

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

VEGA Wins Associate Award for Agricultural Market and Enterprise Development (AMED) in Sudan

The USAID Sudan Field Office (SFO) has signed an Associate Cooperative Agreement with the Volunteers for Economic Growth Alliance (VEGA), awarding \$11,000,000 over three years for VEGA to assist the SFO and the Government of the Southern Sudan (GOSS) in carrying out the Agricultural Market and Enterprise Development (AMED) program.

This pivotal program aims to achieve comprehensive economic recovery and growth in the presently fragile state of the Southern Sudan, through the following project activities: 1) capacity building in agricultural and natural resources systems; 2) direct support to private enterprises and producers; 3) support to governmental and non-governmental agencies that must facilitate recovery; 4) assistance to the GOSS in strengthening its economic policies and support systems; and 5) drawing upon the skills and participation of the Southern Sudan's Diaspora to assist in economic development.

A distinguishing feature of this and other VEGA programs is delivery of development assistance services through the extensive mobilization and deployment of volunteer experts (VEs). Approximately 200 short-term volunteer experts, 8 long-term graduate advisor volunteers, and up to 25 long-term volunteer experts from the Diaspora community are to be recruited and utilized for assignments in the Southern Sudan.

With liaison, program integration, and oversight provided by VEGA, five VEGA member organizations will implement the program. As lead implementing organization, Winrock International will provide program management, logistics support, management of training activities, and monitoring & evaluation services as well as volunteers in support of all project activities; it will also lead training and support services in the forestry and fisheries sub-sectors. ACDI/VOCA will support the development of marketing associations and cooperatives, develop a price information system, and have a lead role in the produce (perennial and high value) crops. Citizens Development Corps (CDC) will provide volunteer support, through recruiting, training and mobilizing both graduate student advisors and business experts to develop business skills and enterprise development in southern Sudan. Citizens Network for Foreign Affairs (CNFA) will provide volunteers to support enterprise development in the staple food crop sectors. International Executive Service Corps (IESC) will recruit volunteers from Sudan's Diaspora, facilitate the establishment of chambers of commerce and industry associations.

As Southern Sudan emerges from a period of conflict, it is essential to rebuild its private sector, strengthening its domestic and international trade capacities to lay the basis for an effectively functioning economy. To this end, the Agricultural Markets and Enterprise Expansion Program will support the Sudan's Strategic Objective #8: To establish a foundation for economic recovery. To achieve this, the program has three primary objectives 1) improve the productivity and competitiveness of Southern Sudan private enterprises; 2) establish GOSS policy, regulatory, and investment plans supportive of growth and private sector productivity and trade and; 3) establish and support institutions, programs, and organizations that promote and support the competitiveness of Southern Sudan's agriculture and industry.

VEGA will draw on its member's existing field capabilities and will hire a highly experienced and skilled full-time field staff for management and logistics that will be based in Southern Sudan and in Nairobi, Kenya.

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