



WORLD TRADE
ORGANIZATION



WTO
CHAIRS
PROGRAMME

WTO Chairs Programme

Call for Applications

The World Trade Organization (WTO) is pleased to call for applications for the WTO Chairs Programme (WCP). This programme is aimed at enhancing knowledge and understanding of the multilateral trading system among academics and policy makers in developing countries through research, curriculum development, and outreach activities.

Launched in 2010 as a capacity-building programme, the WCP is implemented through partnership agreements between the WTO Secretariat and selected institutions. Over a cycle of four years, the WTO provides financial, scientific, and technical support to its partners in three interdependent pillars: research, curriculum development and outreach activities (see Annex II). Upon the completion of the programme cycle, institutions remain active in the network of WTO Chairs, comprising today a total of 35 institutions worldwide.

Implementing the decision announced by WTO Director-General Dr. Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala to admit more frequently limited numbers of institutions to the programme, this call targets exclusively academic institutions from world sub-regions currently under-represented in the programme, in particular: institutions from Middle Africa, Western Africa, Western Asia, Oceania, and Central America and the Caribbean as delineated under the United Nations geoscheme. Please refer to Annex I for the list of countries within these sub-regions. Applications from different world regions will be eligible in the next call for applications.

Chairs participating in the programme will be selected through a competitive process conducted by the WTO Secretariat with the support of the WCP Advisory Board, an external body of multidisciplinary international experts. The final decisions will be taken by WTO senior management. Please refer to Annex II of this document for guidelines on the application process and Annex III for a brief description of the financial guidelines.

Grant, Benefits, and Duration

The WTO provides financial, scientific, and technical support to the Chairs for projects spanning four years and encompassing the three interdependent pillars of the programme: research, outreach, and curriculum development.

Applicants awarded a WTO Chair are eligible to receive up to CHF 50,000 per year for a period of four years under the terms of the programme established in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the WTO and the beneficiary institution.

In addition, the WCP facilitates exchange and networking among Chairs through an annual conference, regional conferences and webinars, as well as publication projects. Chair holders have access to an e-Platform facilitating the sharing of information and discussions, while also making research produced under the WCP publicly available. Chair holders may request technical and scientific advice from the WTO Secretariat on matters related to the implementation of specific projects.

Members of the WCP Academic Advisory Board act as mentors to the Chairs and provide guidance throughout the programme cycle.

Eligibility

The WCP targets academic institutions established in developing and least developing countries, which are Members or Observers in the WTO. In order to implement the transition to more frequent admissions of smaller groups of institutions to this programme, this call is limited to academic institutions from world sub-regions currently under-represented in the programme, in particular: institutions from Middle Africa, Western Africa, Western Asia, Oceania, and Central America and the Caribbean as delineated under the United Nations geoscheme.¹ Please refer to Annex I for the list of countries within these sub-regions. Applications from different world regions will be eligible in the next call for applications.

Applications are to be submitted by an academic (the applicant) employed at the applicant institution, holding a professional position (such as dean, professor, or associate professor) in international trade related fields including, but not limited to, international economics, international law, political science, international relations.

Applicants shall be supported by a team of at least three academics in the host institution with relevant experience and interest in long-term involvement in the activities of the Chair. In addition to the inclusion of junior researchers such as PhD students in this team, diversity of gender, as well as interdisciplinarity between different scientific areas are recommended.

Applications must be endorsed officially by the Rector/Vice-Chancellor/President of the applicant institution.

Selection Process

Chairs will be selected through a competitive process taking place in two stages. The first stage of the selection will be based on the assessment of written applications. In the second stage, shortlisted candidates may be requested to supply additional information and may be interviewed (e.g., over virtual platforms).

The selection process will take into account the following criteria: i) potential for developing capacities at the host institution; ii) relevance of research topics in relation to trade policy and WTO-related issues; iii) quality of research proposals; iv) expected results with respect to the offering of new and updated courses; v) Potential for interaction with policy-making institutions (such as government departments, diplomatic mission in Geneva, other stakeholders like the business sector and civil society); vi) expected results with respect to networking with other academic institutions; vii) strategy towards future sustainability in terms of financial and human resources; and viii) potential for maintaining a team of critical mass in the host institution to collaborate in Chair holder activities.

Submission Procedure

Applications to participate in this cycle of the WTO Chairs Programme shall be submitted by **31 January 2024** using the online application form:

https://wto.formstack.com/forms/wcp_application2023

For further information please contact wtochairs.enquiries@wto.org

¹ Available at <https://unstats.un.org/unsd/methodology/m49/>.

ANNEX I

Institutions from countries that are eligible for WTO technical assistance in Middle Africa, Western Africa, Western Asia, Central America, Oceania, and the Caribbean (as delineated under the United Nations geoscheme) may apply in response to this call. The table below provides a list of these WTO Members, acceding countries, and observer governments. It excludes countries which currently host a WTO Chair.

No.	Region	Countries
1.	Middle Africa	Angola; Central African Republic; Chad; Congo; Democratic Republic of the Congo; Equatorial Guinea; Gabon; Sao Tomé and Príncipe
2.	Western Africa	Burkina Faso; Cabo Verde; Côte d'Ivoire; Gambia; Ghana; Guinea; Guinea-Bissau; Liberia; Mali; Mauritania; Niger; Nigeria; Sierra Leone; Togo
3.	Western Asia	Armenia; Azerbaijan; Kingdom of Bahrain; Georgia; Iraq; Israel; the State of Kuwait; Lebanese Republic; Qatar; Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; Syrian Arab Republic; United Arab Emirates; Yemen
4.	Central America	Belize; El Salvador; Guatemala; Honduras; Nicaragua; Panama
5.	Oceania	Fiji; Papua New Guinea; Solomon Islands; Vanuatu; Samoa; Tonga
6.	Caribbean	Antigua and Barbuda; Bahamas; Cuba; Dominica; Dominican Republic; Grenada; Haiti; Jamaica; Saint Kitts and Nevis; Saint Lucia; Saint Vincent and the Grenadines; Trinidad and Tobago

ANNEX II

General guidelines for application

Academic institutions play a fundamental role in educating and informing students, policy makers, civil society, as well as the general public on trade policy issues of national and multilateral interest. Moreover, academic institutions are in a unique position to provide a domestic or regional perspective in the analysis and teaching of trade policy matters. The analytical work of these academic institutions can contribute in a valuable way to policy-making processes in the respective WTO Members and regions as well as at the multilateral level.

In order to achieve the objectives of the WCP, the WTO provides support to academic institutions through the provision of a grant, while also making available the expertise of the WTO Secretariat to provide technical and scientific support for the implementation of their respective projects under the three pillars of the programme: research, curriculum development, and outreach.

Applications shall contain a project proposal for the first year of the proposed project (including estimated expenditures). The description of each activity shall clearly state the concrete outputs expected and the timeline for implementation. A more general outline for the subsequent years of the project shall be included, focusing mainly on topics and outputs to be expected.

The project plan will be assessed according to the considerations explained below. Once selected, Chairs may be requested to revise their project plans in accordance with beneficiary needs and observations by the WCP Academic Advisory Board.

Research

Research by the Chair should adopt a policy-oriented approach and focus on the analysis of relevant issues of multilateral and regional trade policy. Research projects should ideally involve interdisciplinary teams and be conducted in collaboration with government officials in charge of trade policy so as to promote capacity-building at the host country. Chairs are also expected to publish or translate their research in one of the three official WTO working languages.

The WTO may occasionally call upon selected Chairs to submit papers on a given topic of interest to the multilateral trading system which may be published by the WTO or to provide inputs on research undertaken by the organization.

The activities organized under this pillar will be evaluated annually using criteria such as the number of outputs produced as well as their quality determined according to a peer review.

Curriculum Development

The WCP supports the development and delivery of academic courses on trade policy and WTO-related matters in beneficiary academic institutions. Chair holders are expected to introduce new academic programmes and update existing ones, such as undergraduate or master's degrees or PhD programmes and diplomas. Courses adapted to the training of government officials and policymakers are also an important part of this pillar.

The introduction and updating of academic programmes as a result of WTO support will be evaluated on a yearly basis using criteria such as the number of new and updated academic courses per year and the number of students who successfully completed them.

Outreach and Collaboration

In order to foster discussion of trade policy and WTO matters at the national and regional levels, the WCP encourages interaction with government agencies, diplomatic Missions in Geneva, intergovernmental organizations, as well as with the private sector and civil society groups. Selected institutions are expected to seek active exchange with policy makers so as to strengthen policy relevance of the programme and promote trade capacity building in the host country.

Chair institutions shall organize activities aimed at disseminating research and information, promoting discussion regarding international trade and trade cooperation. Outreach activities may also be an

occasion to engage government agencies in the activities of the Chair and could include courses offered on an ad-hoc basis to policymakers.

Another integral part of the WCP is collaboration on joint projects among Chairs. Joint activities among Chair holders from the same region or cross-regional initiatives are encouraged.

The outreach activities organized through the provision of WTO grants will be evaluated on a yearly basis using criteria such as the number of such activities and instances of advice provided to policy makers and other stakeholders.

Sustainability

The WCP places importance on both the financial and human sustainability components of the projects aimed at ensuring their subsistence over time once financial support through the WTO is no longer available. Candidates are expected to develop a strategy for continuity once funding is exhausted. A high priority should be accorded to encouraging young researchers, lecturers, and PhD students to take part in the programme as well as to the establishment of links aimed at securing alternative revenue sources in order to ensure the sustainability of programme-related activities over the long term.

Governance: WCP Advisory Board

An external body composed of experienced scholars provides academic advice to the WTO Secretariat with respect to all aspects of the programme, thus ensuring the academic quality of outputs generated by the Chairs.

Reporting and Evaluation

Implementation is monitored and assessed on the basis of a Logical Framework (logframe) which is part of the WTO Technical Assistance and Training Plan. The logframe guides the implementation of activities by the WTO on the basis of a results-based management approach (RBM) and provides guidance on the objectives sought by the WTO under each pillar of the programme and the types of indicators that will be used to monitor progress and the achievement of objectives from both the qualitative and quantitative perspectives.

For purposes of monitoring and evaluation, Chair holders are requested to report annually their outputs as well as expenditures. The WTO Secretariat may conduct or commission Members of the Academic Advisory Board to conduct a visit at a Chair institution. Other reports and briefs may be requested by the WTO on particular issues at any time during the four-year cycle of the programme.

WCP Annual Conference

A conference with the participation of all WCP stakeholders is held on an annual basis, involving all Chair holders; members of the WCP Advisory Board; and WTO staff managing the programme and providing substantive support to Chair holders. These meetings provide an opportunity to jointly assess the functioning of the programme, to review the substantive work being implemented by the Chairs, to identify areas for improvement, and to strengthen collaboration.

ANNEX III

Financial Guidelines

The budget submitted with the application should be in accordance with the proposed work plan for the first year of the project. Detailed budgets for subsequent years are not required at the application stage. Successful candidates will be required to submit a detailed budget for every subsequent year of the programme with the project plan for the respective year.

Funds cannot be used as remuneration for the applicant or individuals involved in the applicant's team (e.g., regular salary payments). Overheads cannot be levied upon the grant.

Further guidelines on the use of funds will be communicated upon award of a WTO Chair as part of the MoU which is signed between the university hosting the Chair and the WTO. These guidelines contain expense limits on certain categories, such as per diems and travel.

The disbursement of the yearly WTO grant to Chairs will only be undertaken upon the approval by the WTO of the Chair's activity and budget plan for the year and the annual report of the previous year. The WTO will reserve the right to request documentation for claimed expenses and to request an audit of the programme.