WTO Chairs Programme

Fostering research, training, and outreach activities of relevance to governmental policy makers and other stakeholders at universities in developing countries and least developed countries

Join the WCP

Chairs are selected through a competitive process. More information regarding the next selection will be published on the WTO website and at wtochairs.org. Register your interest in joining the Programme at the email address below in order to be notified of the next call for candidates.

Deputy Director-General Xiangchen Zhang

I am confident that in the coming years the WCP will continue to grow organically. Newcomers benefit from the constant knowledge transfer from more experienced Chairs and the WCP Network. The resulting outputs have had an impact not only on the national level, but also at regional and cross-regional levels, delivering research to policymakers on a more frequent, specialized, customized and sustained level.

Deputy Director-General
Xiangchen Zhang

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Contact details

World Trade Organization
Academic Outreach and WTO Chairs Programme Section, Division for Knowledge and Information Management, Academic Outreach and WTO Chairs Programme (KMD)
WTO, Rue de Lausanne 154, CH-1211 Geneva 21, Switzerland
Tel: +41 22 739 68 13
Email: wtochairs.enquiries@wto.org
Website: wtochairs.org

The WTO Chairs Programme:

- Aims at enhancing knowledge and understanding of the multilateral trading system among academics, policy makers and civil society in developing countries and LDCs by stimulating teaching, research, and public debate on international trade at universities and research institutions.
- Fosters research and capacity building of relevance to government policy makers and other stakeholders and adapted to circumstances on the ground.
- Provides financial and substantive support to Chairs over a four-year Programme cycle as part of the WTO’s technical cooperation mandate of enhancing human and institutional capacities of beneficiary Members to take full advantage of the rules-based multilateral trading system.
- Comprises a total of 36 institutions with a cohort of 17 Chairs participating in the current four-year cycle and 19 Chairs funded in previous Programme cycles actively engaged in the network.

WCP Pillars

Research - Promoting original research on trade and WTO issues and extending specialized knowledge to both governments and the private sector.

Curriculum Development - Supporting the development and delivery of courses on trade policy and WTO-related matters in academic institutions for students, government officials, businesses, trade professionals and other stakeholders.

Outreach - Disseminating research and information on international trade issues to policy makers in capital as well as delegations based in Geneva, businesses, civil society, and the general public.

WCP Academic Advisory Board

The WCP Academic Advisory Board is an external body composed of more than a dozen experienced academics and other experts from all geographical regions. The Board provides strategic guidance to the Secretariat. Its involvement and support ensure the academic quality of the Programme.

Richard Newfarmer, Country Director, International Growth Center, Member of the Academic Advisory Board

One of the unsung virtues of the WTO Chairs Programme has been its catalytic role in prompting South-South discussions of trade and cross-country learning. These types of connections would simply have not happened had it not been for the WTO Chairs Programme.

The WTO Director-General

Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala

Developing countries need a better understanding of negotiating priorities that benefit their vital interests. As neutral researchers, WTO Chairs can provide such facts, figures, and policy advice. This fosters economically and legally sound policy choices on the ground in beneficiary countries. It also builds capacity for their active and successful participation in WTO work including negotiations.

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The WCP has become a community of practice, learning and collaboration across academic institutions, regions and trade-related disciplines. WCP projects are capacitating and empowering stakeholders to participate in the development of inclusive trade policy processes – an important and necessary step to ensure that trade policy and trade contribute to the achievement of their country’s sustainable development objectives.

Ambassador Oudot de Dainville, Permanent Representative of France to the World Trade Organization

By supporting the Chairs Programme, we encourage the exchange of arguments informed by the intellectual emulaton generated by research.

Director-General Cynthia Zimmermann, Ministry for Labour and Economic Affairs of Austria

With the Chairs Programme, the WTO extends the reach of its technical assistance activities by involving university Chairs serving as multipliers in beneficiary countries. The Programme plays a key role in building human and institutional capacities in beneficiary countries to empower each of them to take full advantage of the rules-based multilateral trading system.

WCP Network

- Argentina, Prof. Valentina Delich, Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences
- Barbados, Dr. Jan-Yves Remy, University of the West Indies
- Chile, Prof. Dorotea López Giral, University of Chile
- China, Prof. Lei Zhang, Shanghai University of International Business & Economics
- Indonesia, Prof. Riza Noor Arfani, Universitas Gadjah Mada
- Jordan, Prof. Taleb Warray, University of Jordan
- Kenya, Prof. Tabitha W. K. Nganga, University of Nairobi
- Mauritius, Prof. Boopen Seetanah, University of Mauritius
- Mexico, Prof. Bradly Condon, Instituto Tecnológico Autónomo de México
- Morocco, Prof. Azzedine Ghoufrane, University Mohammed V
- Russian Federation, Prof. Sergei Sutyrin, St Petersburg State University
- Senegal, Prof. Ahmadou Aly Mbaye, Cheikh Anta Diop University
- Singapore, Prof. Michael Ewing-Chow, National University of Singapore
- Benin, Prof. Charlemagne Igue, University Abomey-Calavi
- Brazil, Prof. Vera Thorstensen, Getulio Vargas Foundation, Sao Paulo School of Economics
- Oman, Prof. Osman Guiseven, Sultan Qaboos University
- South Africa, Prof. Wilma Viviers, North-West University
- Tunisia, Prof. Leila Baghdadi, University of Tunis
- Turkey, Prof. Pinar Artiran, Istanbul Bilgi University

Trudi Hartzenberg, Executive Director, Trade Law Centre for Southern Africa, Member of the Academic Advisory Board

Henry Gao, Professor, School of Law, Singapore Management University, Member of the Academic Advisory Board

The Chairs in many countries have become the “go-to” think-tanks on trade-related issues.