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Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance

VEGA 2008 Quarterly Report 1

(January 1 – March 31, 2008)

**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
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Quarterly Report 1 (January 1 – March 31, 2008)

This is the first Quarterly Report submitted to USAID for 2008. This report covers what VEGA has accomplished in the period from January through March 2008.

Part I. Governance

A. Administrative Matters

VEGA completed an Internal Evaluation, conducted by volunteers affiliated with the alliance. The team of evaluators included: J. Wright, Sally Everett and Nancy Tumavick. This evaluation was submitted to VEGA's CTO at the end of March as well as to VEGA's Executive Committee. The report was undertaken to evaluate VEGA's performance over the past four years from the perspective of its member organizations and USAID officials. This evaluation will be used as part of the process VEGA is undertaking to inform decisions about the organization's future in light of the expiration of the 5 year Leader with Associates award.

The results of the evaluation were reported in an intentionally informal manner and include a significant number of quotes from both members and evaluators. This provides better context for the conclusions drawn, however, confidentiality is maintained and no attributions are made to people or organizations. The number of respondents was not enough to produce statistically correct results. That said, certain trends emerge, most relating to marketing- and management-related issues. The report demonstrated that VEGA's members and USAID officials believe that the Secretariat should spearhead a much more vigorous and coordinated marketing/outreach effort.

The VEGA staff has also been focusing on formulating a workplan and business plan for 2008. Part of the planning includes the hiring of a Development and Sustainability Officer who will lead VEGA's Outreach efforts.

B. VEGA Finances

Please see SF269 for this period.

VEGA is still in discussions with USAID about the issue of funds that were not recovered from the Iraq PSDI program. USAID has not yet reported any decisions to VEGA.

C. Executive Committee Meetings

Executive Committee meetings in this quarter were held on January 17, 31, February 14, 29, March 13 and 27.

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

- Annual Report

- 2008 Workplan & Business Plan
- International Evaluation
- Iraq Audit Issue
- MCC Study Consultancy
- Development and Sustainability Officer Position

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

Part II. Outreach

VEGA began work with a web developer to redesign its website. Completion is projected for April 2008.

Events

VEGA assembled an Outreach Committee to plan for a Volunteer Awards Event at the end of April. This Outreach Committee is comprised of: Pete Roberts, Flag International; Deirdre White, CDC; Karen Muir, IESC and Al Schlatmeyer, IESC.

At this event, VEGA plans to honor VEGA and Member Organizations' volunteers with the Presidents Volunteers Service Awards as well as the VEGA Service Impact Awards. Member Organizations will be required to review their records and nominate volunteers who have made the most impact and have contributed the most time on projects.

Meetings and Representations

On Friday, January 14, VEGA staff convened with the COP and DCOP and Winrock International's office to discuss the Sudan AMED program. The Chief of Party reported on the project's progress and provided good news on changes made in terms of project operations.

On Wednesday, January 23, VEGA staff met with Sophie Genet, a representative of EthioCorps. EthioCorps is a U.S. based 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization established to meet the strong demand for a program that would allow students, recent graduates, and young professionals to engage in long-term public service opportunities in Ethiopia. The Chief of Party of VEGA Ethiopia signed a Memorandum of Understanding, with EthioCorps in June 2006. The purpose of the meeting was for EthioCorps to discuss how they could become a more entrenched part of the VEGA Ethiopia program.

On Thursday, January 24, Administrative Assistant, Danielle Payne and Project Management and Support Officer, Lee Warren attended a presentation at the Institute for International Education. Two new VEGA Long Term Business Advisers, from IIE's Emerging Markets Development Advisers Program presented on their Scopes of Works and planned objectives in for their assignments in Armenia and Kazakhstan. James Lykos was assigned as a Senior Adviser to the American Chamber of Commerce in Armenia and Sanjay Srikantiah was assigned as a Public-Private Economic Partnership Specialist with USAID/CAR in Kazakhstan.

At the beginning of February Earl Yates met with John Sullivan, the Executive Director for the Center for International Private Enterprise (CIPE) about CIPE's possible membership in VEGA.

On February 28, Earl Yates, VEGA's Executive Director attended the ACFVA Public Meeting which was a Forum on the Global Development Commons.

Newsletter Headlines

- *VEGA Project Improves Access for West African Exporters*
 - This innovative trade development project significantly improved access to credit for 272 participants from 74 export-ready companies. These companies focus on exporting apparel, processed and specialty foods, shea butter, wood products and handicrafts to the U.S. and Europe. The project, based in Ghana, commenced in February 2007 and is being led by VEGA implementing organization, International Executive Service Corps (IESC).

- *New Long Term Business Advisers for Armenia and Kazakhstan*
 - The Kazakhstan Public Private Economic Partnership (PPEP) Initiative is VEGA's newest Long Term Business Adviser (LTBA) Project. The Institute for International Education (IIE) is the implementing organization and has used its Emerging Markets Development Adviser Program (EMDAP) to recruit an adviser to provide technical assistance to the Kazakhstan PPEP initiative.
 - This program is supported by USAID, the U.S. Embassy in Kazakhstan and the American Chamber of Commerce (AmCham). The Business Adviser will provide additional professional staff time to research and develop a more substantial knowledge base about issues such as rule-of-law, tax reform, transparency and reduced tolerance for corruption

- *Ethiopian Exports to the United States Soar, Almost Double in Two Years*
 - **VEGA Ethiopia AGOA+** is the only stand alone USAID funded AGOA trade program in Africa with the aim to increase Ethiopia's exports to the United States under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA). The program recently announced that Ethiopia has been making steady gains in its efforts to break into the U.S market.
 - Since the project's inauguration two years ago, Ethiopian exports under AGOA have increased by almost 100% to USD \$8.9 million in 2007, much higher than the average national exports growth rate achieved over the past five years. AGOA is a U.S government initiative that allows for a duty free and quota free access to the U.S market for over 6000 items produced in selected African countries including Ethiopia.

Part III. LWA Deliverables

Monitoring and Evaluation

This data was taken from the M&E summation sheet.

Relevant Dates: February 2004 – December 2007
 Total number of volunteer assignments: 194
 Total number of volunteer days: 7,518
 Total value of volunteer contributions: \$3,245,620¹
 Average daily contribution: \$432
 Total cost of volunteers: \$1,561,829²
 Net value of contribution: \$1,675,324
 Average net daily contribution: \$223
 Total number of US citizen volunteers: 149³
 Total number of countries represented in volunteer pool: 16
 Total number of reported training activities: 100
 Total number of people trained: 2,584
 Average number of women among trainees: 38%⁴

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

Bulgaria BTD

Program activities finished in December of 2007, with a three-month, no-cost extension to provide for final activities of the Authentic Bulgaria project that will provide a flagship operation for locally-owned and managed tourism accommodations. Authentic Bulgaria is a member-financed association that grades local accommodations providers, provides consulting services to members for improved operations and offerings, and gives smaller hotels a marketing venue for members including a brochure printed in 4 languages.

During this quarter, VEGA closed the project and submitted the final report to USAID.

Sudan AMED

¹ As reported by bio-data information, volunteer submissions, market estimates

² Mix of burdened and unburdened costs depending on reporting organization; some organizations do not offer separate break outs of volunteer costs due to their respective accounting practices.

³ Representing 14 states and the District of Columbia

⁴ Where data is available.

VEGA began expanded operations following the extension provided by USAID in 2007. Amid the chaos of USAID operations spread among Southern Sudan, Nairobi, and Khartoum, the program continued program activities and ramped up to meet the requirements of ongoing and new activities including the hiring of new staff. Negotiations are ongoing about the possibility of an additional expansion.

Ethiopia AGOA

Program activities continued in the effort to expand trade opportunities for Ethiopian businesses with a special focus on utilizing the Ethiopian Diaspora to provide a bridge between producers and suppliers in Ethiopia with markets in the United States. Discussions have begun on expanding service provisions to the newly formed American Chamber of Commerce in Addis Ababa.

South Africa SAAGA

VEGA signed Modification 2 with USAID, which authorize a no cost extension until June 30, 2008. The original completion date was February 25, 2008.

Long-Term Business Advisors (LTBA)

The USAID Mission in Kazakhstan presented a Request for Program Descriptions in November 2007 for an LTBA to work with the American Chamber of Commerce in Almaty, under the PPEP (Public-Private Economic Partnership) Initiative, seeking to strengthen membership ties between US and Kazakh members as well as ensuring free-market policies beneficial to members were pursued by the Kazakh government. IIE, the only applicant, won the bid and deployed an adviser who began the assignment on March 15, 2008.

During this period and advisor was also deployed to Armenia.

West Africa – Improved Access to Credit for SMEs

The program continued the success enjoyed in the previous quarters although one of the implementers to the project was removed due to funding restrictions in the project and the need for a specialist volunteer with different skills than originally planned.

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

The project is underway with staff working out security provisions. At the end of January, VEGA finalized the subagreement with implementing organization ACDI/VOCA.