

# **BUSINESS GROWTH INITIATIVE**

Quarterly Report 1 FY 2010



Weidemann Associates, Inc.  
J.E. Austin Associates  
Management Systems International (MSI)

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## Section I. Introduction

The Business Growth Initiative (BGI) Project began September 2006 and entered the second option year for the five year activity this quarter. In the projects fourth year, BGI will continue to serve as a resource and center for excellence in business development. Research and technical support efforts will focus on effective tools for practitioners and continue to provide leadership for USAID and implementers around key challenges facing enterprise development.

Changes in US leadership and the global economy offer new challenges and opportunities for USAID and the BGI project. The global economic crisis is challenging how business is conducted. The role of businesses in society and their impact and responsibility to their communities are being questioned and challenged. Government oversight and responsibility in relation to businesses and economic growth has also entered the debate.

Out of the chaos of the economic downturn, individuals, groups and governments are seeking to catalyze opportunities for innovation and government. How can USAID programs best identify and catalyze opportunities? When no opportunities exist, what should economic development assistance priorities be? BGI will face these issues and questions in year 4.

### *Objectives*

The goals and objectives of the BGI project remain the same in Year 4; however greater emphasis and attention will be given to the impact of the recent changes in the global economy; opportunities to participate in and collaborate with other USG activities, specifically the Global Engagement Initiative; and working toward a capstone event to culminate BGI's work at the end of the project.

Specific objectives are:

- 1) Improve enterprise development project designs and implementation to reflect best practices;
- 2) Conduct further research on trends and specific aspects of enterprise development;
- 3) Produce and disseminate technical briefs on specific topics of interest to Missions and to the broader audience for enterprise development;
- 4) Promote the application of these best practices in enterprise development through technical assistance to Missions to aid in improving design of enterprise development projects and through conducting seminars and workshops; and
- 5) Provide technical assistance in the design and implementation of pilot demonstration projects in targeted Missions that will exemplify the application of best practices in enterprise development.

To support these objectives the contract anticipates the services to be provided will include:

- 1) Improved program/project **designs** utilizing best practices in enterprise development in at least four Missions per year;
- 2) At least two **research** projects per year on specific aspects of enterprise development;
- 3) At least four **technical briefs** on aspects/trends in enterprise development produced and disseminated per year;
- 4) At least three **seminars/workshops** per year in the United States and overseas to promote the application of lessons learned and best practices in enterprise development;

- 5) At least two **pilot demonstration projects** (PDPs) per year in Missions with a demonstrated interest generated from outreach to those Missions.

A core service supporting the achievement of these objectives is the **Knowledge Management (KM)** system, which itself has its own set of objectives that are presented below in Section V.

## **Section II. Summary of Accomplishments for Q1 of FY 2010**

In Quarter 1, BGI hit its Mission support target for the entire year. Detailed below are more accomplishments from this Quarter:

- BGI held two Daybreak Discovery events this quarter. The first on October 14, presented the *Extracting Value for Enterprises: Enterprise Development in the Mining Industry in Sub-Saharan Africa* technical note and research paper. The event was co-sponsored by the Corporate Council on Africa. The second event was held on November 17 in conjunction with Global Entrepreneurship Week. The event was co-sponsored by the Grassroots Business Fund and the International Institute of Tourism Development at the George Washington University.
- BGI successfully completed three Mission support activities this quarter: a value chain assessment in Armenia, a financial sector assessment in Armenia, and a project design in Ecuador.
- BGI continued its outreach and communications strategy with the University of Maryland; planning for a paper competition in Spring 2010 continues.
- BGI was represented at the Economic Growth Officer's training in December. BGI team member Mike Ducker presented on the importance of information and communication technologies to enterprise development. BGI COTR Steve Silcox presented an overview of enterprise development. USBs with all BGI publications to-date were handed out and were extremely well-received by all USAID personnel in attendance.
- The workplan for changes to the BGI Knowledge Portal was completed this quarter. Changes will be made in the second quarter.

## **Section III. Organization and Staffing**

The BGI team, Weidemann Associates and partners MSI and JEA, experienced a series of personnel and activity changes in this quarter. The changes were managed well with little or no impact on project activities. Team member meetings with the COTR have been an effective tool and the program manager meets with the COTR every two weeks.

### ***1. Outreach and Communications Strategy***

In this quarter, BGI continued to work with the University of Maryland to co-host a paper competition in the Spring of 2010.

Mike Ducker of J.E. Austin Associates, Inc. presented his paper for a peer review *Information and Communication Technology as a Catalyst to Enterprise Competitiveness* on November 19<sup>th</sup> to the UN Foundation-sponsored Technology Salon. The Technology Salon provides a forum for discussion between information and communication specialists and development experts to contribute to the dialogue on their intersection. This event enabled BGI to reach out to a different audience than usual.

## 2. *Weidemann Associates Resources*

In November, Weidemann Associates, Inc. hired a new Associate III to provide administrative and program support, Jessica Barrineau.

Adam Saffer has left MSI and will no longer be the primary point of contact for the BGI contract. A Level I contact has not yet been approved for MSI; it is expected that this will occur at the beginning of the second quarter.

Alicia Miller, Level III, was approved for J.E. Austin Associates at the beginning of this quarter.

Several consultants were approved as personnel for BGI to conduct the Mission support work undertaken in this quarter.

## **Section IV. Program Activities**

Year 4 activities are driven by: budget restrictions, the illustrative Asia and Middle East (A&ME) Bureau scope of work, activities that support the Global Engagement Initiative, and establishing the BGI legacy for the end of the project.

### 1. *Improved Program/Project Designs for Missions*

Based on direct feedback and new inquiries for service, BGI is now recognized as a quality mechanism for providing research and implementation support. While BGI services are limited due to budgetary constraints, support activities will focus on the A&ME Bureau, MEASURE and implement cost sharing mechanisms when feasible.

#### **A. Asia and Middle East Bureaus (A&ME)**

The objective of this activity is to support economic growth programs in the A&ME Bureau and Missions by carrying out and disseminating research and supporting activities on topics and issues regarding economic growth programs. Regional analyses will also provide state-of-the-art knowledge on critical economic growth programs and development policy issues facing the A&ME Bureau and Missions. Finally, program support will provide A&ME senior management and Mission support for EG strategy development and program design and implementation across the regions.

In this quarter, BGI continued to provide support to the Bureaus by providing Economic Profiles for the Asia Bureau region. Countries completed in this quarter are:

- Afghanistan,
- Bangladesh,
- India,
- Indonesia,
- Pakistan,
- Sri Lanka,
- Burma,
- China,
- Nepal, and
- Vietnam.

In addition, the paper *Economic Growth Alliances in the Asia and Middle East Region* was completed and approved. Research for this paper began last fiscal year.

## **B. USAID Mission Support**

BGI continues to actively pursue work for improved project\program designs that are demand driven and based on direct or indirect requests for support, interviews with program or Mission staff, and knowledge of when project/program decisions will be made. With approval from the COTR, we will contact and work with appropriate Mission personnel to define in detail the support needed in the concept development, design or evaluation of a program/project. In this Quarter, BGI participated in three Mission Support activities.

- 1) BGI provided board support to USAID/Armenia Economic Growth Office and completed two SOWs in addition to MEASURE completed in Q4 of year 3.
  - *A rapid value chain assessment in Armenia.* This activity SOW was original a project design and changed to a rapid assessment of seven value chains and three sectors. Due to time constraints under the original budget, this assessment could not go into great detail. As a result, this assessment has some limitations, but provides a good general background on potential targeted value chains, particularly in the agribusiness sector.
  - *A financial services assessment in Armenia.* As part of the overall assessment of the status of the small and medium enterprise (SME) sector's access to finance, interviews were held with lenders (both commercial banks and Universal Credit Organizations (UCOs)), and individual SMEs. Meetings also were held with various trade associations, government and quasi government entities, and other participants in the sector, including consulting firms. This report makes board recommendations and includes an assessment of the impact of the global economic crisis.
- 2) BGI conducted a project design activity for USAID Ecuador. The purpose of this mission support activity is to provide USAID/Ecuador technical assistance to design a new Program that: (1) strengthen markets and (2) expands economic access and opportunities for the poor.

*Activities for Quarter 2, year four:*

- *Mali ICT sector assessment.* This activity will conduct market research and analysis and to identify concrete ways Internet access can be more sustainably provided in underserved areas of Mali by shared Internet access points (either for-profit or non-profit). This assessment will include analyzing both market demand for products and services (how the centers can increase their revenue by providing the products and services citizens value) as well as business operations (how the centers can control or reduce their costs; this study would include business approaches, incentives, partners). Lastly, the team will study the enabling environment around the internet access points and make suggestions on how to overcome some of the constraints caused by the environment.

## **C. Trainings and workshops**

BGI continues to provide assistance to USAID personnel through trainings and workshops. BGI was represented at the Economic Growth Officer's training in December. BGI team member Mike Ducker presented on the importance of information and communication technologies to enterprise development. BGI COTR Steve Silcox presented an overview of enterprise development. USBs with all BGI publications to-date were handed out, and were extremely well-received by all USAID personnel in attendance.

*Activities for Quarter 2, year four:*

- BGI will be sponsoring a support activity for the African Diaspora Marketplace Learning Event on January 12, 2010, *Identifying Best Practices for Marketing in Africa: Lessons from the Business Growth Initiative*. The session will focus on best practices in marketing with limited funds, and in marketing to larger businesses.

## 2. Tools and Guidelines

### A. Enterprise Development Diagnostic Tool

In this quarter, the MEASURE Armenia assessment, which took place in September, was completed and approved.

### B. Impact of the Crisis on USAID economic development assistance

No activities were conducted in this quarter on this new guideline.

*Activities planned for Quarter 2, year four:*

- Rapid literature review of papers and reports related to the development impact of the economic crisis will be completed and posted in the BGI website.

### C. When do you select value chains for your project design

BGI began a literature review in this quarter on this topic. An evaluation of the best steps to move forward will be done in quarter 2.

### D. Quick reference guide: Approaches to Enterprise Development

No activities were conducted in this quarter on this new guideline.

*Activities planned for Quarter 2, year four:*

- BGI will develop the SOW for this assignment.

## 3. Research Activities/Papers

As part of its core mission, BGI publishes original research to enhance the discussion of best practices in enterprise development.

### A. AME Bureau

The research activity for the Asia and Middle East Bureau year three buy in was completed. The final report, *Economic Growth Alliances in the Asia and Middle East Regions* was approved and will be presented at a BGI daybreak discovery event in the second quarter of year four.

### B. Innovation and Entrepreneurship

Under this core research topic, BGI held an event in conjunction with Global Entrepreneurship Week on November 17. The event, *Entrepreneurs' Voices*, was held at the George Washington University with the Grassroots Business Fund. Feedback from the event was positive.

Planning continued for the planned paper competition to be co-sponsored with the University of Maryland's Center for Social Value Creation and Center for International Business Education and Research. The competition will be open to graduate students from across the nation and will involve a two phase review process. Signing of the

Memorandum of Understanding between USAID and UMD encountered unforeseen delays; it was not signed by the end of this Quarter. As such, the date for the final event has been pushed back to April 23, 2010. Weidemann Associates began moving forward with the Ronald Reagan Building in securing space there for that date.

Activities planned for Quarter 2, year four:

- Global Engagement Initiative Voices collaboration
- Business Innovation Centers project assessment and design SOW approval

### **C. The Business Environment**

No activities were conducted in this quarter on this research topic.

### **D. Strengthening Enterprise Support Systems**

No activities were conducted in this quarter on this research topic.

Activities planned for Quarter 2, year four:

- Rapid literature review of papers and reports related to employment and enterprise development.

### **E. Enterprise Finance**

- A financial services assessment in Armenia. As part of the overall assessment of the status of the small and medium enterprise (SME) sector's access to finance. Part of a design activity and not a public document.

## **4. Technical Notes (formerly Technical Briefs)**

Technical Notes published in this quarter are:

- *Extracting Value for Enterprises: Enterprise Development in the Mining Industry in Sub-Saharan Africa.*

Publications planned for Quarter 2, year four:

- Information and Communication Technology as a Catalyst to Enterprise Competitiveness.

## **5. Seminars/Workshops**

### **A. Daybreak Discovery series**

BGI continues to sponsor the Local/US based Daybreak Discovery series. Daybreak Discovery events held this quarter:

- The first on October 14, presented the *Extracting Value for Enterprises: Enterprise Development in the Mining Industry in Sub-Saharan Africa* technical note and research paper. The event was co-sponsored by the Corporate Council on Africa.
- The second event was held on November 17 in conjunction with Global Entrepreneurship Week. The event was co-sponsored by the Grassroots Business Fund and the International Institute of Tourism Development at the George Washington University.

Events planned for Quarter 2, year four:

- Research paper presentation *Economic Growth Alliances in the Asia and Middle East Regions*.
- Technical notes presentation *Information and Communication Technology as a Catalyst to Enterprise Competitiveness*.

## **B. Capstone Event**

No activities were conducted in this quarter on this event.

## **6. Pilot Demonstration Projects**

Pilot demonstration projects are services provided to USAID Missions. Missions interested in conducting short experimental pilot activities with the purpose of using a pilot design in direct program implementation can receive BGI support in the design and monitoring and evaluation of activities.

No pilot demonstration projects were conducted in this quarter.

## **Section V. Knowledge Management System**

Knowledge Management (KM) is a core service in the BGI project. Specific objectives of the KM system are:

- Capture, provide custodianship, and perform taxonomy of all information, data, analysis, and any other written material produced under the BGI project.
- Create a standard framework for knowledge creation, sharing and vetting.
- Disseminate lessons learned, best-practices, and professional training in appropriate multimedia formats.
- Provide technical-support and outreach to USAID Missions, client country decision-makers, and other domestic US and international development and support organizations.
- Coordinate donor and KM linkages, create and support “Communities-of-Practice.”

Knowledge is generated and shared in many ways. The above described activities are and will be generating knowledge about best practices in enterprise development. Disseminating knowledge includes the traditional methods of distributing published reports, presentations in workshops and seminars, and teleconferencing of BGI personnel with USAID personnel.

The BGI website facilitates dissemination of knowledge, as well as capturing knowledge through participation in a wider circle of practitioners. In order to improve website operations BGI will work with SharePoint experts Applied Knowledge Group as necessary on key new activities.

A facelift of the website, along with updating page descriptions to better convey the services that BGI can provide for USAID personnel and the resources that are available on the website was planned in this quarter. A work plan has been created; implementation of this plan will continue into the next quarter. (see Annex 4)

Beginning last Quarter, BGI receives information through Google Analytics regarding the traffic that goes to the KM Portal website. The statistics are available in monthly increments. Below are the critical points from the most recent month of the Quarter.

Google Analytics, 11/21/09-12/22/09

**Summary:** The BGI website has had 1,290 visits this past month, averaging 43 visits per day. The average time on the site was 7:55 (7 minutes, 55 seconds). 74% of the viewers were new viewers. Approximately 43% of visits were direct traffic. 50% of visitors found our website through search engines and 6.5% found it through a website referral (such as Weidemann or USAID). The page most viewed was the homepage, but there were almost 5,400 unique page views.

**Visitors:**

- BGI site had 1,290 visits.
- 1,001 were absolute unique visitors (unduplicated visitors).
- There were 5,392 page views (home page or any other page opened).
- 4.18 was the average number of pages viewed by a visitor.
- 74.11% of the visitors were new visitors.
- The bounce rate was 67.29% (less than last month) (single-page visits – person left after just visiting the homepage).
- We had visitors from 108 countries/territories, mostly the US, UK, India, Russia, Philippines, Malaysia, Canada, Mozambique, Pakistan and France.
- 1,128 visitors were new visitors; 314 were returning visitors.
- 74.11% of the visits were the persons first time on the site, 25.89% of visitors were returning visitors.
- 68.3% of the visitors were only on the website anywhere from 0-10 seconds, 6.43% from 2-3 minutes, 4.88% for 5-10 minutes, 7.44% for 10-20 minutes.
- 67.29% viewed only 1 page, 10.31% viewed 2 pages, 5.27% viewed 3 pages, 3.57% viewed 4 pages.

**Traffic Sources:**

- 42.79% of visitors (or 617) were direct visitors (they typed in our website directly).
- 50.7% of visitors (or 706 people) found BGI through a search engine (most commonly Google).
  - Most common keywords used in a search engine were: “business growth,” “business growth initiative,” and “Carolyn Kirchhoff.”
- 6.51% came from referring sites (43 referring sites in total), most commonly Google, Bing, UMD, or Yahoo.

**Content:**

- 2,712 unique page views (the number of which one or more pages were viewed).
- Most viewed page was the homepage, second was Business Enabling Environment, third was BGI Publications and fourth was Services to Missions and Bureaus.

**Glossary of Terms:**

- *Absolute Unique Visitors:* the number of unduplicated visitors (counted only once) to the website
- *Avg. time on the site:* the average amount of time a person spent in any part of the website
- *Bounce rate:* percentage of single-page visits, or visits where the person left after just visiting the homepage
- *Page views:* the number of times anyone has clicked on anything away from the home page to open a new page

- *Pages/visit*: The average number of pages per visit a person views
- *Percent of new visits*: the percentage of visits from outside BGI staff members
- *Visits*: the number of times anyone has gone to any part of [www.businessgrowthinitiative.org](http://www.businessgrowthinitiative.org)

## Annex 2: Reports and Documents Completed in Quarter 1

- Economic Profiles for the Asia Bureau region completed this Quarter:
  - Afghanistan,
  - Bangladesh,
  - India,
  - Indonesia,
  - Pakistan,
  - Sri Lanka,
  - Burma,
  - China,
  - Nepal, and
  - Vietnam.
- *Economic Growth Alliances in the Asia and Middle East Region* was completed and approved.
- *A rapid value chain assessment in Armenia.*
- *A financial services assessment in Armenia.*
- *Extracting Value for Enterprises: Enterprise Development in the Mining Industry in Sub-Saharan Africa Technical Note.*
- *Extracting Value for Enterprises: Enterprise Development in the Mining Industry in Sub-Saharan Africa Research Report.*

### Annex 3. Project Results Matrix for Year 4, Q1

Project Outcomes	Expected Results	Accomplishments	Planned Activities for Quarter 2
Improved program/project designs for missions	4 per year	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Armenia Value Chain Assessment.</li> <li>2. Armenia SME Finance Assessment.</li> <li>3. Ecuador Economic Growth Design.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Mali ICT sector assessment.</li> </ol>
Conduct Research Projects	2 per year	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The final report, <i>Economic Growth Alliances in the Asia and Middle East Regions</i> was approved.</li> </ol>	
Develop and Disseminate Technical Note and Notes from the Field	4 per year	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Extracting Value for Enterprises: Enterprise Development in the Mining Industry in Sub-Saharan Africa</i> technical note.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Information and Communication Technology as a Catalyst to Enterprise Competitiveness</i>.</li> </ol>
Convene Seminars/Workshops on Best Practices	3 domestic, one international	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Extracting Value for Enterprises: Enterprise Development in the Mining Industry in Sub-Saharan Africa</i> technical note and research paper.</li> <li>2. Entrepreneur Voices: November 17 in conjunction with Global Entrepreneurship Week.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. African Diaspora Marketplace Learning Event on January 12, 2010, Identifying Best Practices for Marketing in Africa: Lessons from the Business Growth Initiative.</li> <li>2. Research paper presentation Economic Growth Alliances in the Asia and Middle East Regions.</li> <li>3. Technical notes presentation Information and Communication Technology as a Catalyst to Enterprise Competitiveness.</li> </ol>
Implement Pilot Demonstration Projects for Missions	1 per year		
Additional Reports, Publications and Activities.		<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continued Planning for the planned paper competition to be co-sponsored with the U of M.</li> <li>2. Country Reports: Asia Region.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Initiate the paper competition with U of M.</li> <li>2. Rapid literature review of papers and reports related to employment</li> </ol>

		3. Peer paper review of <i>Information and Communication Technology as a Catalyst to Enterprise Competitiveness</i> on November 19 <sup>th</sup> to the UN Foundation-sponsored Technology Salon.	and enterprise development.
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## Annex 4: Knowledge Portal Workplan

<b>Tasks to complete</b>	<b>Results Expected By</b>	<b>Description of task</b>	<b>Overall objective accomplished</b>
Homepage re-vamp	End of Quarter 2	Clean up home page to make it less cluttered and user-friendly; ensure that all new information is displayed clearly and older items are archived.	Ensuring that the homepage (the most viewed page on the website) is as clear and interesting as possible.
Re-write description headers on all pages	End of Quarter 2	Delete outdated information in order to make all introductory paragraphs relevant and clear	Ensuring that every person has a clear understanding of what each page's purpose is, as described by the opening paragraph of that page.
Website Survey	End of Quarter 2	Re-write the website survey and send an email to encourage BGI listserv to take it.	Results from the survey will give the BGI team insight as to what our users want in a website and ideas on how to improve it.
Document archiving	End of Quarter 2	Archive all lists of documents on each page that currently has them	Only the most relevant and newest information will be shown on each page; all other information will be accessible by a separate link, in order to create a cleaner webpage.
Individual page clean-ups	End of Quarter 2	Every single page will be thoroughly edited, with pictures readjusted and text edited and rewritten when necessary.	Every detail on the BGI site matters and a thorough edit of each page will ensure that our information is correct and easy to understand and access.
Deletion of all unnecessary links and documents	End of Quarter 2	All web parts that clutter up a page or can be moved to a page that makes more logical sense will be moved or deleted.	In order to avoid duplication of information or an overload of information to our viewers, which can cause confusion, a number of unnecessary documents or links will be un-duplicated or moved to separate pages.