

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE COMMISSION

[Investment Company Act Release No. 27820; 812-13304]

Van Eck Worldwide Insurance Trust, et al.; Notice of Application

May 9, 2007

Agency: Securities and Exchange Commission (“Commission”).

Action: Notice of application for an order under sections 6(c) and 17(b) of the Act for an exemption from section 17(a) of the Investment Company Act of 1940 (“Act”) and under section 12(d)(1)(J) of the Act for an exemption from sections 12(d)(1)(A) and (B).

Summary of the Application: The order would permit certain registered open-end management investment companies to acquire shares of other registered open-end management investment companies and unit investment trusts (“UITs”) that are within and outside the same group of investment companies.

Applicants: Van Eck Worldwide Insurance Trust (“WWIT”), Van Eck Funds (“Van Eck Funds”) and Van Eck Funds, Inc. (“Van Eck Funds II”) (together, the “Investment Companies”) and Van Eck Associates Corporation (“Adviser”).¹

Filing Dates: The application was filed on June 16, 2006, and amended on May 3, 2007.

Hearing or Notification of Hearing: An order granting the application will be issued unless the Commission orders a hearing. Interested persons may request a hearing by writing to the Commission’s Secretary and serving applicants with a copy of the request, personally or by mail. Hearing requests should be received by the Commission by 5:30

¹ All entities that currently intend to rely on the requested order are named as applicants and any other entity that relies on the order in the future will comply with the terms and conditions of the application. Applicants request that the relief also apply to any other existing or future registered open-end management investment company that is part of the same group of investment companies, as defined in section 12(d)(1)(G) of the Act, as the Investment Companies (included in the term “Investment Companies”). Each series of an Investment Company is referred to as “Fund” and collectively as “Funds.”

p.m. on May 31, 2007, and should be accompanied by proof of service on applicants in the form of an affidavit or, for lawyers, a certificate of service. Hearing requests should state the nature of the writer's interest, the reason for the request, and the issues contested. Persons who wish to be notified of a hearing may request notification by writing to the Commission's Secretary.

Addresses: Secretary, Commission, 100 F Street, NE, Washington, DC 20549-9303.

Applicants: Joseph McBrien, Esq., Van Eck Associates Corporation, 99 Park Avenue, New York, New York 10016.

For Further Information Contact: Emerson S. Davis, Sr., Senior Counsel, at (202) 551-6868, or Nadya B. Roytblat, Assistant Director, at (202) 551-6821 (Office of Investment Company Regulation, Division of Investment Management).

Supplementary Information: The following is a summary of the application. The complete application may be obtained for a fee at the Commission's Public Reference Desk, 100 F Street, NE, Washington, DC 20549-0102 (telephone (202) 551-5850).

Applicants' Representations:

1. WWIT is a Massachusetts business trust and is registered under the Act as an open-end management investment company. WWIT currently consists of five Funds, each with its own investment objective and policies. Shares of each WWIT Fund are currently offered and sold through registered separate accounts of insurance companies that are not affiliates of the Adviser ("Registered Separate Accounts") and unregistered separate accounts that are not affiliates of the Adviser ("Unregistered Separate Accounts," and together with the Registered Separate Accounts, the "Separate Accounts").

2. Van Eck Funds is a Massachusetts business trust and is registered under the Act as an open-end management investment company. Van Eck Funds currently consists of three Funds, each with its own investment objective and policies. The shares of these Funds are offered and sold to retail and institutional investors and are not offered through Separate Accounts. Van Eck Funds II is a Maryland corporation and is registered under the Act as an open-end management investment company. It currently consists of one Fund, the shares of which are offered and sold to retail and institutional investors and are not offered through Separate Accounts. The Adviser is a Delaware corporation and is registered as an investment adviser under the Investment Advisers Act of 1940. Each investment adviser to a Fund of Funds that meets the definition of section 2(a)(20)(A) of the Act is referred to as a "Fund of Funds Adviser." Any investment adviser to a Fund of Funds that meets the definition of section 2(a)(20)(B) of the Act is referred to as a "Fund of Funds Sub-Adviser."

3. Applicants request relief to permit certain Funds (each such Fund, a "Fund of Funds") to invest in: (a) other Funds ("Affiliated Underlying Funds"), and (b) registered open-end management investment companies and UITs that are not part of the same "group of investment companies" (as defined in section 12(d)(1)(G)(ii) of the Act) as the Investment Companies ("Unaffiliated Underlying Funds," and together with the Affiliated Underlying Funds, the "Underlying Funds"). The Unaffiliated Underlying Funds may include UITs ("Unaffiliated Trusts") and open-end management investment companies registered under the Act ("Unaffiliated Funds"). Certain of the Unaffiliated Underlying Funds may have received exemptive relief to sell their shares on a national securities exchange at negotiated prices ("ETFs"). Each Fund of Funds may also make

direct investments in other securities. Applicants state that each Fund of Funds will enable investors to create a comprehensive asset allocation program with just one investment and provide a simple, convenient and cost-efficient program for investors who are able to identify their investment goals and risk tolerances but may not be comfortable deciding how to invest their assets to achieve those goals.

Applicants' Legal Analysis:

A. Section 12(d)(1)

1. Section 12(d)(1)(A) of the Act prohibits a registered investment company from acquiring shares of an investment company if the securities represent more than 3% of the total outstanding voting stock of the acquired company, more than 5% of the total assets of the acquiring company, or, together with the securities of any other investment companies, more than 10% of the total assets of the acquiring company. Section 12(d)(1)(B) of the Act prohibits a registered open-end investment company, its principal underwriter and any broker or dealer from selling the shares of the investment company to another investment company if the sale will cause the acquiring company to own more than 3% of the acquired company's voting stock, or if the sale will cause more than 10% of the acquired company's voting stock to be owned by investment companies generally.

2. Section 12(d)(1)(J) of the Act provides that the Commission may exempt any person, security, or transaction, or any class or classes of persons, securities or transactions, from any provision of section 12(d)(1) if the exemption is consistent with the public interest and the protection of investors. Applicants seek an exemption under section 12(d)(1)(J) to permit the Funds of Funds to acquire shares of Underlying Funds and to permit the Underlying Funds, their principal underwriters and any broker or

dealer to sell shares to the Funds of Funds beyond the limits set forth in sections 12(d)(1)(A) and (B) of the Act.

3. Applicants state that the proposed arrangement will not give rise to the policy concerns underlying sections 12(d)(1)(A) and (B), which include concerns about undue influence by a fund of funds over underlying funds, excessive layering of fees, and overly complex fund structures. Accordingly, applicants believe that the requested exemption is consistent with the public interest and the protection of investors.

4. Applicants state that the proposed arrangement will not result in undue influence by a Fund of Funds or its affiliated persons over the Underlying Funds. To limit the control that a Fund of Funds, and its affiliates, may have over an Unaffiliated Underlying Fund, applicants submit that: (a)(i) each Fund of Funds Adviser, (ii) any person controlling, controlled by or under common control with the Fund of Funds Adviser, (iii) any investment company and any issuer that would be an investment company but for section 3(c)(1) or section 3(c)(7) of the Act advised or sponsored by the Fund of Funds Adviser or any person controlling, controlled by or under common control with the Fund of Funds Adviser (collectively, the “Group”), and (b)(i) any Fund of Funds Subadviser, (ii) any person controlling, controlled by or under common control with the Fund of Funds Sub-Adviser, and (iii) any investment company or issuer that would be an investment company but for section 3(c)(1) or 3(c)(7) of the Act (or portion of such investment company or issuer) advised or sponsored by the Fund of Funds Sub-Adviser or any person controlling, controlled by or under common control with the Fund of Funds Sub-Adviser (collectively, the “Sub-Adviser Group”) will not control (individually or in

the aggregate) an Unaffiliated Underlying Fund within the meaning of section 2(a)(9) of the Act.

5. Applicants also propose to prevent a Fund of Funds and its affiliated entities from taking advantage of an Unaffiliated Underlying Fund with respect to transactions between the entities by precluding a Fund of Funds and its Fund of Fund Adviser, Fund of Funds Sub-Adviser, promoter, principal underwriter and any person controlling, controlled by or under common control with any of these entities (each, a “Fund of Funds Affiliate”) from causing any existing or potential investment by the Fund of Funds in an Unaffiliated Underlying Fund to influence the terms of any services or transactions between the Fund of Funds or a Fund of Funds Affiliate and the Unaffiliated Underlying Fund or its investment adviser(s), sponsor, promoter, principal underwriter and any person controlling, controlled by or under common control with any of these entities (each, an “Unaffiliated Fund Affiliate”). Condition 5 precludes a Fund of Funds and Fund of Funds Affiliate (except to the extent it is acting in its capacity as an investment adviser to an Unaffiliated Fund or sponsor to an Unaffiliated Trust) from causing an Unaffiliated Underlying Fund to purchase a security in an offering of securities during the existence of any underwriting or selling syndicate of which a principal underwriter is an officer, director, member of an advisory board, Adviser, Sub-Adviser, or employee of the Fund of Funds, or a person of which any such officer, director, member of an advisory board, Adviser, Sub-Adviser, or employee is an affiliated person (each, an “Underwriting Affiliate,” except any person whose relationship to the Unaffiliated Underlying Fund is covered by section 10(f) of the Act is not an Underwriting Affiliate). An offering of securities during the existence of any

underwriting or selling syndicate of which a principal underwriter is an Underwriting Affiliate is an “Affiliated Underwriting.”

6. As an additional assurance that an Unaffiliated Fund understands the implications of an investment by a Fund of Funds under the requested order, prior to a Fund of Funds’ investment in an Unaffiliated Fund in excess of the limit in section 12(d)(1)(A)(i), condition 8 requires that the Fund of Funds and the Unaffiliated Fund execute an agreement stating, without limitation, that their boards of directors or trustees and their investment advisers understand the terms and conditions of the order and agree to fulfill their responsibilities under the order (“Participation Agreement”). Applicants note that an Unaffiliated Underlying Fund (other than an ETF whose shares are purchased by a Fund of Funds in the secondary market) will retain the right to reject an investment by a Fund of Funds.²

7. Applicants do not believe that the proposed arrangement will involve excessive layering of fees. With respect to investment advisory fees, applicants state that, prior to approval of any investment advisory contract under section 15 of the Act, the board of directors or trustees of each Fund of Funds (“Board”), including a majority of the directors or trustees who are not “interested persons,” as defined in section 2(a)(19) of the Act (“Disinterested Trustees”), will find that the investment advisory fees charged under the contract are based on services provided that are in addition to, rather than duplicative of, services provided pursuant to any Affiliated Underlying Fund’s or Unaffiliated Fund’s advisory contract(s). Applicants further state that each Fund of

² An Unaffiliated Fund, including an ETF, would retain its right to reject any initial investment by a Fund of Funds in excess of the limit in section 12(d)(1)(A)(i) of the Act by declining to execute the Participation Agreement.

Funds Adviser will waive fees otherwise payable to it by the Fund of Funds in an amount at least equal to any compensation (including fees received pursuant to any plan adopted by an Unaffiliated Fund under rule 12b-1 under the Act) received by the Fund of Funds Adviser or an affiliated person of the Fund of Funds Adviser from an Unaffiliated Underlying Fund, other than any advisory fees paid to the Fund of Funds Adviser or its affiliated person by an Unaffiliated Fund, in connection with the investment by the Fund of Funds in the Unaffiliated Underlying Fund.

8. Applicants state that the proposed arrangement will not create an overly complex fund structure. Applicants note that an Underlying Fund will be prohibited from acquiring securities of any investment company or company relying on section 3(c)(1) or 3(c)(7) of the Act in excess of the limits contained in section 12(d)(1)(A), except to the extent that such Underlying Fund: (a) receives securities of another investment company as a dividend or as a result of a plan of reorganization of a company (other than a plan devised for the purpose of evading section 12(d)(1) of the Act); or (b) acquires (or is deemed to have acquired) securities of another investment company pursuant to exemptive relief from the Commission permitting such Underlying Fund to: (i) acquire securities of one or more affiliated investment companies for short-term cash management purposes, or (ii) engage in interfund borrowing and lending transactions. Applicants also represent that a Fund of Funds' prospectus and sales literature will contain concise, "plain English" disclosure designed to inform investors of the unique characteristics of the proposed Fund of Funds structure, including, but not limited to, its expense structure and the additional expenses of investing in Underlying Funds. Each Fund of Fund will comply with the disclosure requirements concerning the cost of

investing in Underlying Funds as set forth in Investment Company Act Release No. 27399.

B. Section 17(a)

1. Section 17(a) of the Act generally prohibits sales or purchases of securities between a registered investment company and any affiliated person of the company. Section 2(a)(3) of the Act defines an “affiliated person” of another person to include (a) any person directly or indirectly owning, controlling, or holding with power to vote, 5% or more of the outstanding voting securities of the other person; (b) any person 5% or more of whose outstanding voting securities are directly or indirectly owned, controlled, or held with power to vote by the other person; and (c) any person directly or indirectly controlling, controlled by, or under common control with the other person.

2. Applicants state that the Funds of Funds and the Affiliated Underlying Funds might be deemed to be under common control of the Adviser and therefore affiliated persons of one another. Applicants also state that the Funds of Funds and the Underlying Funds might be deemed to be affiliated persons of one another if a Fund of Funds acquires 5% or more of an Underlying Fund’s outstanding voting securities. In light of these possible affiliations, section 17(a) could prevent an Underlying Fund from selling shares to and redeeming shares from a Fund of Funds.

3. Section 17(b) of the Act authorizes the Commission to grant an order permitting a transaction otherwise prohibited by section 17(a) if it finds that (a) the terms of the proposed transaction are fair and reasonable and do not involve overreaching on the part of any person concerned; (b) the proposed transaction is consistent with the policies of each registered investment company involved; and (c) the proposed

transaction is consistent with the general purposes of the Act. Section 6(c) of the Act permits the Commission to exempt any person, security or transactions or any class or classes of persons, securities or transactions, from any provision of the Act if such exemption is necessary or appropriate in the public interest and consistent with the protection of investors and the purposes fairly intended by the policy and provisions of the Act.

4. Applicants submit that the proposed structure satisfies the standards for relief under sections 17(b) and 6(c) of the Act.³ Applicants state that the terms upon which an Underlying Fund will sell its shares to or purchase its shares from a Fund of Funds will be based on the net asset value of each Underlying Fund.⁴ Applicants state that the proposed investment will be consistent with the policies of each Fund of Funds and Underlying Fund, and with the general purposes of the Act.

Applicants' Conditions:

Applicants agree that any order granting the requested relief shall be subject to the following conditions:

1. The members of the Group will not control (individually or in the aggregate) an Unaffiliated Underlying Fund within the meaning of section 2(a)(9) of the Act. The members of the Sub-Adviser Group will not control (individually or in the

³ Applicants acknowledge that receipt of any compensation by (a) an affiliated person of a Fund of Funds, or an affiliated person of such person, for the purchase by the Fund of Funds of shares of an Underlying Fund or (b) an affiliated person of an Underlying Fund, or an affiliated person of such person, for the sale by the Underlying Fund of its shares to a Fund of Funds is subject to section 17(e) of the Act. The Participation Agreement also will include this acknowledgement.

⁴ Applicants note that a Fund of Funds generally would purchase and sell shares of an Underlying Fund that operates as an ETF through secondary market transactions at market prices rather than through principal transactions with the Underlying Fund at net asset value. Applicants would not rely on the requested relief from section 17(a) for such secondary market transactions. A Fund of Funds that owns more than 5% of

aggregate) an Unaffiliated Underlying Fund within the meaning of section 2(a)(9) of the Act. If, as a result of a decrease in the outstanding voting securities of an Unaffiliated Underlying Fund, the Group or the Sub-Adviser Group, each in the aggregate, becomes a holder of more than 25% of the outstanding voting securities of the Unaffiliated Underlying Fund, then the Group or the Sub-Adviser Group (except for any member of the Group or the Sub-Adviser Group that is a Separate Account) will vote its shares of the Unaffiliated Underlying Fund in the same proportion as the vote of all other holders of the Unaffiliated Underlying Fund's shares. This condition will not apply to the Sub-Adviser Group with respect to an Unaffiliated Underlying Fund for which the Sub-Adviser or a person controlling, controlled by, or under common control with the Sub-Adviser acts as the investment adviser within the meaning section 2(a)(20)(A) of the Act (in the case of an Unaffiliated Fund) or as the sponsor (in the case of an Unaffiliated Trust).

A Registered Separate Account will seek voting instructions from its contract holders and will vote its shares of an Unaffiliated Underlying Fund in accordance with the instructions received and will vote those shares for which no instructions were received in the same proportion as the shares for which instructions were received. An Unregistered Separate Account will either: (i) vote its shares of the Unaffiliated Underlying Fund in the same proportion as the vote of all other holders of the Unaffiliated Underlying Fund's shares; or (ii) seek voting instructions from its contract holders and vote its shares in accordance with the instructions received and vote those

the outstanding voting securities of an ETF could seek to transact in "Creation Units" directly with the ETF pursuant to the requested Section 17(a) relief.

shares for which no instructions were received in the same proportion as the shares for which instructions were received.

2. No Fund of Funds or Fund of Funds Affiliate will cause any existing or potential investment by the Fund of Funds in shares of an Unaffiliated Underlying Fund to influence the terms of any services or transactions between the Fund of Funds or a Fund of Funds Affiliate and the Unaffiliated Underlying Fund or an Unaffiliated Fund Affiliate.

3. The Board of each Fund of Funds, including a majority of the Disinterested Trustees, will adopt procedures reasonably designed to assure that the Adviser and any Fund of Fund Sub-Adviser are conducting the investment program of the Fund of Funds without taking into account any consideration received by the Fund of Funds or a Fund of Funds Affiliate from an Unaffiliated Underlying Fund or an Unaffiliated Fund Affiliate in connection with any services or transactions.

4. Once an investment by a Fund of Funds in the securities of an Unaffiliated Fund exceeds the limit of section 12(d)(1)(A)(i) of the Act, the Board of the Unaffiliated Fund, including a majority of the Disinterested Trustees, will determine that any consideration paid by the Unaffiliated Fund to a Fund of Funds or a Fund of Funds Affiliate in connection with any services or transactions: (a) is fair and reasonable in relation to the nature and quality of the services and benefits received by the Unaffiliated Fund; (b) is within the range of consideration that the Unaffiliated Fund would be required to pay to another unaffiliated entity in connection with the same services or transactions; and (c) does not involve overreaching on the part of any person concerned. This condition does not apply with respect to any services or transactions between an

Unaffiliated Fund and its investment adviser(s), or any person controlling, controlled by, or under common control with such investment adviser(s).

5. No Fund of Funds or Fund of Funds Affiliate (except to the extent it is acting in its capacity as an investment adviser to an Unaffiliated Fund or sponsor to an Unaffiliated Trust) will cause an Unaffiliated Underlying Fund to purchase a security in an Affiliated Underwriting.

6. The Board of an Unaffiliated Fund, including a majority of the Disinterested Trustees, will adopt procedures reasonably designed to monitor any purchases of securities by the Unaffiliated Fund in an Affiliated Underwriting, once an investment by a Fund of Funds in the securities of the Unaffiliated Fund exceeds the limit of section 12(d)(1)(A)(i) of the Act, including any purchases made directly from an Underwriting Affiliate. The Board of the Unaffiliated Fund will review these purchases periodically, but no less frequently than annually, to determine whether the purchases were influenced by the investment by the Fund of Funds in shares of the Unaffiliated Fund. The Board of the Unaffiliated Fund will consider, among other things: (a) whether the purchases were consistent with the investment objectives and policies of the Unaffiliated Fund; (b) how the performance of securities purchased in an Affiliated Underwriting compares to the performance of comparable securities purchased during a comparable period of time in underwritings other than Affiliated Underwritings or to a benchmark such as a comparable market index; and (c) whether the amount of securities purchased by the Unaffiliated Fund in Affiliated Underwritings and the amount purchased directly from an Underwriting Affiliate have changed significantly from prior years. The Board of the Unaffiliated Fund will take any appropriate actions based on its

review, including, if appropriate, the institution of procedures designed to assure that purchases of securities in Affiliated Underwritings are in the best interests of shareholders.

7. Each Unaffiliated Fund will maintain and preserve permanently in an easily accessible place a written copy of the procedures described in the preceding condition, and any modifications to such procedures, and will maintain and preserve for a period of not less than six years from the end of the fiscal year in which any purchase from an Affiliated Underwriting occurred, the first two years in an easily accessible place, a written record of each purchase of securities in an Affiliated Underwriting once an investment by a Fund of Funds in the securities of an Unaffiliated Fund exceeds the limit of section 12(d)(1)(A)(i) of the Act, setting forth from whom the securities were acquired, the identity of the underwriting syndicate's members, the terms of the purchase, and the information or materials upon which the determinations of the Board of the Unaffiliated Fund were made.

8. Prior to its investment in shares of an Unaffiliated Fund in excess of the limit in section 12(d)(1)(A)(i) of the Act, the Fund of Funds and the Unaffiliated Fund will execute a Participation Agreement stating, without limitation, that their boards of directors or trustees and their investment advisers understand the terms and conditions of the order and agree to fulfill their responsibilities under the order. At the time of its investment in shares of an Unaffiliated Fund in excess of the limit in section 12(d)(1)(A)(i), a Fund of Funds will notify the Unaffiliated Fund of the investment. At such time, the Fund of Funds will also transmit to the Unaffiliated Fund a list of the names of each Fund of Funds Affiliate and Underwriting Affiliate. The Fund of Funds

will notify the Unaffiliated Fund of any changes to the list as soon as reasonably practicable after a change occurs. The Unaffiliated Fund and the Fund of Funds will maintain and preserve a copy of the order, the Participation Agreement, and the list with any updated information for the duration of the investment and for a period of not less than six years thereafter, the first two years in an easily accessible place.

9. Prior to approving any advisory contract under section 15 of the Act, the Board of each Fund of Funds, including a majority of the Disinterested Trustees, will find that the advisory fees charged under the advisory contract are based on services provided that are in addition to, rather than duplicative of, the services provided under the advisory contract(s) of any Affiliated Underlying Fund or Unaffiliated Funds in which the Fund of Funds may invest. This finding, and the basis upon which the finding was made, will be recorded fully in the minute books of the appropriate Fund of Funds.

10. The Fund of Fund Adviser will waive fees otherwise payable to it by a Fund of Funds in an amount at least equal to any compensation (including fees received pursuant to any plan adopted by an Unaffiliated Fund under rule 12b-1 under the Act) received by the Fund of Fund Adviser, or an affiliated person of the Fund of Funds Adviser, other than any advisory fees paid to the Fund of Funds Adviser or its affiliated person by the Unaffiliated Fund, in connection with the investment by the Fund of Funds in the Unaffiliated Underlying Fund. Any Fund of Funds Sub-Adviser will waive fees otherwise payable to the Fund of Funds Sub-Adviser, directly or indirectly, by the Fund of Funds in an amount at least equal to any compensation received from an Unaffiliated Underlying Fund by the Fund of Funds Sub-Adviser, or an affiliated person of the Fund of Funds Sub-Adviser, other than any advisory fees paid to the Fund of Funds Sub-

Adviser or its affiliated person by an Unaffiliated Fund, in connection with the investment by the Fund of Funds in the Unaffiliated Fund made at the direction of the Fund of Funds Sub-Adviser. In the event that the Fund of Funds Sub-Adviser waives fees, the benefit of the waiver will be passed through to the Fund of Funds.

11. With respect to Registered Separate Accounts that invest in a Fund of Funds, no sales load will be charged at the Fund of Funds level or at the Underlying Fund level. Other sales charges and service fees, as defined in rule 2830 of the Conduct Rules of the National Association of Securities Dealers ("NASD"), if any, will only be charged at the Fund of Funds level or at the Underlying Fund level, not both. With respect to other investments in a Fund of Funds, any sales charges and/or service fees charged with respect to shares of a Fund of Funds will not exceed the limits applicable to funds of funds set forth in rule 2830 of the NASD Conduct Rules.

12. No Underlying Fund will acquire securities of any other investment company or company relying on section 3(c)(1) or 3(c)(7) of the Act in excess of the limits contained in section 12(d)(1)(A) of the Act, except to the extent that such Underlying Fund: (a) receives securities of another investment company as a dividend or as a result of a plan of reorganization of a company (other than a plan devised for the purpose of evading section 12(d)(1) of the Act); or (b) acquires (or is deemed to have acquired) securities of another investment company pursuant to exemptive relief from the

Commission permitting such Underlying Fund to: (i) acquire securities of one or more affiliated investment companies for short-term cash management purposes, or (ii) engage in interfund borrowing and lending transactions.

For the Commission, by the Division of Investment Management, pursuant to delegated authority.

Florence E. Harmon
Deputy Secretary