

Information for USAID Agreement Officers: VEGA – Leader with Associate (LWA)

No. EEM-A-00-04-00002-00



This brochure outlines:

1. Unique benefits of the VEGA LWA.
2. Program options.
3. Accessing impact or performance evaluations.
4. Accessing volunteer expertise.
5. Design, Procurement, Program Management, and Knowledge Management (KM) options.
6. Getting started with the VEGA LWA process.

VEGA is not a typical LWA

The VEGA LWA is the only USAID mechanism with a competitive internal procurement process. VEGA manages the selection process but VEGA members directly implement programs. USAID can use the VEGA LWA as a comprehensive solution to assist Missions with (1) program design, (2) procurement of a broad range of economic growth programming options, (3) program implementation, monitoring and oversight, and (4) independent performance and impact evaluations.

VEGA exists independent of the LWA, allowing VEGA to function as a convener and learning organization to contribute to KM and strengthen VEGA members' ability to implement high-impact programs. Rather than being just a pass-through VEGA is a value-add.

The VEGA LWA is:

1. **Fast** – 35-day turnaround for a winning proposal and an average 75 days to starting a program. No protests on awards.
2. **Responsive** – Missions participate in the technical evaluation, ensuring that the winning proposal is responsive to the Mission's needs.
3. **Flexible** – An administratively easy mechanism. Programs run 5 years beyond LWA end-date.
4. **Cost-Effective** – VEGA's low overhead and use of highly skilled volunteers stretches the USAID dollar.
5. **A trusted USAID partner** –
 - a. 35 awards from 25 missions/bureaus.
 - b. VEGA's members have over five decades of experience in 140 countries implementing integrated programs ranging from economic growth to food security, environment & energy, health, education, democracy & governance and more.

What type of program can be accessed through the VEGA LWA mechanism?

Any economic growth activity; VEGA has implemented programs as small as \$100K to over \$100 million;

How can I incorporate impact or performance evaluations into an Associate Award?

Three M&E resource partner firms (QED, Social Impact, and IBTCI) are available to compete for evaluation work. By incorporating an impact evaluation into the RFA, Missions avoid the need for a separate procurement;

ABOUT VEGA

VEGA, the world's largest consortium of economic growth volunteer organizations, with 25 member NGOs has assisted 140 developing countries & mobilized more than 65,000 experts to promote economic growth activities over the past 5 decades. VEGA's track record includes over 35 programs worth more than \$300 million. VEGA is a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit organization and was founded in 2004 by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) through a Leader with Associate (LWA) award cooperative agreement. USAID issued a three-year, \$100 million extension to the VEGA Leader with Associate (LWA) award. The extension provides USAID Missions the opportunity to issue Associate Awards under the LWA until June 2017. This LWA is available to all USAID Missions and programs implemented under the VEGA LWA can continue five years beyond the 2017 LWA end-date.

"I am truly impressed by the level of professionalism and collegiality I have enjoyed from the headquarters staff particularly...your team has surpassed all my expectations and has set the bar high for timeliness, quality of work, and technical competency, ...and overall communication before and after the award of the project was nothing but exceptional."

USAID/Afghanistan
Agreement Officer Representative

Average time from receipt of USAID solicitation to program start:

- VEGA LWA – 75 Days
- RFA – 160 Days
- RFP – 225 Days



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

VEGA MEMBERS

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|------------------------------------|
| 1. ACDI/VOCA | 8. Florida International Volunteer Corps (FAVACA) | 15. International Real Property Foundation (IRPF) | 22. Partners for Development (Pfd) |
| 2. Aid to Artisans (ATA) / Creative Learning (CL) | 9. Financial Services Volunteer Corps (FSVC) | 16. International Service Lawyers Project (ISLP) | 23. PYXERA Global |
| 3. Aquaculture without Frontiers (AwF) | 10. Global Business School Network (GBSN) | 17. Land O'Lakes International Development | 24. SAVE Travel Alliance |
| 4. ASU Walton Sustainability Solutions Initiative | 11. Global Parks | 18. Mennonite Econ. Dev. Associates (MEDA) | 25. Winrock International |
| 5. Coffee Quality Institute (CQI) | 12. Institute of International Education (IIE) | 19. NCBA CLUSA International | |
| 6. CNFA | 13. International Executive Service Corps (IESC) | 20. NRECA International Foundation | |
| 7. Cuso International | 14. Int'l City/County Management Assoc. (ICMA) | 21. OIC International | |

RESOURCE MEMBERS:

Claro KC · IBTCI · QED Group · Social Impact
Hamman Marketing Associates · FINCON

VEGA – Leader with Associate (LWA) for USAID Agreement Officers

Do I have to use volunteers in the program?

No! But we recommend the unique skills volunteers are able to offer and their cost effectiveness. USAID normally cannot access the business expertise our volunteers offer because their daily rates often are multiples of the USAID maximum. Think of VEGA volunteers as "STTA on steroids," accessing business executives and practitioners who can relate to beneficiaries on a whole different level than traditional consultants.

So, how do I get started with the VEGA LWA?

1. The Technical Office submits a Program Description to the VEGA Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) - Joyce Friedenberg (jfriedenberg@usaid.gov). The AOR confirms that the work is consistent with the Leader Agreement and approves the Program Description or sends it back for revisions.
2. Once approved, the Agreement Officer for the Mission issues a Request for Application to VEGA.
3. VEGA manages an internal competition among members to find the implementing organization. The Mission may appoint a mission staffer to serve on the selection panel.
4. VEGA submits the winning Technical and Cost proposal to the Mission.
5. Mission review (usually a full TEC is deemed unnecessary based on the involvement of the Mission rep on the VEGA proposal selection committee) and approval leads to an Associate Award, Cooperative Agreement to VEGA in which a mission staff person is designated as the AOR for the activity.
6. VEGA will then issue a sub-award to the implementing partner who submitted the winning proposal.

Design, Procurement, Program Management, and Knowledge Management

Design - VEGA offers program design, from simple desktop research to fielding an experienced multi-member design team. Since VEGA does not implement programs but relies on its members to do so, there is no conflict of interest.

Procurement - VEGA makes life easy for USAID Agreement Officers by managing the solicitation process. Once an RFA is issued to VEGA, we share it with our consortium members, set internal deadlines, convene an independent technical review committee with Mission representation, check PPRs, collect proposals, and submit the revised winning proposal to USAID within 35 days. We can also organize a pre-bidder's conference and develop evaluation criteria.

Program Management - Although the VEGA member responsible for implementation interacts directly with the Mission, VEGA provides program oversight and quality control, ensuring that the program will be quickly launched; quality deliverables submitted on time; financial oversight is provided; compliance with USAID rules and regulations is monitored; program issues are quickly resolved; and program obligations are met prior to closeout. As evidence of Mission satisfaction with VEGA's program management, 10 Missions have chosen to expand or initiate repeat projects through VEGA.

Knowledge Management - VEGA exists independent of the LWA, allowing VEGA to function as a convener and learning organization. VEGA members collaborate and share their experiences in an effort to identify best practices and lessons learned, create new networks and partnerships, stimulate innovation, report results to the broader international development community and improve performance. VEGA supports a continuous learning environment. VEGA connects its members with USAID through workshops, panel discussions, presentations, online activities, and other events to build institutional capacity in a collaborative environment.

CORE EXPERTISE

Areas of Focus

- » Enterprise Development
- » Financial Services
- » Economic Governance
- » Volunteerism

Sectors

- » Agriculture
- » Environment & Energy
- » Tourism
- » Trade and Investment

Cross-cutting Themes

- » Value Chains
- » Sustainability
- » Public-Private Alliances
- » Youth & Workforce Development
- » Gender
- » Innovation & Technology Transfer

"USAID Forward efforts to modernize and strengthen our Agency require an array of technical assistance. USAID/Sri Lanka has quickly responded to a spectrum of strategic and tactical level needs through Leader with Associate, VEGA, technical experts. We recommend a flexible, rapid response capability, like VEGA provides, for every economic growth program."

*Gerald R. Andersen, Former Mission Director
USAID/Sri Lanka and Maldives, 2010*

"We have been very pleased with VEGA's work here in Uzbekistan. The Business Advisor has proven very helpful in developing new relationships with the private sector and the local branch of the AmCham. As a result, we have extended the award for three additional years."

*Nathan Park, Country Office Deputy Director
USAID/Central Asian Republics, 2013*

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