



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance

VEGA 2008 Quarterly Report 4

(July 1 – September 30, 2008)

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

**Prepared for the United States Agency for
International Development (USAID)**

**Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance
Leader Award EEM-A-00-04-00002-00**

Quarterly Report 3 (July 1 – September 30, 2008)

This is the third Quarterly Report submitted to USAID for 2008. This report covers what VEGA has accomplished in the period from July through September 2008.

Part I. Governance

A. Administrative Matters

New Staff

During the previous quarter, VEGA Interim Executive Director, Peter Roberts along with members of VEGA's Executive Committee completed the task of finding a permanent Executive Director. They selected Arthur Warman, a development professional, with over 30 years of experience within USAID and the private sector. One of Art's first tasks was to build up the the staff within the VEGA Secretariat. Previously VEGA Staff consisted of: Executive Director, Finance Manager, Project Management and Support Officer and Administrative Assistant.

As Art selected the individuals for his team he also changed the titles. He selected Shakil Tabassum for the position of Chief Financial Officer and Maureen Katuvesirauina for the Portfolio Management position. In August, Mr. Tabassum also selected an Accountant.

The current VEGA staff includes:

Executive Director – Art Warman
Chief Financial Officer – Shakil Tabassum
Portfolio Manager – Maureen Katuvesirauina
Accountant – Soeun Seng
Program Coordinator – Danielle Payne

Although the Executive Committee approved the hiring of a Business Development Officer to assist VEGA in achieving sustainability, it was decided that the VEGA budget does not currently allow for VEGA to fill this position.

Independent Audit

Towards the end of this quarter, Shakil worked vigorously with the VEGA auditors, Gelman Rosenberg and Freedman, to complete the Audit for year ending December 2007.

VEGA Finances

- Leader with Associates Cooperative Agreement (LWA) – During this quarter VEGA submitted a request to USAID for an extension of the agreement, which was to expire in 2009. On September USAID signed Modification #8, granting VEGA a 5 year extension, which carries VEGA to 2014 with an additional \$1,160,000.00 (from \$2,497,798 to \$3,657,798).

- VEGA's new Chief Financial Officer, Shakil Tabassum, has reconciled VEGA's finances from the beginning of the operation up to the present.
- VEGA's CFO also worked with USAID/Baghdad to recover the funds that have been included in the VEGA Audit as a going concern for the past few years. He and the Contracts officer at USAID/Baghdad, Ann Busaka agreed on the calculations and USAID/Baghdad agreed to remit that money to VEGA.

C. Executive Committee Meetings

Executive Committee meetings in this quarter were held monthly instead of bi-monthly, as Art and the Executive Committee decided that that would be a more efficient use of their time. These meetings were held on July 10th, August 14th and September 25th.

Typically, the agenda of these meetings included such items as:

- VEGA Extension Request to USAID
- Transition Period for VEGA
- Outreach Strategy
- Sustainability

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

Part II. Outreach

Meetings and Representations

On July 22 Art organized a New Business Development Meeting for VEGA members, in which they discussed strategies for marketing VEGA along with their own organizations and innovative ways of collaborating. Art introduced his vision of VEGA for the future and handed out useful marketing materials for the members.

VEGA has become more proactive in organizing meetings with individual member organizations as well as participating in events hosted by USAID, MCC, World Bank and the Society for International Development. For Example, on July 17, Art attended the World Bank/USAID Doing Business "Celebrating Reform 2008" Case Studies Book Launch & Panel Discussion

VEGA has also worked on revamping its marketing materials and recently completed the redesign of its website.

Newsletter Headlines (VEGA now sends out its Newsletter every other month)

- *VEGA Co-Sponsors Forum for Ethiopian Diaspora Investors and Entrepreneurs*
 - The Third Ethiopian Diaspora Business Forum, organized by *The Ethiopian American* magazine and Precise Consult International PLC, took place on July 12 in Washington, DC and attracted close to 300 attendees. The purpose of the forum was to tap into the investors and entrepreneurs of the second most populous African nation's large Diaspora community.
 - The Ethiopian Diaspora sends hundreds of millions of dollars in remittances to their mother country every year, and the two panels of officials and academics at the forum stressed that the Ethiopian Diaspora could make rewarding contributions by investing in burgeoning industries back home and strengthening the Ethiopian economy.
- *Spotlight on Member Organization: ICMA*
 - ICMA functions on the premise that economic and social success can be achieved if constructive management practices are introduced to local governing bodies. By leveraging the experience of both local government practitioners and veteran international consultants, ICMA promotes excellence in local governance on a global scale.
 - Since its inception in 1914, ICMA has successfully designed, implemented, and evaluated more than 500 international projects. Though based in Washington, D.C., ICMA has implemented extensive programs in over 60 countries on five continents.
- *VEGA Long Term Business Advisors make a difference in Jordan*
 - Tara Sabre Collier, Export Promotion Officer, Business Development Center. Tara Sabre Collier, who holds an MA in International Public Policy/ Non-Profit Management from New York University, was also selected for an assignment in Jordan as a VEGA Long Term Business Adviser (LTBA). At the end of June, Collier completed her work at the Business Development Center (BDC), an organization that manages donor funds for economic development projects.
 - In the final months of her assignment, Tara focused her efforts on completing an Export Diagnostic Tool, which assesses the readiness of SMEs to export to foreign markets. She finalized a 30-hour entrepreneurial training curriculum, providing technical assistance to at least ten SMEs and solidified the partnership between BDC and the Business in Development Network (BID), a group that provides business planning advice and financial support to SME's in emerging markets.

Part III. LWA Deliverables

Monitoring and Evaluation

During this quarter VEGA Executive Director and Portfolio Manager decided to work with Steve Silcox, VEGA CTO on revamping the current M&E system. The original system was designed by a consultant and a VEGA staff member, but as VEGA prepares to work for another 5 years, it

was deemed an appropriate time to restructure the M&E system to give a better story of VEGA's Impact.

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 www.vegaalliance.org >> Case Studies.

Part IV. Associate Agreements

Sudan AMED

Due to the strategy of new Mission Staff in Sudan, the AMED program will end in December of 2008 instead of in 2010. The implementing organization is currently working on wrapping up program activities and acquiring a tractor for one of the program's beneficiaries.

Ethiopia AGOA

Program activities continued in the effort to expand trade opportunities for Ethiopian businesses with a special focus on utilizing the Ethiopian Diaspora. VEGA helped to Co-Sponsor an Investment conference for Ethiopian Diaspora, hosted a George Washington University. The conference moderators included Addis Alemayou, Chief of Party as well as Thomas Debass, USAID.

South Africa SAAGA

The South Africa program came to a close at the end of this quarter.

Long-Term Business Advisors (LTBA)

The Indonesia LTBA program was recently granted an extension through September of 2009.

Afghanistan - Community Development Agriculture Program in Paktia, Paktika, Khost and Southeast Ghazni (CDA-P2K)

Although security has presented obstacles in reaching the target beneficiaries, the program has been working on the establishment of farm stores for produce storage in order to decrease the waste of crops and increase incomes. The program is also planning for the rehabilitation of karez

irrigation systems, coordinating heavily with veterinary and medical teams, ensuring community outreach especially to youth and women and establishing and strengthening associations for farmers and fruit tree growers.

Recent program achievements include:

- Apricot drying conducted successfully and techniques established for dissemination and expansion into additional fruit crops
- Two Farm Stores investors identified and support in the development of business plans
- Five Requests for Applications (RFAs) developed and submitted to USAID for approval. Activities include support for: fruit tree nurseries, orchard management, wheat seed production, agro-forestry activities and protected cropping infrastructure and vegetable production.
- Locations for ten demonstration cold storage cellars identified