. Once the Correction has been approved the data will override the last version in the Active file. **Note:** Corrections are used when the change is minor and it is not required to go to the cooperator for signature.

Deleting Work Records

To delete an unwanted Work record, from the List screen, mark or highlight the record to be deleted by placing a (✓) in the box to the left of the Agreement Number. Then, click the **“Delete Agreement”** button at the bottom of the screen. The system will ask you **“Are you sure you wish to delete this information?”** If yes, click **“Yes”** and the system will display a message **“Agreement Successfully Deleted”**. Click **“OK”** and the work record will be deleted.

Note: If the record was a new agreement and you delete it, there is no way to get it back.

Agreement Status

Work Status

The Work Status section of ERS-AIMS is used to check the approval status. If a project appears in Work Status, the approval process is not complete and the action is not in the Active file. The submission level indicates where the agreement is in the approval process.

A List screen will be displayed with all the projects currently in the Work file.

Active Status

The Active Status section of ERS-AIMS contains all existing approved projects.

A List screen will be displayed with all the approved projects in the system.

Sorting and Viewing

From the List screen, you can sort, view, and print information.

To sort, click any Column Heading, i.e., **“Control No”** and the records will sort in ascending order by **“Control No”**. Click the column heading again, and the records will sort in descending order. The sort function is available on any List screen throughout ERS-AIMS that has the gray column headings.

To view a record, place your cursor on or mark the record to be viewed, then click from tab to tab to view the information in each section.

Control No	Agreement No	Amend No	Type	Division Dir/ADO (Last, First)	Term Date	To Coop
30915	58 4000 1 0064	00	SCA	UNNEVEHR LAURIAN	09/30/2014	
30337	58 4000 1 0024	01	SCA	UNNEVEHR LAURIAN	09/30/2012	
30338	58 4000 1 0025	00	SCA	UNNEVEHR LAURIAN	09/30/2013	
30872	58 4000 1 0055	00	SCA	UNNEVEHR LAURIAN	12/13/2012	
30332	58 4000 1 0023	00	SCA	UNNEVEHR LAURIAN	09/30/2013	
30331	58 4000 1 0020	00	SCA	UNNEVEHR LAURIAN	06/30/2012	
30817	58 4000 1 0035	00	SCA	UNNEVEHR LAURIAN	09/30/2012	
31972	58 4000 2 0084	00	SCA	TEGENE ABEBAYEH	09/30/2014	
31976	58 4000 2 0088	01	SCA	LEIDTAG EPHRAIM	09/30/2013	
31966	58 4000 2 0082	00	SCA	TEGENE ABEBAYEH	09/30/2014	
31965	58 4000 2 0081	00	SCA	TEGENE ABEBAYEH	09/30/2014	
31962	58 4000 2 0073	00	SCA	TEGENE ABEBAYEH	09/30/2013	

When executed, the search results are displayed on a List screen. The bottom left side of the screen lists the count of records found, i.e., 2 of 34. The highlighted line indicates the location of the cursor. Use the keyboard arrows or the Tool bar icon arrows to move through the records.

Logging Off

To log off the system, click **“File”** and **“Exit”** on each screen, until you are completely out of ERS-AIMS. If you are not using ERS-AIMS for extended periods of time during the day, it is best to log off and then log back in when needed.