



WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

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INFORMATION NOTE ON THE PROPOSED WTO YOUNG PROFESSIONALS PROGRAMME

Further to the statement made by the Director-General at the General Council Meeting of 20 February 2015, please find attached the Information Note on the *proposed* WTO Young Professionals Programme (WTO YPP). The note seeks to provide Members with information on the different elements related to the programme.

The WTO Secretariat will be taking the WTO YPP forward as detailed in this Information Note.

This Information Note replaces the one sent to the Members on 4th May 2015 to ensure alignment with the French and Spanish versions.

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WTO YOUNG PROFESSIONALS PROGRAMME
Information Note**1. BACKGROUND**

Developing and least-developed Members have consistently raised concerns that the current representation in the WTO Secretariat does not fully reflect the diversity of its Membership.

The proposed WTO Young Professionals Programme (WTO YPP) is, in part, a step towards addressing this concern by equipping young professionals from developing and least-developed Members with the necessary experience and skills. This would be over and above what is currently available through the existing WTO Trade-Related Technical Assistance programmes, which will continue to run concurrently with the WTO YPP. The proposed WTO YPP will therefore be an important element of wider efforts to increase diversity and broaden the representation of the Membership within the Secretariat.

2. RATIONALE

The WTO Secretariat consists of a diverse team of highly qualified individuals possessing a wide range of skills, knowledge and experience, as is required in order to handle the Secretariat's responsibilities and to work together as an efficient and diligent international civil service. Recruitment to the Secretariat is governed by WTO staff rules and regulations and is based on the principle of equal opportunity for all, regardless of gender, nationality, race or religion, with the objective of ensuring the broadest possible diversification of the Secretariat. The aim of the WTO Secretariat's recruitment is to seek, attract and retain staff members offering the highest standards of competence, efficiency and integrity. It is important that this competitive recruitment process being operated is not compromised in any way.

Most international organizations of similar standing as the WTO have programmes that provide young professionals with an opportunity to gain entry-level professional experience in their organisations. Up until now, the WTO has not adopted a deliberate policy to attract young professionals. The proposed Young Professionals Programme should be seen as part of a conscious endeavour to increase the number of professionals in the Secretariat from developing and least-developed countries with low representation. The WTO YPP will offer targeted training and mentoring to enhance the skills of young professionals with outstanding graduate degrees and a demonstrated interest in a career in international trade. It will provide them with an opportunity to gain practical experience on WTO issues, making the selected individuals more competitive and eligible to apply for jobs requiring expertise in trade policy at the national, regional or international levels, including at the WTO. It would also provide a pool of potential candidates that would compete, along with others, to fill a limited number of WTO short term contracts.

3. OVERALL OBJECTIVES

The WTO YPP will complement the existing internship programmes by providing young professionals, the opportunity to work directly with a WTO Division thus gaining hands-on experience and an in-depth understanding of the different functions and activities of the WTO. It will provide them with training and mentoring opportunities, professional interactions and policy dialogues to enhance their skills, knowledge and leadership potential, which will be beneficial not only for their career progression but also for their respective countries.

More specifically, the WTO YPP will aim to attract highly talented young professionals interested in a career in international trade. The programme will seek to:

- i. Provide a platform to acquire practical experience on trade issues and contribute to the work of WTO;
- ii. Provide an opportunity to develop expertise and specialization on different WTO Agreement;
- iii. Widen the diversity and pool of relevant expertise from developing and least-developed Members with low representation in the WTO Secretariat, thereby increasing the chances of young professionals to succeed in general competitive WTO recruitment.

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4. PROGRAMME DESCRIPTION

The WTO YPP initiative is particularly important as there is a great need to ensure that efforts to address the persisting concerns relating to under representation in the Secretariat do not compromise the competitive recruitment process being operated by the WTO. The Programme will start by recruiting up to five candidates for a period of one year from eligible developing and least developed Members. During the initial years of its implementation, priority will be accorded to young professionals from those developing and least-developed Members that are not currently represented at the professional level in the Secretariat.

Following a call for candidates on the WTO website, a selection Committee will screen applicants on the basis of their competence. The young professionals will apply in their own capacities and will not require to be nominated by their respective governments as is the case with other WTO TRTA programmes or activities.

There will be no extension as well as no guarantee of employment at the WTO after the one year period is over. Additionally, countries represented in one year will not be eligible to participate in the succeeding year. The WTO YPPs will be treated like Secretariat staff members with respect to their obligations, including with regard to confidentiality during their one year stay with the WTO Secretariat.

The selected beneficiaries will be placed in a specific Division of the WTO Secretariat and will have the opportunity to work in the areas of their interest in accordance with organisational needs. The Divisions involved will nurture and mentor the young professionals during their tenure.

5. TARGET GROUPS

The WTO YPP programme will be focused primarily on young professionals from developing and least-developed Members with graduate degrees in international trade and trade policy. During the initial years of the programme, priority will be accorded to young professionals from those eligible members that are not currently represented in the Secretariat at the professional level. Based on the 31 December 2014 Diversity Report, there are 71 Members falling into this category (Annex 1). Funding permitting, it would then be extended to those individuals from countries with low representation in the Secretariat.

5.1 ELIGIBILITY

To be eligible for the programme, candidates should fulfil the following requirements:

- i. Be 32 years of age or younger;
- ii. Have at least a graduate degree in an international trade-related subject;
- iii. Have demonstrated relevant expertise or continued academic study in a field of interest to the work of the WTO;
- iv. Possess the ability to think strategically, work independently and in a team;
- v. Demonstrate a strong interest in trade policy;
- vi. Preferably possess at least 2 years of relevant work experience;
- vii. Be fluent in one of the official WTO languages, English or French or Spanish.

5.2 PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

A Programme Manager from ITTC will be assigned the responsibility to manage and monitor the programme in close cooperation with the Technical Assistance Monitoring and Evaluation Team (TAME), the Human Resources Division (HRD) and participating Divisions. The ITTC Director will oversee the implementation of the programme.

Once a young professional is selected and placed in a Division, the Director of the Division to which he/she is placed will be responsible to provide a targeted work programme and overall guidance during the one year. The scope of work will be developed by a senior officer responsible for the direct supervision of the WTO YPP, which will include clear work responsibilities and outputs. Participating Divisions will be expected to allocate mentors who will work closely with the Young Professionals.

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The Programme Manager, in consultation with TAME and relevant divisions, will be responsible for monitoring the programme. He/she will provide regular feedback on the performance of these Young Professionals while TAME will conduct an internal evaluation of the programme at the end of each year, the result of which will be reported to the Members through the Committee on Trade and Development. The programme will be assessed in the same way as other programmes and TRTA activities managed by the ITTC.

Overall, it is expected that after a specified period of time, there will be an increased pool of young professionals possessing the necessary expertise from developing and least-developed Members with no representation in the Secretariat, applying and competing for jobs in the WTO, at regional Secretariats and other international organisations.

6. FUNDING

The total amount of funding required will depend on the number of candidates admitted to the programme. The standard cost for one young professional is estimated at CHF 45,000 per year, which includes a CHF 3,500 monthly salary, appropriate medical cover and travel costs. The number of young professionals recruited in any year will depend on resources available and the WTO organisational needs.

Funding for the programme will be considered along with that for other technical assistance activities as part of the 2016-2017 Biennial Technical Assistance Plan. At the same time, the Secretariat hopes to secure funding from interested donors to allow for the gradual expansion of the programme.

7. IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINES

As indicated the WTO YPP will be discussed further with the Members as part of the 2016-17 TA Plan preparations. Once approved for implementation, the Programme will be advertised both on the recruitment page of the WTO and the WTO TRTA page. The programme will open for applications in the second half of 2015 with the aim of ensuring that the selected young professionals can start work by January 2016. This cycle of recruitment and placement will continue in the subsequent year(s).

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ANNEX 1

DEVELOPING AND LEAST-DEVELOPED MEMBERS NOT CURRENTLY REPRESENTED
AT THE PROFESSIONAL LEVEL¹

REGION	MEMBER	REGION	MEMBER
Africa	Angola	Caribbean	Antigua and Barbuda
	Botswana		Belize
	Burkina Faso		Dominica
	Cabo Verde		Dominican Republic
	Cameroon		Grenada
	Central African Republic		Guyana
	Congo		Haiti
	Cote d'Ivoire		Saint Kitts and Nevis
	Djibouti		Saint Vincent & the Grenadines
	Gabon		Suriname
	Guinea-Bissau		
	Lesotho	subtotal	10 members
	Madagascar	CEECAC²	Albania
	Mali		Armenia
	Mauritania		Georgia
	Mozambique		Israel
	Namibia		Kyrgyz Republic
	Niger		The FYR of Macedonia
	Swaziland		Republic of Moldova
	Togo		Montenegro
	Tajikistan		
	Ukraine		
subtotal	20 Members		
Asia	Brunei Darussalam	subtotal	10 Members
	Cambodia	Latin America	Chile
	Hong Kong China		Cuba
	Indonesia		El Salvador
	Lao People's Democratic Republic		Honduras
	Macao, China		Nicaragua
	Maldives		Panama
	Mongolia		Paraguay
	Myanmar		
	Singapore		
	Chinese Taipei	subtotal	7 Members
subtotal	11 Members	Pacific	Fiji
Arab Region³	Kingdom of Bahrain		Papua New Guinea
			Samoa
	Kuwait, the State of		Solomon Islands
	Oman		Tonga
	Qatar		Vanuatu
Kingdom of Saudi Arabia			
United Arab Emirates	subtotal	6 Members	
Yemen			
subtotal	7 Members		

¹ There are currently 71 developing and least-developed Members who are not represented at the professional level in the Secretariat.

² CEECAC-Central and Eastern Europe, Central and the Caucasus

³ For this purpose Arab group excludes those Arab League Members in Africa.