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# Farmer-to-Farmer Lessons Learned I

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**A Special Study**

*Under the Farmer-to-Farmer Special Program Support Project  
Developed by Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance (VEGA)*

June 2016

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## *Executive Summary*

Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance (VEGA) manages the Farmer-to-Farmer Special Program Support Project (F2F SPSP), a supporting entity for the overall F2F Program. The project aims to develop new F2F implementers, reach new volunteers, and advance learning, innovation, and growth within the program. VEGA meets these objectives, in part, through the development and management of a sub-awards program under SPSP.

VEGA embraces continuous learning and adaptation in the management of SPSP. The program is currently in year three of a five-year program. The Lessons Learned I Special Study reviews the accomplishments of the sub-awards program so far and identifies improvements that can be made in the future. VEGA has adopted many improvements since the inception of the project and will continue to learn and change through the second half of the program.

The recommendations contained in this report are based on a 360-degree examination of the sub-awards program. Data collected for the study includes reviews of reports and other primary documents, interviews, surveys, a focus group, and site visits. Recommendations of the study are organized around the three main tasks of the F2F SPSP sub-awards program: (1) outreach and solicitation, (2) grants management, and (3) capacity building of Grantees.

Study recommendations are summarized in the table below, which indicates recommendations that will be implemented by VEGA during the current SPSP, those that could be implemented with additional funding from USAID,<sup>1</sup> and those that—because of timing—can only be taken up by the next round of SPSP. Although a number of the recommendations are not new ideas, documenting them is nevertheless important. Past recommendations that have been verified objectively through this study should receive additional consideration from USAID.

Investment in the sub-awards component of SPSP represents an investment in the future of the F2F program. With relatively little money, Small Grants and PDPs result not only in successful volunteer programs but also in F2F being a more inclusive and innovative program overall.

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<sup>1</sup> In addition to the currently anticipated total funding of \$6.2 million.

	Lesson learned	Will be implemented <sup>2</sup>	Could be implemented	Future SPSP <sup>3</sup>
Outreach and Solicitation	Target outreach and solicitation efforts to a particular SPSP objective	•		
	Increase the number of available		•	
	Improve Requests for Applications (RFAs) based on experience and findings	•		
	Hold a virtual Q&A for each competition	•		
	<b>Error! Reference source not found.</b>	•		
	Reduce PEC level of effort (LOE) for proposal evaluation committee (PEC)	•		
	Encourage Mission-requested programs through PDP buy-ins			•
	Continue \$150,000 maximum for	•		
	Fully fund PDPs		•	
	Allow costs of implementing volunteer recommendations		•	
Grants Management	Increase number of support visits to SPSP		•	
	Improve Grantee onboarding and interaction	•		
	<b>Error! Reference source not found.</b>	•		
	Enhance relationships with PDP holders	•		
	Reduce administrative requirements of SPSP awards	•		
	Reduce expectations of PDPs to support wider F2F community		•	
	Increase expected LOE for grant management		•	
Capacity Building	Increase virtual training opportunities and online resources	•		
	Develop additional templates, tools, and resources	•		
	Continue capacity building for Small Grant applicants	•		
	Increase support for communication with USAID Missions		•	
	Enhance SPSP Grantees' engagement with the larger F2F community		•	
	Add mid-sized grants as F2F 'stepping stones.'			•

## Introduction

<sup>2</sup> At \$6.2 million anticipated funding level.

<sup>3</sup> VEGA recommends all lessons learned also be incorporated into future program cycles.

The John Ogonowski and Doug Bereuter Farmer-to-Farmer (F2F) program was launched in 1985, making it one of the longest-running international development programs. Funded via the U.S. Farm Bill, F2F connects business owners, academics, professionals, and farmers in various U.S. agriculture fields with their counterparts in selected emerging markets to provide volunteer technical assistance. The Farmer-to-Farmer global program has fielded 17,000 volunteers, reaching 1.3 million beneficiaries and 90 million people indirectly.

The F2F program's primary goal is to generate rapid, sustainable, and broad-based food security and economic growth in the agricultural sector. The program is also focused on promoting a greater understanding among the American public of the role of U.S. development programs and their effectiveness in helping people, countering extremism, and justifying development spending by showing positive returns on investments (ROI), all while performing American citizen diplomacy—highlighting Americans' spirit to help others through targeted and effective volunteerism.

In 2009, the Farmer-to-Farmer Special Program Support Project (SPSP) launched as a supporting entity for the overall F2F program. The SPSP works closely with F2F core program implementers to develop and implement good practices and promote agricultural volunteer services. The SPSP's objectives are to develop new F2F implementers, reach new volunteers, and advance learning, innovation, and growth within the program. These objectives are achieved through outreach, grant competitions, and capacity building of Grantees throughout the implementation of the F2F program.

## *Background*

Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance (VEGA) became the management entity of SPSP in 2013 with a mandate to implement five main activities: (1) developing and managing a sub-awards program to test innovative approaches for implementing F2F; (2) providing technical services to support core F2F programs; (3) defining, documenting, and disseminating lessons in best practices; (4) organizing workshops for F2F program staff and stakeholders; and (5) completing evaluations and special studies related to F2F program implementation.<sup>4</sup>

The Lessons Learned I Special Study is focused on the first activity—VEGA's sub-awards program. This activity relies on two funding mechanisms, Small Grants and Program Development Projects (PDPs). F2F Small Grant projects aim to test innovative approaches to the use of U.S.-based volunteers overseas in the food and agriculture sector, draw from non-traditional sources of U.S. volunteers, and allow new U.S.-based organizations to participate in the F2F program. These grants, seen as an entry point into the F2F community, reduce the barriers to entry by simplifying the process of receiving and implementing an F2F award and provide enhanced guidance and award oversight to ensure that all programs meet F2F best practices.

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<sup>4</sup> From Farmer-to-Farmer Special Program Support Project Award, AID-OAA-A-13-00053.

PDPs also incorporate innovative ideas into F2F programs and engage new organizations—those not currently implementing a core F2F program—in the F2F community. In contrast to the Small Grants program, however, the PDP program aims to encourage organizations with some experience and capacity in volunteer-sending to take on a larger role within F2F. Whereas Small Grantees’ program requirements are scaled back, PDPs are expected to follow the same guidelines and requirements as core F2F programs. This model provides PDPs with a supportive environment to successfully complete the requirements of the core implementer programs.

Small Grants and PDPs are selected through a competitive process. VEGA acts as the administrator for each competition and convenes a proposal evaluation committee (PEC) of independent experts to evaluate applications. In addition, VEGA assists applicants by providing feedback and support as they develop their programs. As of June 2016, VEGA has held three Small Grant competitions (2013, 2014, and 2016) resulting in 14 Small Grant awards. In 2014, VEGA held a PDP grant competition that resulted in three awards. Finally, in 2016, VEGA held a competition at the request of USAID/Ghana that resulted in one PDP.

VEGA’s management of the Small Grants and PDP programs addresses the interests of both its Grantees and USAID. For Grantees, VEGA’s capacity-building approach ensures that organizations new to F2F are able to compete with more experienced organizations and successfully meet program requirements. For USAID, VEGA’s active oversight provides assurance that Grantees with more limited capacity and experience will uphold the quality reputation of the F2F program. VEGA’s sub-awards program involves three main tasks, defined below:

- a. *Outreach and Solicitation*: The effectiveness of outreach and communications between VEGA and potential Grantees, with an emphasis on organizations new to F2F; VEGA’s ability to run a fair, transparent, and effective grants procurement.
- b. *Grants Management*: VEGA’s ability to monitor program implementation to ensure that Grantees conform to all USAID regulations, F2F program requirements, and best practices in international development.
- c. *Capacity Building of Grantees*: VEGA’s ability to create templates, conduct trainings, and work directly with Grantees to support their implementation of SPSP programs so that they meet USAID requirements and the needs of beneficiaries and volunteers.

The Lessons Learned I study examines VEGA’s management of each task to identify how effective its sub-award management has been in achieving SPSP objectives overall and to identify improvements that can be made during the remainder of the program.

## Methodology

VEGA followed a 360-degree examination and reflection methodology, using reports and other primary documents, interviews, surveys, a focus group, and site visits. The table below summarizes the data sources used for the review. The remainder of the methodology section describes each data source and the method used for the review.

No.	Review Type	Description	Outreach & Solicitation	Grants Management	Capacity Building
1	Survey	Small Grant and PDP applicants (successful and unsuccessful)	✓		
2	Site Visit	Purdue University PDP in Colombia and FAVACA PDP in Jamaica		✓	✓
3	Site Visit	Small Grant		✓	✓
4	Site Visit	VWB PDP in Ethiopia and Uganda		✓	✓
5	Interview	Proposal evaluation committee (PEC) members	✓		
6	Interview	PDP recipients	✓	✓	✓
7	Focus Group	Small Grant recipients	✓	✓	✓
8	Document	Review of email and social media promotion of RFAs	✓		
9	Document	PEC meeting notes and feedback to applicants	✓		
10	Document	Lessons learned from PEC process	✓		
11	Document	Volunteer trip reports and SOWs		✓	✓
12	Document	Modifications to awards		✓	
13	Document	Small Grant Final Milestone reports, including standard indicators		✓	✓
14	Document	Pre-bidders conference materials	✓		
15	Document	Grantee onboarding materials		✓	
16	Document	Grants manual		✓	
17	Document	Review of Small Grant and PDP RFA and awards	✓		
18	Document	Small Grant exit interviews (2013)	✓	✓	✓

### (1) Survey of Small Grants and PDP Applicants

VEGA distributed an online survey to all Small Grant and PDP applicants from the current SPSP program cycle (60 total applicants) using SurveyMonkey. The 32-question survey (Annex A) received a 27% response rate, an acceptable rate given that many data sources support the survey findings. Of the 16 respondents, 13 were successful applicants, and three were unsuccessful. The survey focused on investigating outreach and solicitation, including perceived fairness, transparency, and applicant satisfaction; the opinion of VEGA's support during the solicitation process; the preferred methods of communication; and the quality of the RFA to which they responded most recently.

## **(2) Site Visits to PDPs in Colombia and Jamaica**

In January 2015, VEGA's SPSP program director and program associate traveled to Colombia and Jamaica to observe two PDP programs, the Jamaican Sustainable Farm Enterprise Program implemented by the Florida Association for Volunteer Action in the Caribbean and the Americas (FAVACA) and the Farmer-to-Farmer program in Colombia's Orinoquia Region implemented by Purdue University. The objectives of these visits were program oversight and support to the Grantees. Since the visit occurred before the Lessons Learned research commenced, staff conducted no interviews for the purpose of the study. However, notes from the trips and the official trip reports were reviewed to identify findings.

## **(3) Site Visit to Small Grant**

In April 2016, VEGA's SPSP program manager traveled to conduct field interviews and observe the Small Grants program. The purpose of the trip was to explore the challenges faced by all Small Grant recipients. During this visit, the program manager conducted observations of two volunteer assignments and held interviews or meetings with the following stakeholders: the in-country coordinator, USAID, the in-country coordinator of a dropped host, and the volunteers. Please refer to Annex B for the interview questions used during the in-country coordinator interview.

## **(4) Site Visit to PDP Program in Ethiopia and Uganda**

In May and June 2016, the SPSP program director and program manager traveled to Ethiopia and Uganda to conduct field interviews and observe the PDP program implemented by Veterinarians without Borders (VWB). The VWB project is a four-year \$1.4 million PDP aimed at improving livestock disease surveillance, particularly for trans-boundary diseases in Ethiopia and Uganda. The VWB program has several unique features that test VEGA's capacity building and support roles. Finally, VEGA staff planned a program support visit during the study period, making it possible to combine objectives and collect data more efficiently. During this visit, the staff observed volunteer teams in each country and held interviews or meetings with the following stakeholders: in-country coordinators, USAID/Uganda, USAID/Ethiopia, leaders of host organizations, and the volunteers. The interview questions listed in Annex B guided unstructured interviews of the in-country coordinators.

## **(5) Interviews of Proposal Evaluation Committee (PEC) Members**

Six of the nine former Small Grants and PDP PEC members participated in interviews, representing a response rate of 67%. During these interviews, PEC members identified ways for VEGA to make its processes more fair, efficient, and effective, as well as ways for VEGA to improve its solicitation efforts to reach new, more-diverse implementers and bring in more innovative proposals. Gathering such information from PEC members gave VEGA an idea of the effectiveness of its current solicitation processes and identified potential future improvements to its solicitation efforts and documents to address the feedback and findings. Please refer to Annex C for the interview questions.

## **(6) Interviews of PDP Recipients**

Individual interviews were held with the program managers of all three 2014 PDPs. Interviewers excluded the Ghana PDP from this list because program implementation had not started at the time of

this study. The questions posed to the interviewees intended to build on the information collected through the survey of applicants and to explore issues related to program implementation. The interviews followed the questions listed in Annex D.

#### **(7) Focus Group of Small Grant Recipients**

VEGA held a focus group of Small Grant recipients to gain a deeper understanding of their perspectives on VEGA's outreach, solicitation, and program management processes and capacity-building support. The questions posed to the focus group meant to build on the information collected through the survey of applicants and to explore issues related to program implementation. Out of the eight current and past Small Grants managers, five participated in the focus group and a sixth provided input via email. Questions posed during the focus group are in Annex E.

#### **(8) Review of Email and Social Media Promotion of RFAs**

VEGA posts RFAs under SPSP to Farmer-to-Farmer.org and VegaAlliance.org and uses direct email and social media outreach to promote these funding opportunities. Email solicitations are sent through MailChimp, an email marketing service that tracks the number of messages sent, the number opened, and the number of recipients who clicked on the email's links to the RFA. To date, VEGA has a wide distribution list of more than 3,000 subscribers and a targeted list of 287 subscribers for potential Small Grant applications. A review of MailChimp statistics showed the number of emails opened and the number of clicks on the RFA link. In addition, Google Analytics displayed the number of unique page views<sup>5</sup> for each RFA solicitation page on F2F's website. Finally, Facebook data determined how many users were reached and how many accessed information about RFAs through the F2F Facebook page.

#### **(9) Review of PEC Meeting Notes and Feedback to Applicants**

VEGA is responsible for managing the competitions to select Small Grants and PDPs, and as part of this work, it records notes from each PEC meeting and synthesizes these notes into applicant feedback. VEGA reviewed all comments and feedback from the Small Grant competitions held in 2013, 2014, and 2016 and the PDP competitions held in 2014 and 2016. From these documents, VEGA identified the number of first-time and returning applicants, the number of applicants that met minimum qualifications, common critiques and feedback, and common reasons applicants were not chosen.

#### **(10) Review of PEC Notes and Lessons**

To date, VEGA has conducted five grant solicitations: three Small Grants, one PDP, and one Mission buy-in. During each of these PEC meetings in 2014 and 2016 for Small Grants and the PDP Ghana buy-in for 2016, VEGA staff took detailed notes from the discussions about each applicant. These notes captured common themes, best practices, and lessons learned.

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<sup>5</sup> Unique page views is the number of sessions during which the specific page was viewed at least once. A unique page view is counted for each *page URL + page title* combination.

### **(11) Review of Volunteer Trip Reports and SOWs**

To evaluate how well VEGA manages Grantees' volunteer-sending processes, VEGA reviewed a sample of Small Grant and PDP volunteers' scopes of work (SOWs) and trip reports to compare the reports to the corresponding SOW objectives. Because PDP Grantees had sent 68 volunteers and Small Grantees had sent 65 volunteers as of March 31, 2016, VEGA did not have the capacity to compare every volunteer's SOW and trip report. Therefore, VEGA used Excel's "RAND" function to select two volunteers randomly from every Small Grant and PDP. Excel provided each volunteer with a number, and VEGA chose the two volunteers with the highest numbers for comparison. Since VEGA may be familiar with some volunteers, using this random selection process eliminated any selection bias that may have come from manually choosing any two volunteers to use for comparison. Once the volunteers to be used for comparison were chosen, VEGA reviewed their SOWs to identify their trip's expected results, impact, deliverables, and host partners. Then, VEGA reviewed the volunteers' trip reports with the four criteria identified in the SOW to determine if the work the volunteer completed matched what was intended. Overall, learning if the work volunteers are completing aligns with the work they are being sent to do will help evaluate how well VEGA manages the volunteer-sending aspect of F2F SPSP.

### **(12) Review of Modifications to Awards**

When a Grantee's program changes, VEGA must make a modification to their award. This is important both contractually and to document the program. To understand how well it manages Grantees during program implementation, VEGA conducted a document review of Grantee modifications. To identify common modifications made to Small Grants and PDP awards, VEGA categorized every modification made thus far to PDPs from the 2014 solicitation and to Small Grants from the 2013 and 2014 solicitations. The purpose of identifying common modifications is to understand if there are any themes in programs' modifications. If most modifications are expected and/or out of VEGA's control, we can assume its award writing and management are adequate. However, if there are many modifications, like changes to milestones, then that may suggest VEGA should improve its management processes.

### **(13) Review of Small Grant Milestone Reports and Standard Indicators**

VEGA reviewed Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) data for Small Grantees and PDP Grantees to evaluate whether or not they have met or are meeting their targets. To conduct this evaluation for 2013 and 2014 Small Grantees, VEGA first reviewed the targets each Grantee set in their award. While there was not a standard set of indicators to measure their Small Grants programs, there was enough overlap amongst the indicators to compare a few indicators across the programs. The targets set in the award were then compared to the results reported in each Grantee's Final Milestone Report. The comparison process for 2014 PDPs was slightly different. Since PDP projects are between three and four years in duration, the 2014 awardees have not yet concluded their programs. Therefore, VEGA measured four common indicators across most PDPs and then reviewed each Grantee's award to identify the targets to achieve by the end of the program, which is either 2017 or 2018 for all 2014 Grantees. VEGA then reviewed each Grantee's FY14/15 work plan to identify the targets each program planned to have achieved by FY15. Both the end-of-program targets and FY15 targets were compared to the results reported in each program's FY15 Annual Report. For those programs that had a work plan for FY15, it was easy to see if the program was on track with meeting its FY15 targets. However, for those programs

with no work plans, VEGA divided the end of the program targets by the duration of the program to produce an estimated target of where the program should have been at the end of FY15. Overall, reviewing Small Grant and PDP M&E data provides VEGA with an indication of how Small Grantees and PDP Grantees are performing.

#### **(14) Review of the Bidders Conference Materials**

Before VEGA held its first F2F grant competition, it organized a pre-bidder's conference in December 2013. To evaluate its approach to solicitation and grants management, VEGA reviewed the information and presentation given to the conference attendees to identify what worked and any possible adjustments or additions that may improve the Conference in the future.

#### **(15) Review of Small Grantee Onboarding Materials**

To evaluate its approach to grant management, VEGA conducted a document review of the materials distributed to Grantees at the kick-off meeting. This review aimed to show how the kick-off meeting changed throughout each Small Grant onboarding process and to identify best practices. Lastly, this review hoped to identify any gaps, possible changes, and/or any additional documents that may be useful for VEGA to provide to new F2F Grantees.

#### **(16) Review of F2F SPSP Grants Manual**

VEGA developed a Grants Manual at the beginning of the SPSP program “to provide specific implementation guidance for the Grants Program—i.e., awarding, administering, and monitoring grants as to ensure that the program is managed in a consistent and efficient manner, programmatic impact is maximized, and objectives are achieved.”<sup>6</sup> The review of the manual focused on evaluating whether any procedures outlined in the manual are not being implemented and identifying improvements and best practices to incorporate into potential future revisions of the manual.

#### **(17) Review Small Grant and PDP RFA and Award**

Prior to each grant competition and draft award, VEGA staff conducts a review of the previous RFA or award template in order to identify areas for improvement. This study recorded major changes and improvements incorporated to date.

#### **(18) Small Grantee Exit Interviews**

At the conclusion of the 2013 Small Grants, VEGA staff conducted an exit interview with each Grantee to identify challenges and improve practices. Small Grantees did not complete an exit interview in 2014 because these Grantees participated in a focus group for this study. For a list of exit interview questions, please refer to Annex G.

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<sup>6</sup> Grants Manual, USAID Farmer-to-Farmer Special Program Support Project, 2013

## *Research Findings*

Due to the 360-degree research methodology, findings of the Lessons Learned I study include sensitive information about VEGA's grantees and procedures. Therefore, findings have been shared in full with USAID but removed from the public report.

## Lessons Learned

VEGA embraces continuous learning and adaptation in the management of SPSP. The organization has adopted many improvements since the inception of the project, and it continues to learn and change through the second half of the program. The findings of the Lessons Learned I study make it possible to look back at these improvements, evaluate their effectiveness, and identify additional improvements to make during the duration of the program. The recommendations below are rooted in these findings but also reflect VEGA staff's experience implementing the sub-award component of SPSP.

### Outreach & Solicitation

#### ***Target outreach and solicitation efforts to a particular SPSP objective.***

Through SPSP, USAID aims to increase the number of new implementers, increase the number of MSO implementers, and explore innovative volunteer-sending models. While these are all worthy objectives, attempting to achieve all three through a single outreach and solicitation strategy has proven challenging. VEGA recommends holding separate competitions to target each SPSP objective. This would make it possible to focus outreach efforts more effectively. In addition, more targeted RFA requirements would help PEC members make selections that more closely align with SPSP priorities.

For example, it is difficult for organizations that have never implemented an F2F program to compete with organizations that have years of experience. Regardless of how much support they receive, they are disadvantaged compared to organizations that have lengthy experience implementing F2F programs. Holding a solicitation where only new implementers qualify would ensure that new implementers receive awards.

Another example is MSO engagement. Since 2013, VEGA has conducted two special studies to explore the best methods of reaching MSOs: "Special Study on Minority-Serving Institutions' and Minority-Serving Organizations' Engagement"<sup>7</sup> and "Increasing Diversity in the Farmer-to-Farmer Program."<sup>8</sup> Both studies have produced insights and recommendations on how to engage MSOs, but it is not possible to implement those recommendations through an untargeted Small Grants competition. With a targeted outreach plan and an MSO-only competition, VEGA can implement the previous special study recommendations for engaging MSOs.

#### ***Increase the number of available Small Grants.***

The number of eligible Concept Papers received for the Small Grants competition has only varied slightly over the three grant cycles: 21 in 2013, 27 in 2014, and 23 in 2016. Even without increasing numbers of Small Grant applications, however, each round has had more fundable proposals than available grants.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.farmer-to-farmer.org/resources/special-study-minority-serving-institutions%E2%80%99-and-minority-serving-organizations%E2%80%99>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.farmer-to-farmer.org/resources/increasing-diversity-f2f-programs>

VEGA recommends increasing the number of available grants to make it more likely that smaller and less experienced organizations, whose proposals often lack the polish of their larger competitors, can receive awards. Additionally, increasing the number of grants would make it possible to award a meaningful number of programs targeting each SPSP objective. However, increasing the number of grants would also increase the staff time required for VEGA to provide high-quality grant management and capacity-building support. Therefore, if the number of Small Grants is increased, staff LOE should increase at a corresponding rate.

***Improve Requests for Applications (RFAs) based on experience and findings.***

Since 2013, VEGA has improved upon its RFA based on its experience mentoring individual implementers. For example, many implementers were having difficulty understanding PERSUAP reporting requirements. VEGA reacted by adding PERSUAP to the reporting requirements section of the RFA (where previously only an annex explained the requirement). Other improvements to the RFA include more clearly stating standard indicators' reporting requirements; incorporating emerging best practices, such as the requirement for volunteer reference checks; adding specificity to the volunteer SOW template (adapted from Winrock's template); and allowing more flexibility in the monthly update format. Initial feedback on these changes has been positive.

The findings of this study point to a number of other improvements that VEGA recommends for SPSP RFAs. These include:

- *Clearly define allowable and unallowable costs* – Several statements made by Small Grants managers indicate confusion about allowable costs. Specifically, Grantees believe beneficiary travel, equipment, and training materials are not allowable and that F2F expects volunteers to provide training materials. In addition, one PDP Grantee did not understand the option to accept a 10% *de minimis* rate for overhead in lieu of an established NICRA.
- *Update Small Grant budget templates* – The budget template used to date was designed to be extremely simple in the interest of enhancing accessibility for new applicants. However, feedback from the Grantees and PEC members indicates that the template has been oversimplified. Greater detail in the template could help applicants to understand acceptable cost categories and what options they have for funding administrative costs. Specific revisions could include adding cost categories and illustrative costs for each category, especially leverage and NICRA/overhead.
- *Enhance past performance information* – Although past performance information is currently submitted by applicants, the level of detail provided is low, and the information is not validated. References should be independently verified for all applicants in the Full Application stage. In addition, VEGA should provide a more formal documentation of past performance for applicants who have implemented previous grants under SPSP.

***Hold a virtual Q&A for each competition.***

VEGA held a “bidder’s conference” in conjunction with the 2013 Small Grants cycle and will hold a similar virtual Q&A period for each grant cycle to provide additional explanation on topics that have been challenging for previous applicants, including allowable and unallowable costs, budget development, and standard certifications.

***Reduce PEC level of effort.***

VEGA has received an average of 25 Concept Papers in response to each Small Grants solicitation, creating a great deal of work for evaluation committee members. VEGA recommends exploring alternative PEC processes that align with USAID best practices. One approach that could reduce the level of effort required of committee members would be to have VEGA perform an initial screening of all applications to eliminate those that are unfundable before they are passed on to PEC members. The criteria used for the initial screening would mirror those used by the evaluation committee. VEGA would thoroughly document all findings and share feedback with the applicants for transparency.

***Encourage Mission-requested programs through PDP buy-ins.***

To date, attempting to procure Mission-requested projects through Small Grants solicitations has been ineffective. Feedback from SPSP applicants indicates that these programs were too small and technically specific to attract sufficient interest from a broad range of potential implementers. VEGA did successfully procure a PDP at the request of USAID/Ghana, attracting three strong applications. Although the program description was highly specific, the larger size of the program – \$3 million – attracted sufficient interest potential implementers. Future Mission requests could use the Ghana program’s success as a model. To encourage greater participation by Missions, F2F could offer matching funds for Mission-requested programs. VEGA also recommends that staff time required to facilitate and manage buy-ins be considered in future SPSP budgets.

***Continue \$150,000 maximum for Small Grants.***

In 2013, VEGA awarded Small Grants of \$100,000. The maximum award amount increased to \$150,000 in 2014 in response to exit interviews with the 2013 Small Grantees. One 2013 implementer stated that it is “difficult to build institutional capacity with such little funding.” The higher funding amount has made it possible for Grantees to better support volunteers and ensure that F2F best practices in implementation and reporting are achievable.

***Fully fund PDPs.***

VEGA planned to award two PDPs at around \$1.5 million each during the 2013 competition. However, by recommendation of the PEC, one of these awards was split between two applicants, with each asked to pare down their program by half. While both of these implementers have run successful programs, cutting back their programs so dramatically has led to challenges. In addition, low levels of funding undermine the ability of implementing organizations to operate like core implementers, which is a stated desire of USAID. VEGA recommends that PEC members be discouraged from recommending partial funding for PDPs.

***Allow costs of implementing volunteer recommendations.***

Limiting F2F funding to supporting volunteers often creates a gap between volunteer input and desired impact. Several Grantees have requested the ability to use project funds to implement volunteer recommendations. Since SPSP is designed to test innovation under F2F, it could allow Small Grantees and PDPs more flexibility to use project funds for activities outside of direct volunteer support. Particularly for PDPs, which have programs of sufficient length to fully implement recommendations, funding the implementation of volunteer recommendations would likely lead to enhanced impact. In addition, this flexibility would allow SPSP to fund more innovative proposals.

Another strategy could be to develop a separate volunteer impact fund, managed by SPSP, to award funds competitively for implementing volunteer recommendations.

## **Grants Management**

***Increase number of support visits to SPSP Grantees.***

While virtual communication can accomplish a lot, there is no substitute for in-person support visits to share information and establish relationships, both of which are vital to the achievement of SPSP objectives.

VEGA originally planned for each PDP to receive a single support visit during the life of the project and did not plan any support visits for Small Grant projects. This has proven insufficient to achieve SPSP's objectives in capacity building and outreach. VEGA recommends at least two visits for each PDP awarded—one at the beginning of the project and one about two-thirds of the way through implementation. The first trip could focus on working with local staff to ensure that they understand F2F requirements and best practices, verifying that volunteer support services uphold the quality reputation of the F2F program, and meeting with hosts, USAID, and other potential partners to ensure that they are aware of the project and its relationship to the larger F2F program. VEGA's experience supporting the Purdue, FAVACA, and VWB PDPs has demonstrated that an early visit is particularly important to Grantees' understanding of the F2F standard indicators and establishing good M&E practices. The second visit is necessary later in the project to review M&E data collection practices, to observe volunteers in the field and collect success stories, and to re-engage the Mission and potential partners about opportunities to extend the program.

In addition to visiting PDPs, VEGA recommends visiting at least one Small Grant recipient from each program cycle. Planning these trips in the SPSP budget would give VEGA the flexibility to provide additional support to Grantees that struggle or run into implementation challenges. Likewise, VEGA would be able to promote projects that excel and better engage Missions about the opportunity to extend Small Grant programs through SPSP buy-ins.

***Improve Grantee onboarding and interaction.***

For each grant cycle since the beginning of the program, VEGA has enhanced its onboarding by expanding the topics covered and providing additional documents and resources. Interviews with Small

Grantees indicate that a detailed kick-off meeting that outlines all aspects of the award, roles of VEGA, and information on F2F as a program is useful. Feedback from Grantees indicates that the higher level of support and interaction is appreciated and should be continued. Furthermore, Grantees have expressed a desire for more opportunities to collaborate with and learn from their peers. VEGA could consider convening Small Grantees periodically and facilitating the exchange of best practices.

***Enhance relationships with PDP holders.***

There is a natural tension between VEGA's role in providing oversight to SPSP grants and its role in building the capacity of its Grantees. VEGA staff must successfully hold Grantees accountable to the terms of their awards and F2F best practices without discouraging them from sharing the challenges they face so that VEGA might provide support. One PDP Grantee stated:

“Wearing different hats is somewhat problematic. Not having a clear line between what VEGA will share with USAID and what they will use to partner with us is [an issue].”

VEGA recommends increasing informal interaction with Grantees to help build the trust necessary to balance these objectives. More in-person support visits and phone calls would likely be effective, and future programs should allocate resources to accommodate these activities. In addition, VEGA should openly discuss its relationship to USAID during Grantee onboarding so that Grantees feel more comfortable discussing the challenges they face.

***Reduce administrative requirements of SPSP awards.***

PDPs expressed that the administrative requirements of their grants are greater than they anticipated and that staffing levels planned before they received their award are sometimes not sufficient. They suggested that VEGA advise Grantees about the level of effort required so that budgets are allocated accordingly.

PDPs stated that reporting requirements are too extensive. One Grantee stated, “I feel that it is reporting for reporting's sake. We need to focus on the issues for the core of the program and what will make it sustainable.” Currently, VEGA requires monthly updates and semi-annual reports. The intention of the monthly update is to monitor progress and quickly identify challenges that would benefit from VEGA's support. A bi-monthly phone call could take the place of monthly written updates, however. This strategy would make it possible to maintain strong oversight while reducing the administrative burden on Grantees and strengthening relationships between VEGA staff and program managers.

In addition, VEGA will reduce reporting requirements for Small Grantees who have implemented F2F programs and demonstrated good program management. For example, VEGA could replace monthly updates with phone check-ins quarterly or at the submission of each milestone report.

***Reduce expectations of PDPs to support wider F2F community.***

PDPs' grant managers are often asked to engage in the larger F2F community on a level similar to core implementers, such as sitting on committees and helping to revise the best practices guide. PDP managers recognize that these activities have high value for the F2F program as a whole and express interest in participating, both for their own benefit and to be 'team players.' However, they also feel

that USAID makes requests without taking their more limited budget and staffing into account. VEGA recommends that USAID tailor requests for support to the general F2F community to the size of each implementer, and the difference between requirements and requests should be clear.

***Increase expected LOE for grant management.***

Fulfilling SPSP's commitment to bring smaller and less-experienced organizations into the F2F community while maintaining good volunteer-sending practices and upholding the program's reputation requires significant investment of support and oversight. SPSP targets applicants that are not familiar with USAID's award-making processes, and engaging these organizations requires high levels of engagement and support.

## **Capacity Building**

***Increase virtual training opportunities and online resources.***

Farmer-to-Farmer.org is an increasingly effective way to reach numerous F2F stakeholders. The number of unique users visiting the site has increased from 175 in fiscal year 2014 to 4,362 in FY 2015 and 7,992 in just the first six months of FY 2016. However, passive communication is not enough. During meetings with VWB program staff in Uganda and Ethiopia, for example, VEGA discovered that local staff were not aware of Farmer-to-Farmer.org and the resources available on the site. They were very interested in the training opportunities that VEGA provides, requesting links to indicator training videos and encouraging a webinar format for future sessions so that staff in distant locations can participate.

***Develop additional templates, tools, and resources.***

Implementation of the F2F program can be challenging to new implementers, and feedback from the survey and focus group reinforce that additional support would be welcome in understanding awards and F2F standard indicators and developing strong policies and procedures. Resources developed to date, including F2F USAID standard indicator training videos<sup>9</sup>, PERSUAP for F2F implementers<sup>10</sup>, and the "VEGA Guide to Volunteer Safety and Security Policies and Procedures<sup>11</sup>," have been well-received by implementers. When possible, VEGA will share or adapt resources from the *Farmer-to-Farmer Implementer's Manual* as needed by Grantees. Potential topics for additional resources are listed below:

- Training on the calculation of leverage and definition of volunteer contributions
- Alternative sources of funding to implement volunteer recommendations

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<sup>9</sup> [http://farmer-to-farmer.org/resources?search\\_api\\_views\\_fulltext\\_1=training+session&field\\_audience=All&field\\_sectors=All&field\\_tags=All](http://farmer-to-farmer.org/resources?search_api_views_fulltext_1=training+session&field_audience=All&field_sectors=All&field_tags=All)

<sup>10</sup> [http://farmer-to-farmer.org/resources?search\\_api\\_views\\_fulltext\\_1=persuap&field\\_audience=All&field\\_sectors=All&field\\_tags=All](http://farmer-to-farmer.org/resources?search_api_views_fulltext_1=persuap&field_audience=All&field_sectors=All&field_tags=All)

<sup>11</sup> <http://farmer-to-farmer.org/resources/vega-guide-volunteer-safety-and-security-policies-and-procedures>

- How in-country USAID Missions work and how to communicate best with your country's Mission.
- Standard indicator training for in-country hosts (PDPs)
- Templates for communication and outreach, such as press releases
- Training on best practices in financial management
- Training on CFR 200
- Risk management
- Templates and recommended procedure for volunteer reference checks
- Template for volunteer trip reports

***Continue capacity building for Small Grant applicants.***

VEGA's capacity-building efforts begin at the application phase to ensure that organizations with little experience applying for USAID funding have the information needed to compete against more experienced applicants. Over the course of the program, VEGA adopted several improvements to this support. During the first round of Small Grants, support and capacity building were limited to informal emails or phone calls. VEGA has since adopted a procedure that offers all applicants equal support in a transparent manner. During the 2015 competition, staff developed feedback memoranda, including both application-specific feedback and general tips for all applicants, and shared them with all applicants, regardless of whether they were invited to submit a Full Application. Furthermore, VEGA's F2F SPSP director offered a phone call to discuss and clarify the feedback.

Although this process is time consuming, it has resulted in stronger applications. PEC members stated that the quality of applicants has improved with each round of Small Grants solicitation. Applicants themselves also reported that they received sufficient support from VEGA, which allowed them to better understand USAID requirements and strengthen their proposals. VEGA recommends that staff continue to offer higher levels of support and interaction at all stages of the application.

***Increase support for communication with USAID Missions.***

SPSP Grantees have expressed a desire for VEGA to take a more direct and active role in facilitating their communication with USAID Missions. To date, VEGA's strategy has been to encourage Grantees to engage with Missions, supplying contacts when necessary but generally leaving communication up to the Grantees. However, there is a perception among Grantees that VEGA currently engages Missions without sharing that information.

While VEGA could do more to facilitate Mission relationships with its Grantees, staff time is a limiting factor. If time were available, VEGA would take a two-pronged approach to enhancing Mission engagement. First, it would coach its Grantees on how best to approach USAID Missions in order to foster strong relationships. Then, it would communicate directly with USAID Missions—including an introductory email at the program's inception that explains the program and VEGA's role, shares semi-annual reports, develops success stories, and sends them to Missions—and connect in-person through additional support visits to Grantees.

***Enhance SPSP Grantees' engagement with the larger F2F community.***

VEGA could better connect its Grantees to core implementers, which would help both SPSP Grantees and core implementers to explore possibilities for collaboration. Providing funding for all Small Grantees and PDPs to attend the F2F annual implementer partners meeting would go a long way to foster this collaboration. Travel funds, in particular for Small Grantees, should be provided in addition to the grant.

***Add mid-sized grants as F2F 'stepping stones.'***

SPSP is designed to bring new organizations into F2F and help them grow into larger roles within the community, such as partnering with other implementers as subs. Overall, PDPs agree that their experience has greatly enhanced their understanding of what is required to implement an F2F program. However, Grantees also expressed that moving between grant levels—PDPs moving up to become core implementers or Small Grantees moving up to receive a PDP—still feels out of reach. They note that the gaps between each level are too large. During the focus group, Small Grant managers agreed that the one-year duration and \$150,000 limit were obstacles to their organization's ability to implement larger programs.

In order to bridge the gaps and design SPSP grants so they are helping organizations work toward larger roles within F2F, USAID could introduce a mid-sized SPSP grant category (\$300,000–\$500,000). This grant could be awarded at the beginning of the SPSP cycle, or it could begin about midway and be limited to organizations that successfully completed Small Grants awarded earlier in the cycle.

## *Conclusion*

The Lessons Learned I study has shown that VEGA's SPSP sub-awards program has operated effectively throughout the first half of the program. Many improvements have already been incorporated, and the benefits of these can be seen both in feedback from Grantees and in the high quality of Small Grant and PDP projects. With few exceptions, VEGA Grantees reported being satisfied with the support they receive, though many requested that VEGA take an even more active role in building the capacity of their organizations.

Of course, further improvement is always possible. Many of the recommendations made in this study can and will be implemented by VEGA during the remainder of the program, especially in the design and management of the final round of Small Grants, which is planned for 2017. Other recommendations, however, require additional resources from USAID. Over the course of the program, estimated funding has decreased significantly—from an initial \$9 million for core activities to \$6.2 million in 2015. While expectations of VEGA staff increased, LOE was cut by 28%, making it increasingly challenging to ensure that the level of support and oversight to sub-Grantees does not suffer. As the current F2F cycle winds down and funding expectations become more certain, VEGA encourages USAID to consider that investment in the sub-awards program represents an investment in the future of the F2F Program. With relatively little money, VEGA can support Small Grants and PDPs that result not only in successful volunteer programs but also in F2F being a more inclusive and innovative program overall.

## *List of Annexes:*

*Annex A: Survey Questions – Small Grant Applicants (Successful and Unsuccessful)*

*Annex B: Interview Questions – In-Country Coordinator*

*Annex C: Interview Questions – PEC Members*

*Annex D: Interview Questions – PDP Grantees*

*Annex E: Focus Group Questions – Small Grantees*

*Annex F: 2016 Small Grants Onboarding Packet*

*Annex G: Small Grant Exit Interview Questions*

## *Annex A: Survey Questions – Small Grant Applicants (Successful and Unsuccessful)*

**1. Which of the following F2F funding opportunities has your organization applied to? Please check all that apply.**

- 2013 Small Grant (Concept Paper was due 12/23/13)
- 2014 Small Grant (Concept Paper was due 10/27/14)
- 2016 Small Grant (Concept Paper was due 2/18/16)
- 2014 PDP (Concept Paper was due 04/24/14)
- 2016 PDP (Full Application was due 03/1/16)
- My organization has never applied for F2F funding.

**2. Which of the following did your organization most recently apply to?**

- Small Grant
- PDP

**3. If your most recent application was for a Small Grant, were you invited to complete a Full Application?**

- Yes
- No
- Did not apply for a Small Grant.

**4. Was your organization awarded the Small Grant?**

- Yes
- No

**5. If your most recent application was for a PDP, were you invited to complete a Full Application? Please note that the 2016 PDP in Ghana did not have a concept paper stage.**

- Yes
- No
- My organization applied to the 2016 PDP in Ghana
- Did not apply for a PDP

**6. Was your organization awarded the PDP?**

- Yes
- No

**7. Please rate how comfortable or uncomfortable your organization is with applying to USAID–funded programs.**

- Very comfortable
- Comfortable
- Neither comfortable nor uncomfortable
- Uncomfortable
- Very uncomfortable
- I don't know
- Other (please specify)

*When answering the following questions, please only refer to your most recent application.*

**8. Which of the following did you most recently apply to?**

- 2013 Small Grant
- 2014 Small Grant
- 2016 Small Grant
- 2014 PDP
- 2016 PDP

**9. Please select the option that best represents how you feel about the content of the RFA you most recently applied to.** *Please note that you may need to scroll to the right to view all answer options: Strongly Agree, Agree, Undecided, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, N/A.*

The RFA clearly explained the eligibility criteria for applicants.

Comments:

The program objectives outlined in the RFA were clear.

Comments:

How to submit Question and Answer queries was clear.

Comments:

The responses received from the Question and Answer portion of the application provided further clarity to the RFA.

Comments:

The application requirements (page length, outline, submitted via Word, etc.) outlined in the RFA were clear.

Comments:

The evaluation process outlined in the RFA was clear. (For example, you understood that there was a Concept Paper phase and that only organizations selected by the Proposal Evaluation Committee would be invited to submit a Full Application.)

Comments:

The evaluation criteria outlined in the RFA were clear. (For example, you understood that you were being evaluated on your technical approach, source of volunteers, organizational capacity, and budget and the meaning/purpose of each of these sections.)

Comments:

The deadline for submitting Applications was clear.

Comments:

Directions on how to submit Applications were clear.

Comments:

*F2F RFAs always include a number of annexes. We are interested in learning if you feel each was helpful or unhelpful. If you felt an annex was unhelpful, please use the comment box to explain why you felt it was unhelpful and/or add any suggestions for how you think VEGA could improve its usefulness.*

**10. Please select the option that best represents how you felt about the annexes included the RFA you most recently applied to. (Helpful, Neither helpful nor unhelpful, Unhelpful, Did not use, I don't remember)**

“Functions and Activities Typically Required in an F2F Volunteer Program” – outlined requirements like sector analysis and planning, selecting partners, selecting hosts, development of assignments, volunteer recruitment, etc.

Comments:

“Other Critical Implementation Requirements” – stressed that applicants consider the planned and unplanned impacts of their programs on gender and environmental issues; also outlined restricted sub-sectors, activities, and PERSUAP requirements.

Comments:

“Eligible F2F Countries and Existing F2F Country Programs”

Comments:

“F2F Standard Indicator Reporting Tables” – provided an example of the USAID F2F Standard Indicator Tables or provided a reminder of where an example table could be located.

Comments:

“VEGA F2F Volunteer SOW Approval Document” – provided a template for Volunteer Assignment SOWs that would be required from Grantees.

Comments:

“Branding and Marketing” – outlines the Branding Strategy and Marketing Plan USAID requires apparently successful applicants to submit.

Comments:

“Environmental Guidelines for F2F Volunteers” – outlines the volunteer's role in maintaining environmental health and safety.

Comments:

“John Ogonowski F2F Program Guidelines for Implementing Partners: Environmental and Natural Resource Management Issues” – outlines major environmental issues in volunteer programs, current practices, the role of implementers, and key recommendations.

Comments:

“Certifications” – provides a link to USAID's resource for certifications and required representations.

Comments:

“CV Template”

Comments:

“Past Performance Review Template”

Comment:

**11. Was the amount of time provided to submit a Concept Paper sufficient?**

- Yes
- No
- Applied to 2016 PDP RFA Ghana (did not have a Concept Paper phase)
- I don't know

**12. Please provide us with an estimate of how much time your organization would need to prepare a Concept Paper.**

**13. Was the amount of time provided to submit a Full Application sufficient?**

- Yes
- No
- We have never completed a Full Application.
- I don't know

**14. Please provide us with an estimate of how much time your organization would need to prepare a Full Application.**

**15. Would you have benefited from more support in developing your Concept Paper and/or application? Please choose all sections you would have liked like more support developing.**

- Objectives
- Description of Problem
- Proposed Activities
- Sources and Management of Volunteers
- Staffing
- Budget
- Requirements (i.e. Mission concurrence, CVs, past performance references)
- Certifications and Representations
- Navigating USAID RFAs
- How to Implement F2F Grants
- None of the above
- Other (please specify)

**16. How would you like to receive additional support? Please select all options that may interest you.**

- Webinars
- Templates
- One-on-one calls
- Seminars/Events
- Other written resources
- Other (please specify)

**17. In 2015, VEGA offered an F2F Small Grant opportunity for \$150,000 in Turkmenistan to train extension agents working in the livestock sector. Did you receive information about this opportunity?**

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

**18. Did you apply to the Small Grant opportunity in Turkmenistan?**

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

**19. Please explain why you did not apply (if applicable).**

**20. In 2015, VEGA offered an F2F Small Grant for \$150,000 to support agribusiness in Serbia. Did you receive information about this opportunity?**

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

**21. Did you apply to the Small Grant opportunity in Serbia?**

- Yes
- No
- I don't know

**22. Please explain why you did not apply (if applicable).**

**23. How did your organization learn about F2F Small Grant and/or PDP opportunities? Please check all that apply.**

- Farmer-to-Farmer.org website
- Farmer-to-Farmer social media (Facebook, Twitter)
- VEGAalliance.org website
- VEGA Alliance social media (Facebook)
- Direct email of RFA announcement
- Personal reference
- I don't know
- Other (please specify)

**24. Which of the following is your preferred method of communication to learn about F2F Grant opportunities?**

- Farmer-to-Farmer.org website
- Farmer-to-Farmer social media (Facebook, Twitter)
- VEGAlliance.org website
- VEGA Alliance social media (Facebook, Twitter)
- Direct email of RFA announcement
- Speaking with an F2F representative at an event
- Other (please specify)

**25. Please rate how helpful or unhelpful you found VEGA's assistance (F2F staff) during the solicitation process.**

- Very helpful
- Helpful
- Neither helpful nor unhelpful
- Not helpful
- Very unhelpful

Comments:

**26. Please rate how fair or unfair you felt the solicitation process was.**

- Very fair
- Fair
- Neither fair nor unfair
- Unfair
- Very unfair

Comments:

**27. Please rate how transparent or nontransparent you felt the solicitation process was.**

- Very transparent
- Transparent
- Neither transparent nor nontransparent
- Nontransparent
- Very nontransparent

Comments:

**28. Please rate how satisfied or unsatisfied your organization was with the overall F2F solicitation process.**

- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Unsatisfied
- Very unsatisfied

Comments:

**29. Please rate how likely or unlikely it is that your organization will apply for F2F funding in the future.**

- Very likely
- Likely
- Neither likely nor unlikely
- Unlikely
- Very unlikely
- I don't know

Comments:

**30. Please share any other comments or recommendations related to your experience applying for an F2F grant.**

**31. If VEGA has any follow-up questions, may we contact you for an interview?**

- Yes
- No

**32. Please provide your name and a phone number or email where we can reach you.**

## Annex B: Interview Questions – In-Country Coordinator

### In-Country Coordinator Interview Questions:

1. How did you first encounter the program implementer? Did the idea for the program come from the implementer or the host?
2. Did you work with the program implementer in developing the Application under the Small Grant/PDP RFA? To what level, in what capacity?
3. What problem or issue does your program seek to address? Do you feel the Small Grant or PDP has addressed it successfully? Why? Why not? *(Post-Interview: check if this response matches the program description.)*
4. In your words, please describe your role implementing the program. (If applicable: Did you have a hand in selecting hosts? What makes a good host? What are the biggest challenges you face working with hosts and the strategies you use to overcome them?)
5. To what level were you involved in identifying safety and security procedures for volunteers? Are you aware of how the implementing organization identified these procedures (i.e., adequate housing, an evacuation plan, etc.)?
6. What involvement did you have in developing volunteer SOWs and recruitment? Do you feel that volunteer candidates are well qualified to meet the objectives of those SOWs?
7. What involvement do you have in completing the standard indicator reporting? How comfortable are you with these reporting requirements?
8. About what percentage of your time do you spend on the Small Grant/PDP program? What other professional commitments do you currently have? How do you access the resources you need (equipment/space/staff support/supplies) to perform your job? What did you contribute to the assignment/project in terms of time?
9. Describe what generally happens when volunteers are in country. How much time did you spend interacting with the volunteer? Do you feel that, in general, the time volunteers spend in country is used efficiently and effectively? How would you rank the volunteer's interaction with the host on a scale of 1-5 (1 being very good, 5 being very bad)?
10. What is your level of familiarity with the worldwide Farmer-to-Farmer program? Is it an effective program in your opinion? Why or why not?
11. As an in-country coordinator, please identify some benefits and challenges of F2F's volunteer short-term technical assistance approach.

12. What is your level of familiarity with VEGA's F2F SPSP?
13. Have you ever seen F2F resources like the Implementers' Guide? If so, how useful is it? Are there other resources that might be helpful to you in coordinating F2F programs? Have you visited Farmer-to-Farmer.org?
14. Is there anything else you would like F2F/USAID to know?

**Host Organization Coordinator Interview Questions for coordinators who are from host organizations (frequently found in Small Grants):**

1. How well did the volunteer address problems/questions raised by your organization and its beneficiaries?
2. What did your organization learn from the volunteer?
3. What do you think the volunteer learned from your organization?
4. Based on the list of recommendations from the report, rank the importance of each recommendation. Then discuss if you have been able to implement the recommendations. If yes, what was the result? If no, why not (and do you plan to)?
5. Are you and other farmers in this area doing things differently than before based on the Small Grant/PDP program? If yes, describe the differences (especially focus on technology or innovations).

## Annex C: Interview Questions – PEC Members

### Interview – Proposal Evaluation Committee (PEC) members

#### Goals of this interview:

- To assess VEGA’s management of the PEC
  - To gather lessons learned on the PEC process, and the PDP/ SPSP program in general
1. This first set of questions will help us assess our communications and the process of setting up the PEC. How well did VEGA communicate what was expected from you as a member of the PEC? Did you feel the scope of work you were given was achievable within the timeframe and compensation provided? Did you participate in a briefing call prior to receiving the Applications? Was this call helpful? Why or why not?
  2. Please provide feedback on the Concept Note and Full Application stages. Do you think the two-step approach was useful? Did you see an improvement in Applications from concept note to full application? Number of applications they were required to read appropriate?(*Note: Ghana RFA was only fully application*)
  3. The RFA was broken into different sections with different points assigned. Were the categories appropriate for evaluation? Were any categories missing or should be removed? Should there be a category with more emphasis? (*Please refer to RFA for points and reference*)
  4. The SPSP (small grant and PDP programs) were was established to help us reach a more diverse set of F2F volunteers and implementers and to promote innovation within the program. Based on that goal, do you think the solicitations were written to help garner that kind of interest? What would you recommend we adjust, if anything, on the evaluation criteria to help us meet those goals? How can we better reach new implementers? How can we better bring in/evaluate innovation in proposals?
  5. VEGA managed the overall PEC process. What were some of the things VEGA did to help make the process fair, effective, and efficient? What would you recommend that VEGA do to improve on their management of the PEC process?
  6. The makeup of the PEC was purposely diverse—including USAID, VEGA, several retired USAID Officers, and industry experts. Do you have any thoughts on the composition of the committee? Do you think this composition led to fair decisions? Do you think this composition helped to promote innovation? What recommendations do you have to improve the composition of the committee in order to lead to a more diverse and innovative F2F program?
  7. What recommendations do you have to improve the PEC process? What else, apart from what has been asked, do you think VEGA and USAID should know about the PDP program?

## *Annex D: Interview Questions – PDP Grantees*

### Interview Group 1 – PDP Grant Managers

#### Goals of this interview:

- To assess how VEGA is doing in program management
- To assess how VEGA is doing in capacity building
- To assess RFA outreach and solicitation process

Let's start with a brief overview of your work with the PDP program. Can you tell me about your project, such as where it was implemented, targeted beneficiaries, and key results? Tell me about any innovative aspects of the program and why you consider them to be innovative.

1. We are interested in improvements or adjustments in the awards process that can make the PDP award process more inclusive to new organizations and better prepare applicant organizations to bid on the larger Farmer-to-Farmer programs. Can you please provide feedback on changes you would suggest VEGA make to improve its management of the PDP process? (Areas to consider: outreach and pre-solicitation preparation, time provided to respond to the solicitation, clarity of the solicitation, process of reviewing/evaluating proposals.)
2. The PDP program was designed to provide new or smaller organizations with an opportunity to bid on a medium-size Farmer-to-Farmer program. The idea of the PDP is to build the capacity of the implementer to be able to feel confident and obtain the past performance needed to manage a larger Farmer-to-Farmer program successfully in the future. What was/is your long-term goal for working with Farmer-to-Farmer, and how does the PDP program help you achieve that? In what ways has managing this PDP program prepared your organization to meet your goal? In what ways hasn't it?
3. VEGA is tasked with building the capacity of PDP and Small Grant holders to comply with USAID management and reporting requirements and Farmer-to-Farmer best practices. VEGA had done this by: having a more iterative proposal process, hosting "brown bags" on topics of need or interest to PDP implementers, developing Web-based tools or resources on management processes and USAID requirements, and conducting special studies. We are seeking your feedback on these tools.
  - Overall, are you aware that these capacity-building tools exist? How were you made aware of them? What have you used? What is still needed?
  - Do you have any thoughts on VEGA's reporting requirements and procedures? Was it reasonable? Too much?
  - What did you think about the onboarding process? What recommendations do you have?
  - Have you used resources on Farmer-to-Farmer.org? What resources are helpful? What additional resources would you like to see?

- VEGA has conducted several “brown bags,” which are short presentations and discussions, on Farmer-to-Farmer implementation. Have you attended a brown bag in the past? If so, did you find the session helpful? How would you improve it in the future?
  - VEGA has conducted several special studies in the past—e.g., Farmer-to-Farmer PERSUAP (Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan) and the recruitment of minority volunteers—and has room to conduct additional studies. Are there any particular study topics that would be useful to you?
  - What areas, if any, do you need assistance with when implementing Farmer-to-Farmer?
  - Based on your work, where would you like to see improvements made in F2F?
4. Volunteers are the heart of the Farmer-to-Farmer program, and the PDP awards are meant to assist organizations in learning more about effective fielding of volunteers. Do you think the PDP program gave opportunities to new volunteers to participate in the Farmer-to-Farmer program? What are the challenges you face in volunteer recruitment? Volunteer management? Volunteer safety and security? Has VEGA assisted in addressing these challenges? What could VEGA do that they are not doing to assist in these challenges? Thinking more broadly on the Farmer-to-Farmer program, do you think improvements need to be made to the volunteer screening, preparing, and fielding process?
  5. Monitoring and evaluation is a critical area of international development programs. Let’s talk about the Farmer-to-Farmer Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) process. What are some of your positive comments about the M&E system? What is needed to improve it? Does the M&E data collected help you, as the implementing organization, make better management decisions? VEGA, with USAID and others, put together online M&E trainings (found on Farmer-to-Farmer.org). Have you used these? Why or why not?
  6. In general, tell me about your overall experience with VEGA, USAID, and the PDP program. What were the challenges when implementing the PDP program? What were the most rewarding parts of implementing the PDP program?
  7. Let’s talk about outreach and communications. Part of VEGA’s role is educating the international development community and the public about Farmer-to-Farmer and assisting program managers in sharing stories and communications with the public about F2F. VEGA attempts to do this through stories on PDP programs. Assess how VEGA supports PDPs to communicate on behalf of their programs.
  8. What else, apart from what has been asked, do you think VEGA and USAID should know about the PDP program?

## *Annex E: Focus Group Questions – Small Grantees*

### Goals of the Focus Group:

- To learn how VEGA is doing in program management
  - To learn how VEGA is doing in capacity building
  - To gain feedback on RFA outreach and solicitation processes
1. We are interested in improvements or adjustments in the awards process that can make the Farmer-to-Farmer Small Grants application and management process more inclusive to new organizations and better prepare applicant organizations to bid on and manage larger programs. Can you please provide feedback or changes you would suggest VEGA make to improve their management of the Small Grants process? (Areas to consider: outreach and pre-solicitation preparation, time provided to respond to the solicitation, clarity of the solicitation, process of reviewing/evaluating proposals.)
  2. Overall, was the RFA clear in identifying the type of programs Farmer-to-Farmer is seeking to award? Do you feel the RFA requirements are appropriate when implementing your program (one-year programs capped at \$150,000)? Did you seek assistance from VEGA when developing your application? If yes, was this assistance helpful?
  3. Do you find the reporting requirements appropriate (monthly updates, milestone reports, and final milestone report)? Is VEGA's feedback on these reports useful? Small Grants Awards are fixed-amount awards; the payments are based on milestones. The main advantage of this type of award is simplified financial documentation and reporting requirements. Is the simplified system helpful to your organization? Do you feel you could meet the requirements of a cost-reimbursable system, including meeting federal cost principles? Has the milestone system been clear throughout implementation?
  4. One goal of the Small Grants program is to build the capacity of the implementer to be able to feel confident and obtain the past performance needed to manage a larger Farmer-to-Farmer program successfully in the future. What was/is your long-term goal for working with Farmer-to-Farmer, and how does the Small Grants program help you achieve that? In what ways has managing this Small Grants program prepared your organization to meet your goal? In what ways hasn't it?
  5. Another goal of the Small Grants program is to bring new volunteer sources into the Farmer-to-Farmer community. Are you satisfied with your level of engagement with the larger Farmer-to-Farmer community? Has your participation in the Small Grants program led to increased interaction with core implementers? Would you consider collaborating with a core implementer as a smaller piece of a larger Farmer-to-Farmer program? Why or why not? What kinds of support would be helpful in making connections with core implementers (if participants are interested)?

6. VEGA is tasked with building the capacity of Small Grant holders to comply with USAID management and reporting requirements and Farmer-to-Farmer best practices. VEGA has done this by: communicating frequently with grant recipients, hosting “brown bags” on topics of need or interest to Farmer-to-Farmer implementers, developing Web-based tools or resources on management processes and USAID requirements, and conducting special studies. We are seeking your feedback on these tools.
  - a. Overall, are you aware that these capacity-building tools exist? How were you made aware of them? What have you used? What is still needed?
  - b. Do you have any thoughts on VEGA’s reporting requirements and procedures? Was it reasonable? Too much?
  - c. What did you think about the onboarding process? What recommendations do you have?
  - d. Have you used resources on Farmer-to-Farmer.org? What resources are helpful? What additional resources would you like to see?
  
7. VEGA has conducted several “brown bags,” which are short presentations and discussions, on Farmer-to-Farmer implementation. Have you attended a brown bag in the past? If so, did you find the session helpful? How would you improve it in the future?
  
8. What areas, if any, do you need assistance or more assistance with when implementing Farmer-to-Farmer program? Are there any areas where you felt you received inadequate support? Some of the areas might include:
  - a. Volunteer recruitment: publicizing the volunteer program and building a network of volunteers.
  - b. Travel arrangements: including compliance with the Fly America Act and support in the area of travel vaccinations and visas and purchasing medical evacuation insurance for volunteers.
  - c. Managing volunteer finances: including reimbursement of allowable costs.
  - d. Monitoring and evaluation of volunteer assignment impacts.
  - e. Safety and security.
  - f. Program management systems: developing project strategies, host profiles and scopes of work (SOWs).
  - g. Finance and budgets.
  - h. Working with host organizations/host beneficiaries.
  - i. Use of pesticides and USAID PERSUAP regulations.
  - j. Where and how to find resources for the Farmer-to-Farmer program.
  - k. Outreach and communications: to the general public and USAID Missions
  - l. Other areas.
  
9. Would you be interested in working with VEGA to engage USAID Missions about expanding your Farmer-to-Farmer program? Why or why not? What kinds of support from VEGA would be most important?
  
10. What changes would you like to see to the Small Grants program in the future?

## Annex F: 2016 Small Grants Onboarding Packet



### Farmer-to-Farmer Special Program Support Project

## On-boarding Packet

Small Grants 2016-1

May 2016

*Welcome to the VEGA Farmer-to-Farmer Special Program Support Project! This packet contains links and resources to assist in implementation of your Farmer-to-Farmer Small Grants program. We look forward to working with you throughout the next year to implement a successful and impactful Farmer-to-Farmer Small Grant Program.*

- Laura Alexander & Leia D'Amboise  
VEGA F2F Team

#### Contact Information:

Organization	Name	Title	Email
VEGA	<i>Names and contact information have been omitted for this report</i>		
VEGA			
FAMU			
BGGC			
EWB			
FAU			
NCBA CLUSA			

## Links to Resources

- Farmer-to-Farmer Program Manual
  - [Managing International Volunteer Programs: A Farmer-to-Farmer Program Manual](#)
- Reporting on F2F Standard Indicators
  - [Standard Indicator Definitions](#)
  - [Monitoring and Evaluation Dos and Don'ts](#)
  - [Standard Indicator Reporting Tables](#) (Please note, Small Grants only report on the highlighted yellow indicators in your award)
- Resources on PERSUAP
  - [USAID PERSUAP](#)
  - [Information for Implementers](#)
  - [Environmental Guidelines for Farmer-to-Farmer Volunteers](#) (Should be shared with all Volunteers)
  - [PERSUAP and You!](#)
- Communication and Outreach
  - [Farmer-to-Farmer Program Brochure](#)
  - [Farmer-to-Farmer Common Power Point Slides](#)
- Safety & Security
  - [VEGA Guide to Safety & Security Policies and Procedures](#)
- Volunteer Recruitment & SOW Development
  - [Winrock SOW Checklist](#)
- Business Development and Program Expansion
  - [Accessing More Farmer-to-Farmer Program](#) (for USAID)

More helpful resources can be found at: <http://farmer-to-farmer.org/resources>

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## Volunteer Recruitment & GAO Compliance.

### The Farmer-to-Farmer General Accountable Office (GAO) Report

Requirements for organizations engaging in Volunteer Recruitment:

- Does not engage in transactions with, or provide resources or support to, individuals and organizations associated with terrorism, including those individuals or entities that appear on the Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List maintained by the U.S. Treasury or the United Nations Security designation list. All potential volunteers are screened against these and other watch lists and this provision is included in all sub-agreements, including sub-awards and contracts issued under the F2F award.

- *Specially Designated Nationals and Blocked Persons List:*  
<https://sanctionssearch.ofac.treas.gov/>
  - *United Nations Security designation list:*  
<https://www.un.org/sc/suborg/en/sanctions/un-sc-consolidated-list>
- Carries out at least two reference checks on all potential first time F2F volunteers in addition to other required screening and carries out reference checks on all repeat F2F volunteers with regard to prior F2F assignments, and additional external references if no F2F assignments have been completed within the past 24 months.
  - Immediately informs the USAID AOR of any negative F2F volunteer performance or behavior and provides information on such performance or behavior experiences to other F2F implementing organizations when contacted for reference checks on potential volunteers.
    - *VEGA will inform USAID AOR on behalf of all Grantees.*

### Monitoring and Evaluation Compliance

Please see below for standard language for M&E Compliance. This language must be included with the Small Grant Final Report.

#### **M & E CERTIFICATION (STANDARD LANGUAGE)**

XX confirms that we have: a) used established indicators and definitions; b) participated in regular (annual) workshops reviewing indicators and M&E systems; and c) trained field staff on indicators and data collection systems. The above mentioned training sessions included extensive instruction in the collection and reporting of indicators.

### Annexes

All annexes can be found in your award. However, VEGA recognizes many of these are needed as word documents. Please find the relevant annexes below:

- Award Annex Two: Milestone Payment Request Form**
- Award Annex Four: Monthly Update Template**
- Award Annex Five: VEGA Farmer-to-Farmer SOW Approval Document**
- Award Annex Nine: Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan (PERSUAP) Reporting Template**

**ANNEX TWO: GRANT PAYMENT REQUEST FORM**

Grantee: \_\_\_\_\_ (name of organization)

Grant #: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Requested: \_\_\_\_\_ (amount in US\$ currency)

Milestone Payment #: \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

Backup documentation attached (accomplishment report): \_\_\_\_\_ (description of backup)

*"The undersigned hereby certifies: a) the milestone has been achieved, b) that payment of the sum claimed as total spent in this request is proper and due and that all funds provided by VEGA have been used solely for the purposes described in the Grant and in accordance with all of the terms and conditions therein; c) that appropriate refund or credit to the Grant will be made in the event of a disallowance in accordance with the terms of the Grant, for nonperformance in whole or in part under this Grant, in the event funds are not expended, and that any interest exceeding US\$250 per year accrued on the funds made available herein will be refunded to VEGA; d) that any detailed supporting information as the Grantor may require will be furnished by the Grantee promptly upon request; and, e) that all requirements called for by the Grant have been met up to the date of this certification."*

By:

Name:

Title:

Date:

**ANNEX FOUR: MONTHLY UPDATE TEMPLATE**

**Farmer-to-Farmer Special Program  
Support Project  
Small Grants 2016**

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*Monthly Update Report*  
*NAME OF ORGANIZATION*  
*MONTH*

**Activities accomplished last month:**

**Challenges during the last month:**

**Is there any assistance needed by VEGA? If yes, please describe:**

**Planned activities for next month:**

**Volunteer Planning and Tracking:**

*\*Note, this table should be cumulative for the life of the project*

Title of SOW	Has this SOW been approved by VEGA?	Name of Volunteer (if volunteer has been recruited)	Planned Dates of Volunteer Assignment	Does this SOW involve Pesticides use or training?	Name, title of Mission contact. Date which the mission was informed of Volunteer assignment.	Actual Dates of Volunteer Assignment (completed post-assignment)

**ANNEX FIVE: VEGA FARMER-TO-FARMER SOW APPROVAL DOCUMENT**



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



**USAID-Funded  
John Ogonowski and Doug Bereuter Farmer-to-Farmer Program  
[Name of Project]**

**Request for Technical Assistance  
Scope of Work**

**Assignment Title:  
Assignment Number:**

**Executive Summary:** *Provide a 2-3 paragraph abstract of the assignment. This should include a brief statement of problem(s) to be addressed during the volunteer assignment, and skills required of the volunteer. Additional/longer information can be included in the Background or Host Information sections below.*

**Background:** *Include information to explain the context of the assignment and orient volunteers about the assignment.*

**Host Information:** *The host is the direct recipient of F2F assistance. If there are multiple hosts, provide information for each host to be assisted under the SOW. Information should include, at a minimum:*

- *Host name*
- *Address and contact information*
- *Host gender (refer to Standard Indicator: Output 10: Number of Host Organizations Assisted to define Host Gender)*
- *Host type (refer to Standard Indicator: Output 10: Number of Host Organizations Assisted to define Host Type)*
- *Whether the host is new under the project*

**Host Organization Profile:** *Provide additional information about the host, such as history of the organization, size, capabilities, assets, etc. The greater the detail, the better as a well-developed SOW can aid volunteer recruitment, orientation, and data collection. Provide only information applicable to this assignment.*

**Assignment Information:**

**Type of Volunteer Assistance:** Choose an item.

*Indicate which category of assistance (standard F2F indicators) the volunteer will spend the majority of his or her time supporting. (Administrative, Business/Enterprise Development, Environmental Conservation, Financial Services, Organizational Development, Technology Transfer)*

**Number of Volunteer Experts Requested:** *The number of volunteers required to complete the assignment.*

**Expertise of Volunteer Experts Requested:** *Describe in as much detail as possible the technical and training skills needed by the volunteer to fulfill the assignment objectives. Information needed includes minimum requirements, professional affiliations, specific experience or skills, etc.*

**Objectives of the Assignment:** *Describe what kinds of impacts the host expects from this assignment -make sure they are realistic -e.g., increased sales, a new product developed; a new business plan written, new business/farm management skills. Objectives should be linked to the overall objectives of the small grant program.*

**Duration and Dates of Assignment (including travel):** *Identify specific dates or windows of opportunity with regards to crop cycles, holidays, etc. Also note any time periods that the host would not be available.*

**Expected Beneficiaries:** *Provide the following information on the expected training participants or direct recipients of volunteer assistance.*

- Estimated number of assignment participants:
- Estimated % of women:
- Average skill and education level:
- English-language capability:
- Any prior training on similar topic:

**Tasks to be Performed:** *These are the activities the expert is expected to perform in order to achieve the objectives. Include an illustrative work schedule for the volunteer (suggested table format included below).*

Prior to leaving the US:

In-country:

Activity	Location	Estimated days
Total number of days		

**F2F Pesticide Evaluation Report and Safer Use Action Plan (PERSUAP):** Indicate whether this is a PERSUAP assignment and, if so, the type: Type 1 (the assignment is expected to cover pesticide issues), Type 2 (the assignment may address some pesticide issues, but it is not a main focus), Type 3 (the assignment will probably not have any pesticide issues), or Type 4 (the assignment is supporting another USAID program).

**Working/living Conditions and Materials Needed for Assignment:** Describe the physical conditions the volunteers will encounter, such as the amount of walking/hiking to farm fields that will be required, if there will be large elevation changes, whether there will be hot or cold temperatures that may be difficult for some volunteers, etc. Please suggest what equipment and clothing the volunteer will need. This helps reduce the amount of luggage some volunteers bring. Describe need for water purification tablets, insect repellent, clothing, voltage of electricity, lack of water, etc. volunteer expert/s should be prepared for. Also, include any electronic, teaching materials, video, written information, etc. required for the assignment.

**ANNEX NINE: PESTICIDE EVALUATION REPORT AND SAFER USE ACTION PLAN (PERSUAP) REPORTING TEMPLATE**

The following guidance and standard language should be used in all program reports. ***Each F2F Semi-Annual and Annual report should include a PERSUAP annex, noting compliance with the F2F PERSUAP guidelines.*** This annex should include:

PERSUAP Implementation Experience – F2F Assignments: Over the period covered by this report, the project has had the following experience in implementing the F2F PERSUAP:

Assignments with Pesticides: The following Type 1 or 2 (or relevant Type 4) volunteer SOW were completed during the reporting period. (none or list as below)

1. Volunteer XXX for Assignment XXX:
  - a. One sentence general description of activities with pesticides
  - b. Key findings and recommendations on limitations/successes of F2F PERSUAP
  - c. Recommendations to F2F for additional support needed to improve pest and pesticide management practices
2. Volunteer XXX for Assignment XXX:
  - a. (etc.)

Assignments with SOWs in IPM and pesticide safer use: The following volunteer SOWs in IPM and pesticide safer use were undertaken for the F2F regional program, country program, or country project area as a whole. These differ from the individual assignments addressing pesticide use with specific hosts, which should be included in the table below. These will be relatively limited. (none or list as below)

1. Volunteer XXX for Assignment XXX:
  - a. One sentence general description of activities with pesticides
  - b. Key findings and recommendations on limitations/successes of F2F PERSUAP
  - c. Recommendations to F2F for additional support needed to improve pest and pesticide management practices
2. Volunteer XXX for Assignment XXX:
  - a. (etc.)

Needs for a PERSUAP amendment: The following needs for a PERSUAP amendment to add pesticides were identified during the reporting period. (Indicate none or list)

**F2F PERSUAP Assignment Data Table<sup>1</sup>:**

Assignment (Trip) Number	Volunteer Name	Country	Country F2F Project	PERSUAP Assignment Type	Work Directly with USAID Mission or Mission-funded Project (Type 4) – Check for Yes	Training Syllabus Sent to F2F AOR/ Mission Environmental Officer (Type 1) – Check for Yes	Training Attended by USAID (Type 1) – Check for Yes
<b>Counts:</b>							

**Certifications of assignment and office compliance with PERSUAP guidelines:**

***A. PERSUAP Compliance – F2F Assignments***

[Implementing partner] certifies that all volunteers have received the F2F Environmental Brochure. For all PERSUAP Type 1, 2 and relevant Type 4 SOWs, [implementing partner] further certifies the following have been provided to and developed by the relevant volunteers:

	<b>Type 1 SOWs<sup>2</sup></b>	<b>Type 2 SOWs<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>Provided to Volunteer</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> F2F PERSUAP with Attachments A - H <input type="checkbox"/> SUAP briefing with F2F field staff <input type="checkbox"/> Implementing Partner F2F PERSUAP Questionnaire <input type="checkbox"/> List of any IPM practices and any tools, forms, protocols, plans from previous volunteers <input type="checkbox"/> Host country list of approved pesticides <input type="checkbox"/> Approved pesticide list from any other applicable PERSUAPs	<input type="checkbox"/> F2F PERSUAP with Attachments B, C, F, H <input type="checkbox"/> SUAP briefing with F2F field staff <input type="checkbox"/> Implementing Partner F2F PERSUAP Questionnaire <input type="checkbox"/> List of IPM practices from previous volunteers

<b>Developed/ Provided by Volunteer</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Syllabus for training event <input type="checkbox"/> Material Safety Data Sheets (filed in field office) <input type="checkbox"/> Any pesticides that the F2F program should be able to recommend/use which are included on an approved list <input type="checkbox"/> Limitations/successes of F2F PERSUAP <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendations for additional support on pesticide management practices <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendations/feedback on local IPM practices <input type="checkbox"/> Highly Toxic Pesticides (Attachment E)/poor pesticide practices witnessed <input type="checkbox"/> Tools, forms, protocols, plans for implementation of pesticide-related recommendations	<input type="checkbox"/> Limitations/successes of F2F PERSUAP <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendations for additional support on pesticide management practices <input type="checkbox"/> Recommendations/feedback on local IPM practices
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**B. PERSUAP Compliance – F2F Offices**

[Implementing partner] certifies that all F2F staff have reviewed the F2F Environmental Brochure for staff the fiscal year and that the following have been updated and kept on file:

	<b>Home Office</b>	<b>Field Office</b>
<b>Documents Updated and on File</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> F2F Environmental Brochure for staff <input type="checkbox"/> PERSUAP with Attachments A-I <input type="checkbox"/> Any USAID Mission- or sector-wide PERSUAP(s) for relevant country/sector	<input type="checkbox"/> F2F Environmental Brochure for staff <input type="checkbox"/> PERSUAP with Attachments A-I <input type="checkbox"/> USAID Mission- or sector-wide PERSUAP(s) for relevant country/sector <input type="checkbox"/> Host country list of approved pesticides <sup>3</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> Implementing partner F2F PERSUAP Questionnaire, with any volunteer additions <input type="checkbox"/> Material Safety Data Sheets for relevant pesticides <sup>4</sup> <input type="checkbox"/> Tools, forms, protocols, plans developed by volunteers

<sup>3</sup>Required only for PERSUAP Type 1 & 2 SOWs, and for Type 4 SOWs that follow Type 1 & 2 requirements

<sup>2</sup>If governed by F2F PERSUAP, Type 4 SOWs should follow requirements for Type 1, 2, or 3 SOWs, as most relevant

<sup>3</sup>Or, letter from host country government stating that there is no list of government-approved pesticides and noting any specific measures that should be taken when F2F volunteers recommend pesticides

<sup>4</sup>It is recommended that these documents be translated into local languages for distribution to relevant hosts and partners. Please note if they have been translated (in whole or in part), and if not, why.

- The syllabus for each training event that includes pesticide use will be submitted to the Mission Environmental Officer and the USAID F2F AOR/COR for review and comment. The AOR/COR shall consult with the BEO or relevant REA, as needed, in situations where there is no Mission Environmental Officer.
- A representative from USAID (preferably the Mission) should attend the training sessions to the extent possible.
- All Implementing Partners (IPs) will be provided with and will familiarize themselves with the environmental brochures developed for the Farmer-to-Farmer Program. The “John Ogonowski Farmer-To-Farmer Program Environmental and Natural Resource Management Issues” provides program managers with needed information on environmental policies, issues, and regulations relevant to the F2F Program. The “Environmental Guidelines for Farmer-to-Farmer Volunteers” summarizes key environmental issues and regulations as guidance to volunteers to consider all potential environmental implications of their work (attached to the F2F IEE).

## *Annex G: Small Grant Exit Interview Questions*

### Exit Interview Questions – Small Grants

February 2015

#### *Pre-Award*

- How was the RFA process?
  - Were the objectives/parameters of the RFA clear?
  - Was VEGA supportive/responsive to your questions?
  - Was VEGA clear during the evaluation process?
- How was the Award process?
  - Was the Award explained clearly?
  - Were your questions answered?

#### *Onboarding*

- How was the onboarding process?
  - Were your questions answered?
  - Were the expectations clear?

#### *Grant Implementation and Management*

- How was VEGA's management during implementation?
  - Was VEGA responsive?
  - Did VEGA address your questions?
- Were there areas where VEGA assisted with the capacity building of your organization?
  - If yes, when?
  - Are there other areas you feel your organization could have benefited more from some training/capacity building?
- What challenges did you face during implementation?
  - How do you think VEGA could have better supported you during this?
- Now that the project is close to completion, do you feel prepared to take on a larger grant, such as a PDP?
  - Why or why not?

#### *General/F2F Worldwide*

- What changes would you suggest to VEGA throughout the Small Grants process and management?
- What suggestions, if any, do you have to improve the F2F worldwide program?