

WCO-JAPAN CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

I. General Objectives

This programme aims to:

- Provide developing-country Members with an opportunity for selected candidates to undertake work at the Secretariat as a Professional Associate to obtain knowledge, skills and international work experience.
- Promote the involvement of Members where neither of the two official WCO languages (English and French) is widely spoken.
- Develop and enhance networks among WCO Members and the Secretariat.
- Support and assist the Secretariat in its missions, work and tasks.
- Enhance the research function of the WCO.
- Develop a pool of highly competent experts/managers with international experience.

II. Sponsorship

The programme is sponsored by the Customs Administration of Japan.

III. Programme at a Glance

(a) Duration and Participants

The programme will host up to 10 participants (known as Professional Associates) for a 10-month period starting on 15 September 2025.

(b) Venue

WCO Headquarters, Brussels, Belgium.

(c) Field Study Trip

A field study trip to the sponsoring Administration, Japan Customs, will be included.

(d) Office and Directorate of Assignment

Assignments will be determined in cooperation with Directorates, taking into account each participant's professional experience.

IV. Application and Selection

(a) Areas of Work

- Up to 2 Professional Associates will be selected for work in Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) and/or Risk Management.
- Up to 8 Professional Associates will be selected for work in other Customs issues, with candidates specifying a particular area of their expertise.

(b) Eligibility and Requirements

Mandatory Requirements

Applicants must:

- Be customs officers from a developing-country Member administration which has active status at the WCO.
- Be selected and nominated by the Head of their home Customs Administration.
- Have a minimum of 3 years' experience in Customs.
- Hold a university degree or equivalent professional qualification.

- Demonstrate proficient in English, as evidenced by work experience, certification from a recognised language testing body, and/or diplomas from international institutions of higher education where English is the medium of instruction¹.
- Not have any medical condition that would impair full engagement in the Programme.

Preferred Qualifications

It is advantageous for applicants to:

- Have work experience in policy making, policy implementation and/or research.
- Have prior international work experience, in particular related to WCO matters (e.g. participation to WCO committees or activities as a WCO accredited expert)
- Possess skills in data analysis.
- Be under 45 years of age.

(c) Additional Selection Factors

- Preference will be given to applicants from Members where neither of the two official WCO languages (English and French) is widely spoken, such as Arabic, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish speaking Members. Applicants supported or recommended by a community or multiple Members sharing a common language will also receive special consideration.
- Applicants with sound experience in writing research papers and conducting analysis, particularly those who hold relevant degrees will be positively considered.
- Applicants will be evaluated based on their academic achievements, motivation, leadership potential, management capabilities, career progression, and relevant work experience.
- Preference will also be given to the applicants who have engaged in WCO programmes and activities.

V. Main Tasks and Responsibilities of Professional Associates

(a) Assisting and Supporting WCO Activities

Professional Associates will assist and support the activities and projects of the WCO, primarily within the Directorate to which they are assigned. In addition, they will provide support for linguistic matters as required.

(b) Research and Study Project

Professional Associates are expected to undertake a research project on a theme either assigned by the WCO or proposed by the Professional Associates themselves in consultation with a designated tutor from the Directorate and under the supervision of the Programme coordinator. The Professional Associates shall submit the outcome of the research project to the Office of the Secretary General before the end of the Programme.

(c) Field study trip

A field study trip is an essential part of the Programme, providing opportunity for Professional Associates to conduct research and deepen their understanding of the subject matter. Financial support will be granted for a visit to the donor country (Japan) and may also be extended to missions to other countries. Costs covered include economy-class travel, accommodation, and meals.

¹ The WCO working languages are English and French, however, main activities of the Programme, including the field study trip to Japan, are conducted exclusively in English.

VI. Duties, Obligations, and Privileges

(a) Status

The participants will hold the status of Professional Associate and will remain in a contractual relationship with their Home Administration as its customs officials throughout the duration of the programme.

(b) Recruitment, Terms of Appointment, Advancement:

- Appointment will be for fixed term for 10 months based on a Tripartite Agreement signed between the WCO, the Member administration, and the selected Customs official².
- Advancement or promotion within the WCO is not considered under this programme.

(c) Allowances and Benefits

- Monthly Allowance: Approximately 4,300 euro

Note: Additional benefits such as household allowances, expatriation allowances, dependants' allowances, terminal allowances, advances, or loans are not granted.

- Medical Insurance: All Professional Associates are required to enrol in a medical insurance plan covering emergency treatment (around 136 euro per year). This insurance is applicable only to the Professional Associates.

(d) Travel for Commencement and Conclusion of Duty

- Economy-class return air tickets will be provided.
- An installation allowance equivalent to half of one month's allowance will be paid upon commencement of duty.

(e) Working Conditions and Leave

- The WCO Staff Manual (provisions of Chapter VII) is applicable for working hours and public holidays.
- Professional Associates are entitled to 15 days of annual leave during the programme.

(f) Accommodation

- All Professional Associates must reside in accommodation arranged by the WCO. Changes to the designated housing arrangement will not be permitted.
- The monthly rental fee, including utilities, is approximately 1,500 euro and will be payable by the Professional Associate.

VII. Other Information

This programme is a short-term, non-family posting. The WCO will assist with visa arrangements exclusively for the Professional Associate.

² The renewal or extension of the term may be considered only in exceptional cases.