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## Press Release

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February 13, 2006

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

#### **VEGA wins Associate Award for Trade Training, Volunteer Mentoring and Entrepreneur Exchanges in Morocco and Bahrain for USAID and MEPI**

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USAID has signed an Associate Award with the Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance (VEGA) for \$689,396 for a 12 month program to create VEGA's Export Trade Training (ETT) program in Bahrain and Morocco. VEGA/ETT is 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. In support of this goal, VEGA/ETT's primary focus is to identify entrepreneurs with export ready firms and provide them with the tools necessary to market their products overseas.

Over the life of program, VEGA will deliver training sessions in each country providing an estimated 2,000 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, are designed to address the fundamentals of export/import requirements and the practical challenges of managing and marketing global trading operations. VEGA/ETT will achieve these program goals through the following activities: identifying and engaging participants that are export ready and those that require training to reduce their risks in the international marketplace; engaging government officials and members of the private sector in discussions concerning how to maximize the benefits of trade and mitigate adverse effects for all stakeholders, including women and minorities; developing exchange programs for both markets, in order to provide technical and networking assistance for qualified firms and entrepreneurs; establishing mentoring services to review plans and provide advice and counsel during the process of international trade transactions; and delivering Trade Training Modules with a team comprised of a U.S. Trade Training Specialist, a VEGA/ETT Training Coordinator, and Logistics Specialists to help educate the regional business communities about the benefits of the Free Trade Agreements between the U.S. and both countries.

Volunteer Experts will be utilized throughout the program. Each VEGA/ETT Trade Training Module will be presented by Volunteer Experts in both countries. The Volunteer Expert Trainers will also be available as Mentors for follow up consultations or visits with training and exchange program participants after the module is completed.

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**The Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance (VEGA)** is the world's largest consortium of economic growth volunteer organizations providing technical expertise in private sector development. Collectively, VEGA has more than 350 years of experience in mobilizing American volunteers to support economic growth in developing countries (including post-conflict and transition), and in designing and implementing successful technical assistance projects across the spectrum of economic growth activities worldwide.

VEGA is demand-driven and provides comprehensive resources with a single point of contact. Program designs are consolidated, but created through a collaborative process based on our members' extensive expertise in:

- Private Market Development
- Financial Services
- Agribusiness Development
- Expanded Opportunities for Rural and Urban Poor