



The Commonwealth

## JOB AND TASK DESCRIPTION

---

**Job Title:** Assistant Research Officer (International Trade Policy Section)

**Directorate:** Trade, Oceans and Natural Resources (TONR)

**Grade:** Y (Young Professionals Programme)

**Reports To:** Adviser and Head, International Trade Policy Section

---

### Young People in the Commonwealth

Young people (under 30) constitute more than 60% of the population of the Commonwealth, and the wellbeing and development of this 1.2 billion youth cohort are essential to the success of the Commonwealth and its 54 member countries.

The Commonwealth sees young people as assets to their societies, with a proven capability to contribute to and lead change. It is vital to ensure they are developed and empowered to realise their individual potential, and to contribute to their countries' development and the success of the Commonwealth.

Accordingly, under its Young Professionals Programme (YPP), the Commonwealth is designating a number of junior technical positions to young people.

### General Information

The Trade, Oceans and Natural Resources Directorate (TONR) is one of the three Directorates of the Commonwealth Secretariat. The Directorate brings together work in Trade Policy, Competitiveness, Hub and Spokes and Oceans and Natural Resources. TONR is responsible for delivering on two strategic outcomes:

- Effective policy mechanisms for increased trade, increased access to trade, employment and business growth and;
- Sustainable development of marine and other natural resources, including blue economies.

A significant part of the Directorate's work is of a consultancy and advisory nature, delivered through a combination of in-house and external expertise.

The Directorate's International Trade Policy (ITP) Section undertakes work directed towards proactively promoting common approaches and courses of action on trade policy issues, with the aim of fostering multilateral trade, taking account of the special requirements of developing member countries; analysing regional trade and integration issues to provide objective assessments and policy advice prompting effective national and regional strategies in and approaches to regional co-operation; undertaking analytical work on emerging trade and related development issues to better understand potential implications and generate practical policy advice; conducting global advocacy work to promote trade and development linkages; enhancing the capacity of member governments to adapt and develop trade policies in tune with changes in global and regional trading systems and helping institutions in member

countries to formulate and implement trade and development policies for the export of goods and services.

The Section is also concerned with organising workshops/conferences/consultations, undertaking collaborative initiative/events with international, regional and national organisations, and country missions to advance trade advocacy and capacity building. In addition, it contributes to the Directorate's work on general development issues.

### **Job Summary**

The Assistant Research Officer will be responsible for providing the ITP Section with technical and administrative support for the delivery of analytical work, the organisation of advocacy meetings and capacity building workshops, and the preparation and documentation of policy work. Reporting to the Adviser and Head of Section for International Trade Policy, the post holder will undertake policy research, including data analysis and literature reviews, and provide support to the team in key areas of the Section's trade policy work.

### **Task Description**

The main duties of the Assistant Research Officer are as follows:

- Assist the ITP Section with literature reviews, data analysis, information gathering and analytical work on trade and trade-related development issues;
- Work with the relevant Advisers in conducting analysis on multilateral and regional trade negotiation issues of interest to member countries;
- Assist the Section with data work involving Commonwealth countries' trade performance and intra-Commonwealth trade flows;
- Assist the ITP Section in the preparatory processes for major publication projects and their dissemination;
- Assist the Section in preparing analytical and briefing papers on issues of interest, such as multilateral and regional trade negotiations, supply chains, South-South trade, and other trade-related emerging and development issues;
- Assist Advisers/the Head of Section with research and data analysis for preparing papers and presentations in different forums;
- Assist the Section with the preparation of terms of reference and contracts for external consultants, organising meetings, workshops and conferences as part of the programme of activities;
- Assist in and conduct other trade-related research as required, and contribute to speeches, presentations and talking points for senior officials.
- Adhere to the Gender Equality Values of the Commonwealth as enshrined in the Charter and the Secretariat's Gender Equality Policy.
- Perform any other duties as may be required from time to time.

## Person Specification

This role forms part of the Young Professionals Programme (YPP), so to be considered candidates must be no older than 27 years old as at the close of applications.

### Education:

#### Essential

- A strong first degree in Economics, International Trade or related discipline.

#### Desirable

- A relevant post-graduate qualification

### Work Experience:

#### Essential

- At least one year of demonstrated work experience in the areas of Economics or International Trade. The work experience may be gained through a combination of paid employment, postgraduate research, and placement or internship positions.

#### Desirable

- Good data analysis/quantitative skills and experience of working on international trade agreements and/or the functioning of international trade organisations, such as the World Trade Organization, will be advantageous.

### Skills

#### Essential

The post holder should be able to demonstrate:

- Excellent understanding of international trade theories and their applications;
- Ability to review the literature and other information to prepare concise reports;
- Ability to organise, plan and prioritise workload, efficiently and accurately within tight deadlines with minimum supervision;
- Excellent written and oral communication skills;
- Ability to interpret complex trade data/information and instructions;
- Ability to maintain confidentiality as appropriate;
- Ability to work autonomously and in teams.

### Competencies

#### **Working with Others**

Regularly shares information of value with colleagues.

Shows commitment to delivering on key agreements made to colleagues.



Makes an effort to view a situation from the other party's perspective as well.

Demonstrates awareness and sensitivity to colleagues' pressures.

Develops a wide network, including senior level contacts, to facilitate activities and further own knowledge.

Develops long-term relationships across cultures and/or geographical boundaries.

Uses relationships to identify the best people to help in the completion of tasks.

Tactfully deals with difficult people to gain buy-in and manage their expectations.

### **Communication**

Interacts and communicates effectively with internal/external contacts.

Ensures information is communicated to all of the appropriate people.

Provides feedback to more senior colleagues effectively, providing justification where necessary.

Uses the correct method of communication, depending on the message and the audience.

Anticipates objections in dialogues and prepares convincing responses.

Writes reports and papers that are succinct accounts of key information.

### **Developing and Applying Professional Expertise**

Proactively identifies how to develop specialist knowledge.

Takes learning from previous experience and applies it appropriately.

Demonstrates willingness to learn new skills and/or approaches.

### **Respect for Diversity**

Works effectively with people from all backgrounds.

Treats all people with dignity and respect. Treats men and women equally.

Shows respect and understanding of diverse points of view and demonstrates understanding in daily work and decision making.

Examine own biases and behaviours to avoid stereotypical responses and does not discriminate against any individual or group.

Identifies biases in systems & processes.



### **Adhering to Principles and Values**

Adapts professional style to suit different situations with different individuals where appropriate.

Takes ownership of assigned tasks, honours deadlines.

Ensures timely delivery of outputs within defined cost and quality standard parameters.

### **Adapting and Innovating**

Recognises opportunities for improvement and proposes change with impact and effect.

Drives forward improvements and innovations within own area of responsibility, adding value where appropriate.

Quickly grasps new concepts and how to apply them.

Demonstrates flexibility e.g. by working beyond own remit in order to achieve an objective.

Will effectively reorganise activities when faced with changing contexts and demands.

Promotes new ideas that are picked up by senior colleagues.

Adapts personal style to meet the needs of others.