

VEGA Programs Fact Sheet

The 14 member strong Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance has made tremendous progress worldwide. With the support of more than 65,000 volunteer experts and professional in-house staff we've undertaken 17 awards in 21 countries constituting \$48 million of activities that span all USAID regions.



Subsaharan Africa Region

Ethiopia

African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA +) Program

Duration: 6/2005 – 9/2009

Value: \$ 1,398,778

Implementing Organizations: IESC
USAID Project CTO: Jeanah Lacey



VEGA's African Growth and Opportunities Act (AGOA +) program is an export promotion program under the broader trade initiative AGOA, which was signed into law on May 18, 2000. The project works in close partnership with the Government of Ethiopia, the Ministry of Trade and Industry, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the Ethiopian Embassy in Washington DC, the Ethiopian and Addis Ababa Chambers of Commerce and Sectoral Associations.

VEGA's program has made tremendous progress in contributing to the growth of exports from Ethiopia to the U.S market.



- The VEGA/Ethiopia AGOA+ project resulted in a \$2.5 million increase in Ethiopia's exports under AGOA/GSP, which constitutes a 5:1 return on USAID investment. Ethiopian exports to the United States under the African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) in the first six months of the 2008 export levels doubled from the first six months of 2007.
- The specific sectors developed through the VEGA/Ethiopia AGOA+ project are the textile and flower industry. The total AGOA/GSP exports from Ethiopia to the US at the end of the year 2007 grew to USD 8.97 million, from USD 7.20 million in 2006.
- The year-to-date total AGOA/GSP exports from Ethiopia to the U.S. (updated September 2008) grew from USD 5.423 million in 2007 to USD 11.293 million in 2008 indicating more than 100% increase within the last six months alone!
- It is important to note that Ethiopia made remarkable progress in the export of textile and apparel products at a time when the total AGOA export to the U.S. by all the SSA countries dropped by 16%.

South Africa

APS Grants Administration

Duration: 9/2005 – 9/2008

Value: \$ 4,079,695

Implementing Organizations: IESC
USAID Project CTO: Cindy Hattingh



The South African APS Grants Administration (SAAGA) program manages USAID/South Africa's small grants program in support of its employment generation initiatives. The goal of the SAAGA program was to contribute to USAID/South Africa's objective for employment generation through the effective administration of small grants to South African organizations whose programs supported the growth of Historically-Disadvantaged SMMEs. The general program objectives of the combined USAID/South Africa employment generation program are: increased market-driven employment; more rapid growth of SMMEs; improved capacity of SMMEs to respond to market opportunities; and SMME access to financial resources increased.



The SAAGA program provided training in export trade facilitation, marketing and sales, customer service, packaging and merchandizing, market research and pricing. SAAGA supported subgrantees such as the Cape Town Regional Chamber of Commerce, the Mineworkers Development Association, a Milk Producers Organization and Natural Botanicals (a cosmetics company).

The SAAGA Program Assited in the following ways:

- Nearly 5,000 jobs were created/saved
- Over R300 million was generated in sales contracts (10:1 return).
- Over 8,000 HD individuals/enterprises received business skills training(majority female).
- Over R40 million in financing was accessed



Sudan

Value: \$ 12,525,336

Agricultural Markets and Enterprise Development

Implementing Organizations: Winrock, CDC, IESC

USAID Project CTO: Lokosang Lemi

Duration: 6/2005 – 12/2008



VEGA AMED program often uses Sudanese Diaspora to provide technical skills training.

VEGA's Agricultural Market and Enterprise Development (AMED) program helped achieve comprehensive economic recovery and growth in the presently fragile state of Southern Sudan. AMED worked toward two primary objectives: (1) strengthening market and enterprise development in selected urban areas as a means of increasing private sector employment; and, (2) building the capacity of local community, county, and state level government and civil society organizations to provide effective support to agriculture livelihood development and employment generation initiatives with a focus on the reintegration of Internally Displaced Persons.

VEGA's primary method to impact change in these areas was through the provision of volunteer technical assistance. The program utilized the expertise of 136 short-and long-term volunteers from the U.S. Sudanese Diaspora and the East Africa region as well as that of paid consultants and technical staff.

Selected project accomplishments to date include:

- Provided technical assistance to more than 3,000 individuals.
- Assisted 119 small and micro enterprises and strengthened 37 local institutions.
- Strengthened seven cooperatives and two business associations. Approximately 100 cooperative members and 60 association members received direct training in improving their operations.
- Assisted in the formation of a Chamber of Commerce in Western Bahr el Ghazal State. The process, which attracted approximately 200 small business owners, emphasized chamber functions, member benefits, and the responsibilities of Chamber officers and members.
- Provided technical assistance and training in the construction sector from furniture to large scale carpentry and masonry, to road constructions. The business and technical training provided resulted in the winning of a bid for a large scale road construction project to be implemented by one of the construction business owners. The bid resulted in creation of 20 jobs for the construction business.
- Provided technical assistance to a Micro Finance Institution on reporting accurate information in loans awarded. The institution is now able to track accurate figures on the late loan repayments and default rates.
- Helped a Shea butter business in South Sudan to develop a business plan. Conducted a market survey, and ultimately launched a successful opening day event which resulted in more than US\$1,500 in average sales a day. Additional technical assistance was provided such as market assessment, financial analysis and budgeting, strategic and marketing plans were also developed. This resulted in the business securing clients in the export market and boosted its sales with 15% increase. The operational cost for running the business decreased by 24%, this was achieved through a cost-benefit analysis exercise.

West Africa

Value: \$199,888

Access to Credit

Implementing Organization(s): IESC

USAID Project CTO: Paul Richardson

Duration: 4/2007 – 4/2008



VEGA's Improved Access to Credit for SMEs in the West Africa Region (IACES) program facilitated greater trade competitiveness in West Africa by leveraging relevant expertise and building on the business development activities of USAID's West African Trade Hub (WATH). The program involved a multipronged training approach which assisted export-oriented SMEs' ability to meet bank requirements for borrowing while improving banking processes so the financial sector was better capable of understanding and delivering services to these SMEs.



During the duration of the project, VEGA/IACES developed and implemented four training workshops in business planning, general and financial management and the credit policies and practices of Ecobank specifically related to ERCS. The goals of these activities were to improve lending processes, provide faster service and loan turnaround for prospective borrowers particularly in the area of export finance, and generally improve customer satisfaction among ERCS. Other results included improved awareness, knowledge and understanding of constraints among the parties in order to change perceptions of risk and as a result provide for lower bank interest rates and charges. Due to these training sessions, Kraft Export Consult, a handicraft export company obtained the pre-shipment loan of USD 80,000 from Ecobank Ghana.

Asia Region

Afghanistan

Community Development Agriculture Program

Duration: 11/2007 – 11/2009

Value: \$7,000,000

Implementing Organizations: ACDI/VOCA, CNFA, Winrock, Grand Council of Kuchis

USAID Project CTO: David Stockdale



The goal of VEGA's Community Development Agriculture Program for Paktia, Paktika, and Khost and Southeast Ghazni Provinces (CDA-P2K) is to "generate increased income, employment and sales of agricultural products for communities in the P2K region, with secondary support to south-eastern Ghazni province". CDA-P2K program supports increased productivity in key sub-sectors, market-led production of higher-value products and improved technologies that lead to greater production of commodities at lower cost per unit.

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.

Specific accomplishments to date include:

- Twelve Farm Stores have been opened.
- A training program has been negotiated and a contract is being developed with the Afghan Veterinarian Association for the training of field veterinarians. The goal is to establish Veterinary Field Units and to station a paravet in each district to supply livestock services. Twenty students will be identified for the training and the graduates will be provided equipment to start a field paravet business.
- Cooperation between the P2K staff and the Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) and Agribusiness Development Teams (ADTs); Several Areas of cooperation identified.
- Identified 12,000 farmers for an alfalfa seed voucher program
- A meeting was held with the Pine Nut Traders to develop a sustainable business strategy
- Technical assistance in progress for the following areas:
 - Alfalfa production and harvesting
 - Feedlot development
 - Slaughter facility development
 - Farm Store nutrition programs are being developed
 - Association Development
 - The P2K team is working with ADTs and PRTs and has identified several associations in need of further development, such as the Paktia Fruit Tree Nursery Association, Paktia Beekeepers Association and the Butcher Association.



Apricot Drying in Paktia

Indonesia

Long Term Business Advisers (LTBA)

Duration: 8/2005 – 9/2009

Value: \$408,531.51

Implementing Organization(s): IIE

USAID Project CTO: Raya Soendjoto



VEGA/LTBAs in Indonesia work for the American Chamber of Commerce in Jakarta (AmCham) and USAID-Indonesia's Program Coordination Office. These Advisers work in tandem to support USAID initiatives in Public-Private Economic Development. The AmCham adviser also works closely with AmCham on organizational development projects to streamline services and expand its membership in order to implement a more robust strategy for economic growth. Also one of the key achievements of VEGA advisers in Indonesia has been to begin structuring a public private partnership program, the origins of which were tsunami relief efforts.

VEGA Advisers led communication and public outreach efforts, completed due diligence reports, published and presented research at conferences, conducted client surveys, developed linkages between the business sector and development organizations to support overall improvement of the Indonesia's business climate.

Kazakhstan

Value: \$74,368

Long Term Business Advisers (LTBA)

Implementing Organization(s): IIE
USAID Project CTO: Joe Lessard

Duration: 1/2008 – 5/2009



The aim of the program in Kazakhstan is to develop and enhance the competitiveness of the country's private sector with the ultimate goal of promoting growth in the local economy. The VEGA Adviser in Kazakhstan directly supports the research and marketing efforts of the American Chamber of Commerce in Kazakhstan.

This adviser has developed a research on the Kazakhstan investment climate, drafted papers on the Public Private Economic Partnership initiative and is liaising with representatives of the private, public and government sectors. The Adviser will continue to assist the Chamber in researching the economic impact and opportunities available for US and Kazakh business in the legislative and regulatory environment in Kazakhstan while assisting the development of partnering US and Kazakh enterprises.

Europe and Eurasia Region

Armenia

Value: \$481,310

Long Term Business Advisers (LTBA)

Implementing Organization(s): IIE
USAID Project CTO: John Caracciolo

Duration: 9/2005 – 3/2009



The program in Armenia supports business organizations (BSOs). VEGA advisers work with USAID/Armenia's Economic Restructuring and Energy Office. Assignments vary and have included: Armenia Micro enterprise Development Initiative, Armenia Agribusiness SME Market Development project and MDF-Kamurj project Competitive Armenian Private Sector. Advisers have developed PR/marketing action plans, sustainable business models to increase revenue generation, written grant proposals to increase funding for businesses, developed fundraising projects and conducted sales and pricing training.

Bulgaria

Value: \$4,225,848

Business Trade Development

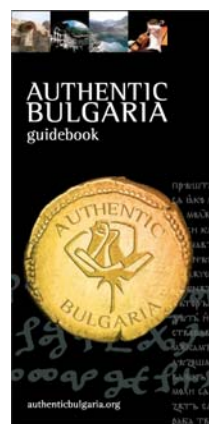
Implementing Organization(s): CDC, FSVC, IESC
USAID Project CTO: Rayna Dimitrova

Duration: 5/2004 – 9/2007



VEGA's Business Trade Development (BTD) program focused on building effective Business Support Organizations (BSOs) that can, on a market-driven basis, provide a combination of general and industry-specific technical/managerial services to support the long-term growth of small and medium-sized enterprises within Bulgaria.

- The VEGA/BTD program delivered technical assistance projects to 55 BSOs and 75 tourism operators, impacting over 772 Bulgarian businesses through SME trade show participation, EU standards certification processes, facilitation of consultations with potential investors, and awareness events. BSOs supported by the program increased their revenues by \$259,554 and their profitability increased by an average of 19%.
- 53 new jobs were created and another 287 were sustained. The lower increase in employment compared to the percentage increase in revenues demonstrates increased efficiency (revenues/employees ratio) for BSOs and SMEs.
- Over 81% of the new jobs created were for females. 81 new products and services were developed and introduced, another 154 improved. These led to attracting 424 new members and an additional 432 new clients served. Four business linkages amounting to \$1,014,200 were completed and 95 other potential linkages were established. BSO clients conducted 213 consultations with potential investors, as a result of which 128 new leads were established.
- The program was instrumental to the development of the tourism business in Bulgaria. Over 75 tourism operators (B&Bs, small family owned hotels and boutique city hotels) throughout the country were assessed and 54 of them were certified and awarded the Authentic Bulgaria Quality Mark. Accommodation owners reported a \$17,397 increase in revenues, an average increase of 18%, as a result of introducing 11 new services and attracting 401 new tourists. 11 new jobs were created and another 67 sustained. Two of the tourism operators participated in EU standards certification programs, mainly HACCP.
- The Authentic Bulgaria Project was successful in creating awareness among Bulgarian B&Bs and family hotel operators on how to use their local offerings and flavor to differentiate themselves from others in the tourism business. The certified hotels and B&Bs acquired a guaranteed authenticity, unique character, individuality, personalization, experience and high standards of unobtrusive service, and anticipation of guests needs. Better service delivery and incorporation of local attractions, food, wine, and culture resulted in attracting higher value customers and contributed towards establishing Bulgaria as an attractive tourism destination.



Cyprus

Partnership for Economic Growth

Duration: 12/2004 – 9/2005

Value: \$456,777

Implementing Organization(s): IESC
USAID Project CTO: Jean Lange



VEGA's Cyprus Partnership for Economic Growth (CYPEG) program objective was to support the US Government's facilitation of the reunification of the island by supporting economic growth in the Turkish Cypriot Community (TCC) and provide island-wide economic interaction. One of the main activities in this program was trade show assistance for the TC community. The VEGA Expert assisted with efforts to organize the first Turkish Cypriot (TC) trade delegation in over 30 years to participate in the Cyprus International Trade Fair. Fifty-three (53) TC businesses exhibited at the Fair, representing a broad range of products. Thirteen participants reported immediate orders valued at \$430,000, with expected annual sales in excess of \$5 million as a direct result of their Fair participation. Additionally, several companies agreed to establish joint TC/Government of Cyprus showrooms or distributor relationships. Nine companies received visitors/buyers from abroad at their booth.

Latin America and Caribbean Region

Mexico

Long Term Business Advisers (LTBA)

Duration: 9/2005 – 7/2007

Value: \$ 56,692

Implementing Organization(s): IIE



VEGA/LTBA in Mexico was program that paired up one MBA-level Adviser with Mexico's Acceso a las Finanzas Rurales para la Microempresa (AFIRMA) program. A key project activity of AFIRMA is to provide targeted technical assistance to selected microfinance institutions to strengthen their operations and help them expand their client bases. One of the targeted organizations to receive technical assistance includes Fundación Integral Comunitaria A.C.—also known as FINCA.

The adviser completed a market study in a new geographic area, conducted two focus groups with AISol loan officers from the main and 2 branch offices, designed new marketing materials (newsletters, brochures, business cards, calendars), completed AI Sol's first client survey, enabling senior management to develop a business and marketing strategy, developed Technical worksheets for product development, prepared Training materials on promotional strategies and how to represent the institution at microfinance events, compiled results from focus groups with clients, recruited and trained a local Marketing Manager to follow through on the work started.

Middle East Region

Bahrain

Free Trade Area

Duration: 6/2004 – 9/2004

Value: \$ 149,540

Implementing Organization(s): CDC
USAID Project CTO: Kristin Lobron

VEGA's Free Trade Area (FTA) program was a short-term project that accelerated the trade and investment flows for the Kingdom of Bahrain by identifying opportunities in the US to increase trade and investment flows between the two countries.

Iraq

Private Sector Development

Duration: 7/2004 – 1/2006

Value: \$12,089,702

Implementing Organization(s): CDC, CNFA,
 IESC

USAID Project CTO: Shakir Shakir



VEGA's Private Sector Development Initiative (PSDI) worked in Basra, Baghdad and Erbil, Iraq and promoted the expansion of a competitive and efficient private sector through provision of business training and other business support services to Iraqi entrepreneurs. Iraqi professionals, trained by American volunteers, provided training, consulting for businesses in 10-20 targeted industry groups, and training for medium and large-size enterprises in winning procurement and consulting services contracts. Finally, PSDI developed business tool kits that can serve as self-training devices for micro and small entrepreneurs.

The Iraq PSDI program awarded 314 grants worth \$2,946,074.00, provided 62 Mid-Market Firms Technical assistance and training, distributed 9007 Small Business Toolkits, established 19 new startup/entrepreneur business and delivered 123 training courses to 2,683 people (21% of which were women).

Jordan

Long Term Business Advisers (LTBA)

Duration: 6/2005 – 7/2011



The program in Jordan uses VEGA Advisers to develop and enhance the competitiveness of Jordan's private sector with the ultimate goal of promoting growth of the nation's economy, support and implementing USAID's Economic Opportunities Program (EOP). These advisers support Jordanian businesses and organizations in improving their operations. Advisers work in the American Chamber of Commerce, Stone & Tile and Olive export businesses, Business Support Organizations as well as Tourism related associations. The advisers have been staff development and management specialists, product & sector development specialist and have created business development advisories for business development services. Recently an adviser served as an export promotion officer for a Business Development Center (BDC), organized a regional SME conference by securing \$100,000 in sponsorship and generated \$50,000 for the BDC. She also designed 35 hour curriculum to train 100 youth entrepreneurs.

Value: \$1,699,623.36

Implementing Organization(s): IIE
USAID Project CTO: Nujoud Serhan

Lebanon

Investment in Microfinance

Duration: 5/2009 – 11/2010

The Lebanon Investment in Microfinance program will administer and provide grants ranging between \$350,000 and \$600,000 to capable microfinance institutions, NGOs and other providers of micro-credit loans. These institutions will then disburse loans to micro-enterprises in the tourism, ICT and agribusiness sectors. To meet the goals and objectives of the program, VEGA's member organization, the International Executive Service Corps (IESC) is leading the program with a mobilized team of member organizations comprised of the Financial Services Volunteer Corps and the International Senior Lawyers project.

Value: \$1,927,782

Implementing Organization(s): IESC
USAID Project CTO: Harvey Eichenfield

Projected Accomplishments

These loans will be utilized to establish new businesses and build capacity in existing businesses in rural and peri-urban areas of Lebanon. The program expects to deliver the micro-loans, increase incomes and create jobs within the first quarter of implementation. In addition to delivering grants, the program will also provide cost-effective technical assistance to MFI sub-grantees covering topics such as improvement of business development services and MFI loan officer training.

Lebanon

Lebanon Assessment for Growth and Opportunity

Duration: 8/2005 – 1/2006

VEGA's Lebanon Assessment for Growth and Opportunity (LAGO) was a short-term program to assist USAID/Lebanon in developing a new strategic objective, Economic Equality in Utility Investment Transferred into Yields. The result was the publication of "Strengthening Democracy through Economic Opportunity."

Value: \$249,737

Implementing Organization(s): CDC
USAID Project CTO: Ghassan Jamous

Morocco & Bahrain

Export Trade Training

Duration: 10/2005 – 9/2007



VEGA's Export Trade Training (ETT) program was designed to assist the U.S. Department of State's Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) in producing successful trade agreements between the U.S. and Bahrain and the U.S. and Morocco. Over the life of program, VEGA delivered training sessions in each country providing an estimated 387 business executives, entrepreneurs and government officials in Morocco and Bahrain with Trade Training and Mentoring Services. The Trade Training Modules, along with a proven portfolio of export trade mentoring and support services, were designed to address the fundamentals of export/import requirements and the practical challenges of managing and marketing global trading operations. A proven 5% of companies were able to increase exports due to their training.

Value: \$689,396

Implementing Organization(s): IESC, IIE
USAID Project CTO: Stephen Silcox

MultiCountry

(MultiCountry) Microenterprise Development

Long Term Business Advisers (LTBA)

Duration: 9/2005 – 3/2009

Value: \$ 525,206

Implementing Organization(s): IIE

USAID Project CTO: Jason Wolfe



VEGA/LTBAs provided technical assistance to USAID's Office of Microenterprise Development (MD) to foster economic growth through selected microfinance and micro-and small enterprise programs in seven countries: **Ecuador, Guyana, Mexico, Sierra Leone, Pakistan, Philippines and Zambia**. The Advisers in these countries worked to strengthen Microfinance Institutions and Biodiversity Conservation organizations. They completed market plans/studies, enhanced capacity building for local businesses, implemented grant-making policies, developed training material for groups, and conducted strategic planning exercises.