

WCO-Japan Career Development Programme 2026-2027 Programme Description

I. Objectives

The Programme aims to:

- Provide officials from developing-country Members with the opportunity to work at the WCO Secretariat as Professional Associates (PAs), thereby acquiring knowledge, skills and international work experience.
- Promote broader involvement of Members where neither of the WCO's two official languages is widely spoken.
- Strengthen networks of cooperation between Members and the WCO Secretariat.
- Support and assist the WCO Secretariat in carrying out its missions, work and tasks.
- Enhance the research function of the WCO.
- Develop a pool of highly competent officials within Member administrations with international experience.

II. Programme Overview

- **Sponsorship:** Japanese Customs Administration
- **Number of Participants:** Up to 7 PAs
- **Programme Duration:** Ten months from 14 September 2026 to 13 July 2027
- **Venue:** WCO Headquarters, Brussels, Belgium

III. Programme Activities

Each PA will be assigned to a specific Unit/Office of the WCO Secretariat and will work closely with a tutor designated by the Secretariat to ensure appropriate technical guidance for both on-the-job assignments and research activities. Overall supervision of the Programme will be provided by the Expert Mobilization & Curriculum Management Unit and the Project Management Office.

The main components of the Programme include:

1. On-the-Job Assignments and Support to WCO Activities

- Within their assigned Unit/Office, PAs are expected to support and assist the various tasks and ongoing work of the WCO Secretariat.
- These tasks may include research and analysis, preparation of documents and materials, coordination and administrative support, and contributions to capacity-building or policy-related activities. PAs may also be required to provide linguistic support when necessary.

2. Research Paper

- PAs are expected to conduct research on a theme identified by the WCO or proposed by the PA in consultation with a designated tutor within the Units/Office to which they are assigned.
- The research may focus on WCO policies, Customs modernization, or other areas aligned within the WCO's strategic priorities, contributing to the organization's broader research function.

- PAs are required to submit a final research paper and present their research findings to the Secretariat's Senior Management before the end of the Programme.

3. Field Study Trips

- PAs will undertake field study trips to neighbouring Customs administrations and the Japanese Customs administration, subject to feasibility and the circumstances of the host administrations. The purpose of the trips is to complement and enhance the PAs' research activities.
- During the visit, PAs will observe the practical application of Customs procedures, modernization initiatives, and operational best practices.
- Financial support for the field study trips will be provided by the donor and will cover travel (economy class), accommodation, and meals.

IV. Application and Selection

1. Eligibility, Requirements and Conditions of Candidacy

(a) Eligibility

Applicants must:

- Be a customs officer of a developing-country Member administration with active status at the WCO.
- Be chosen and nominated by the Head of their home Customs Administration.
- Have a minimum of 3 years' experience in Customs.
- Have a university degree or equivalent professional qualification.
- Be proficient in English, with proficiency attested by work experience, certification from a recognised language testing body, and/or diplomas from international institutions of higher education where English is the working language.
- Be able and willing to undertake international travel for the duration of the programme, as required by the programme.

(b) Recommended Qualifications

It is desirable that applicants:

- Have work experience in policy-making, policy implementation, and/or research and study.
- Have experience working in an international environment, particularly in relation to WCO matters (e.g. participation in WCO committees or activities as a WCO-accredited expert).
- Have working knowledge of data analysis and/or computer applications.
- Are younger than 45 years of age.

(c) Other Factors for Selection

Preference will be given to applicants who:

- Are from Members where neither of the WCO's two official languages (English and French) is widely spoken. This includes, but is not limited to, speakers of Arabic, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. Special

consideration will be given to applicants supported or recommended by a community or multiple Members sharing a common language.

- Have demonstrated experience in research and analytical writing, including those holding a Master's or Ph.D. degree.

V. Duties, Obligations and Privileges

1. Legal Status

The PA shall continue to be under a contractual relationship with the Home Administration as its Customs official for the entire duration of the Programme, and shall only be considered as a participant of the Programme, organized under the auspices of the WCO.

2. Terms of Appointment, Advancement and Promotion

- PAs will be appointed on a fixed-term basis for a period of ten months, pursuant to a Tripartite Agreement (see Annex II) concluded between the WCO, the Member administration, and the selected official.
- Advancement and promotion are not applicable under this Programme.

3. Allowances and Benefits

- PAs are entitled to an allowance of approximately €4,300 per month.
Note: Benefits and allowances such as household allowance, expatriation allowance, dependant's allowance, terminal allowance, advances, loans, etc. are not granted.
- PAs will be required to pay a medical insurance premium for emergency treatment (approximately €136 per year). This insurance covers the PA only.

4. Travel on Appointment and Completion of Duty

- PAs will be provided with economy-class return air tickets in connection with their appointment and completion of duty.
- An installation allowance equivalent to half of one month's allowance will be granted.

5. Working Conditions and Leave

- Working hours and public holidays shall be governed by the WCO Staff Manual.
- PAs are entitled to fifteen (15) days of annual leave for the duration of the Programme.

6. Accommodation

- All PAs will be required to reside in accommodation arranged by the WCO. Changes to or substitutions of the WCO-reserved accommodation will not be permitted.
- The monthly rental fee is approximately €1,500 and includes utility costs, which shall be borne by the PA.

VI. Other

This Programme is designed as a non-family posting and is of short duration.

Accordingly, the WCO will provide assistance solely to the PA, and no support of any kind will be provided to family members or other accompanying persons with respect to any arrangements, including visa-related, administrative, or logistical matters.

(End)