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Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance

VEGA 2007 Quarterly Report 1

(January 1 – March 31, 2007)

**LEADER WITH ASSOCIATE AGREEMENT (LWA)
EEM-A-00-04-00002-00**

**Prepared for the United States Agency for
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Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance

Leader Award EEM-A-00-04-00002-00

Quarterly Report 1 **(January - March 2007)**

This is the first Quarterly Report submitted to USAID for 2007. This report covers what VEGA has accomplished in the period January through March 2007.

Part I. Governance

Staff and Administrative Matters

Board Meeting

The VEGA Board of Directors met on March 20 and considered the following agenda items:

- Administration
 - Program Updates
 - Financial Update
- Executive Committee and VEGA Staff Efforts and Activities Under the Business Plan
- Outreach Efforts—Review and Planning for 2007
- Formation of a Committee/Task Force to Study Feasibility and Promote Extension and Expansion of the Present LWA
- Formation of a Nominating Committee for Election of Board Officers at the October Meeting

The Minutes from this meeting can be viewed by the VEGA Board members and member organization staff at [VEGANet](#) → Board of Directors

Members Meeting

Board Members and other representatives of VEGA's member organizations met on March 21 to consider the following theme and agenda:

Theme: VEGA Prospering in a Tough Market

Agenda:

- Review of 2006 Annual Report
 - Program Review
- Preview of 2007 Work Plan
- Outreach and New Business Development
 - Current Business Plan
 - Member Centered Outreach Strategy for 2007-2008
 - Business Development Incentives for Members

- Discussion: Maximizing VEGA's Competitiveness in the Current Development Assistance Funding Environment
- Responding to USAID Requests for Program Descriptions
- Monitoring and Evaluation: A Tool for Improved Project Management and a Resource for Higher-Impact Outreach Efforts
- Roles of VEGA Management Committees
 - Associate Design Committee
 - Independent Evaluators Council
 - Leadership Steering Committee

The Minutes and presentation from this meeting can be viewed by the VEGA Board members and member organization staff at [VEGANet](#) → Outreach → Members Meetings

Executive Committee Meetings

As charged by the Board of Directors at its October 11, 2006 meeting, the Executive Committee took on a larger and more engaged role in guiding and facilitating the work of the VEGA staff and or Member Organization staff, toward the end of carrying out a sustained outreach effort designed to take full advantage of the established contacts, business relationships, and in-country presence that Member Organizations have with USAID Missions. Consequently, Executive Committee members committed to meeting every two weeks to consider VEGA outreach, as well as project management implementation in the field, and project management and support from VEGA and the Member Organization home office staffs: Typically, the agenda of these meetings included such items as:

- Weekly Activity Sheet by the VEGA staff
- Periodic Program Performance Reports
- Periodic Financial/Audit Reports and Issues
- USAID/Client Relations
- Responsibilities/Communications to the VEGA Board
- Planning and Implementation of Outreach Activities/Tracking of the Outreach to the Top Twenty USAID Country Programs
- Governance issues or policies currently impacting on-going outreach and project implementation activities
- Prospective or Pending USAID Requests for Program Description
- Special Events

Executive Committee meetings during this quarter were held on January 3, 17 and 30; on February 14 and 28; and on March 14 and 28.

Notes for these meetings can be made available by the VEGA staff to Member Organizations and USAID clients upon request.

Part II. Outreach

In the period of January to March 2007, VEGA was involved in a number of outreach activities, serving a coordinating role to member organizations as outlined in the October 2006 Business Plan. VEGA staff followed up with contacts at member organizations regarding targeted USAID missions to see what intelligence is available at these missions and what refinements may be made to the Top 20 Targets List. The Top 20 Targets List was designed to always be in a state of refinement depending on USAID's goals in various missions around the world. The list went through its first refinement at the end of January, based on further intelligence from Members and discussions with Mission officials. VEGA engaged in active outreach to Missions in Lebanon, Pakistan, West Africa Regional Program, Liberia, and Sri Lanka. VEGA staff worked with CNFA on opportunities in Pakistan, the number one mission on the Top 20 List, and worked with OICI on opportunities in Liberia, the number 10 Mission in the Top 20 List. VEGA responded to a pre-solicitation notice issued by the Sri Lanka/India for RFI # 383-07 – USAID/Sri Lanka Private Enterprise and Competitiveness Expansion (PEACE) Project. VEGA was represented by six (6) member organizations at a February 13th Pre-Solicitation Conference in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The staff followed up with member organization participants following the conference and concluded outreach with the Sri Lanka Mission to discuss opportunities for VEGA in light of their potential new program.

Newsletter Headlines

- One of Sudan's 'Lost Boys' Returns Home as a VEGA Volunteer
 - Juke Mabior shares information technology skills and brings the Southern Sudan Ministry online
- Spotlight on Long Term Business Advisor Gabriella Prudencio
 - LTBA works on assignment in Zambia as a Market Research Specialist with USAID's PROFIT (Production Finance and Technology)
- VEGA/BTD's Authentic Bulgaria Introduces a Guidebook, Website, and Tourism Exhibitions
 - The Authentic Bulgaria Quality Mark program finalized the guidebook and website, which will be used to promote the program and accommodations that carry the mark
- VEGA Volunteers Help Prepare Southern Sudan for First National Census
 - Alexandra Lepionka and Kirk Manhin assist the Southern Sudan Commission for Census, Statistics, and Evaluation
- Ethiopian Textile and Garment Firms do MAGIC
 - The VEGA/AGOA + program assisted ten Ethiopian textile and garment factories to attend the biggest garment sourcing show in the world, Men's Apparel Guild in California (MAGIC)
- VEGA/South Africa Profiles Two New Subgrantees
 - Two of the five subgrantees selected to receive awards under the USAID/South Africa Annual Program Statement for Employment Creation represent business development services and skills industries in South Africa. These two organizations are the Cape Town Regional Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and Business Skills for South Africa

Part III. LWA Deliverables

Monitoring and Evaluation

There was no M&E reporting in this period but VEGA completed data analysis on the previous semiannual submission. While this submission was specifically for the period ending September 2006, the information included M&E data from the beginning of VEGA as that period had not been covered under any other M&E reporting method. Through September 2006, a period covering 27 months, VEGA fielded 84 volunteers providing roughly \$2.5 million in cost share to all USAID programs with VEGA. The volunteers came from 13 states and 14 countries, with a number of diaspora volunteers returning to their country of origin to assist in economic development efforts. The gender breakdown was 2/3 male and 1/3 female. The next submission is scheduled for April 2007.

Best Practice Models

Member organizations continue to submit their Case Studies in Best Practices for this quarter. These Case Studies are collected to provide USAID missions with members' Best Practices in utilizing volunteers to assist USAID in achieving its goals in economic growth and development. In order to maximize the value to USAID, member organizations and VEGA, the Case Studies in Best Practices underscore both a regional and technical specialty chosen by the submitting organization, yet each Case Study is linked by the common thread of highlighting the successful use of volunteer technical assistance to implement the core of the program. In addition to the previously submitted Case Studies in Best Practices, this quarter's Case Studies in Best Practices can be downloaded from the Case Studies page at <http://www.vegaalliance.org/best.asp> >> Case Studies.

Part IV. Associate Agreements

Bulgaria BTD

Work continued on implementing the program goals with an eye towards completing a no-cost extension at the request of the Mission in Sofia. The extension would add 4 months to the program but we have received word from the Mission that they want VEGA to program for a reduction of \$300,000 due to shortfalls in other programming in Bulgaria. VEGA is working with its implementing members to decide an action plan allowing for completion of program activities that meet USAID Bulgaria's priorities.

Sudan AMED

The security situation restrained the planned extent of operations, and questions surrounding the Sudanese government's acceptance of visas for Sudan issued anywhere other than Khartoum, e.g., Sudanese embassies, led to a brief slowdown of activities. Additionally, VEGA's COP announced his intention to leave the program due to a family situation in the US. VEGA has found several candidates and is in the process of interviewing and conducting background checks to ensure capability and suitability for the broad mission of this project. USAID announced its interest in a possible extension and expansion of program activities but provided very few details of what this would entail, however VEGA was asked to join a team researching a food security program for broader reach in other parts of Sudan not specifically covered in VEGA's current program. VEGA will continue to pursue current program activities until more details become available.

Ethiopia AGOA

With nearly a year passed since original discussions took place between USAID Ethiopia and VEGA, we still wait word from the Mission regarding a program extension which would add 15 months and \$500,000. With less than 6 months' activities remaining, we expect this to be completed by the Mission in the next quarter.

South Africa SAAGA

We were informed by VEGA's COP that she would be leaving in May or June due to a family situation in the US. A suitable replacement has been found and will assume COP duties in June 2007.

MEPI Morocco/Bahrain

A no-cost extension was agreed and signed between USAID and VEGA which added 6 months to the program to allow for additional training and consulting sessions. The program will now run through September 2007.

Long-Term Business Advisors (LTBA) – Microenterprise Development Office

4 LTBA's completed assignments and conducted their debriefings. Only two LTBA's remain in the field under Microenterprise Development (MD) and there is no word of any further activities with this office beyond the end of those assignments.

Long-Term Business Advisors (LTBA) – Other

LTBA's continue working in Jordan, Indonesia and Armenia. Jordan and Indonesia are interested in bringing new advisors in for the next FY and we are currently searching for suitable advisors to match the proposed scopes of work. As yet, there is no word from Armenia on whether they will request more LTBA's for the next year.