



**To:** Deputy Director-General Yonov Frederick Agah **Date:** 14/01/2019

**From:** Bridget Chilala *Bilala*  
John Adank *Adank*  
Victor Luiz Do Prado *Prado*  
Shishir Priyadarshi *Shishir* **Ref:** Selection RTPC Arab and Middle Eastern countries

**Division:** ITTC

**cc:** Raymundo Valdes  
Janet Chakarian-Renouf  
Roberto Fiorentino

**Subject:** Selection of partner – RTPC for Arab and Middle Eastern countries

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**The following are the findings and recommendation of the RTPC Selection Committee regarding the selection of a new partner to host the RTPC for Arab and Middle Eastern WTO Members and Observers.**

## 1 BACKGROUND

1.1. Regional Trade Policy Courses (RTPCs) are training courses for government officials from WTO Members or Observers whose objectives are to: provide government officials with intermediate level knowledge on the WTO with a view to deepen their understanding of WTO Agreements and the functioning of the WTO, its rules and procedures; enhance participants' understanding of relevant trade policy issues in their regional context; increase participants' autonomy to work on WTO issues by strengthening their capacity to access and utilize WTO information and resources; and facilitate the strengthening of their professional trade-related network. These RTPCs are implemented through a partnership between the WTO and degree-granting academic institutions selected through a competitive process.

1.2. Trade Policy Courses for WTO Members and Observers from the Arab and Middle East region have been held in various formats and on an ad-hoc basis since 2008 in response to the demand from countries from the region and the commitment made in various TA Plans. These courses were held as short trade policy courses (SRTPCs) rather than fully fledged RTPCs and hosted by countries and partner institutions appointed with the backing of the countries from the region but not selected through the formal RTPC competitive process. In an effort to harmonize RTPCs across all regions, the first selection process for a partner institution to host the RTPC for Arab and Middle Eastern WTO Members and Observers was launched in December 2013. In response to the invitation for expression of interest, two proposals were received from Oman and Qatar. The Sultan Qaboos University in Oman was ultimately selected and it hosted the RTPC for Arab and Middle Eastern countries from 2014 to 2017.

1.3. A selection process for a new partner institution for the RTPC for the Arab and Middle East region was launched on 15 June 2018. Letters inviting expression of interest were sent to eligible countries from the region namely Bahrain, Jordan, Kuwait, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen. The deadline for submission of proposals was set for 23 August 2018. An information meeting was convened on 18 July 2018 to brief

interested WTO Members from the region on the rules and procedures governing the RTPCs and the selection process.

1.4. Given that by the set deadline only one proposal had been received from Qatar University, Qatar, the deadline was extended to 14 September, by which date a second proposal was received by King Saud University (KSU), Saudi Arabia.

## **2 SHORT-LIST**

2.1. The RTPC Selection Committee met on 4 October 2018 to consider the proposals received by Members from the Arab and Middle East region interested in hosting the next RTPC for Arab and Middle Eastern WTO Members and Observers. The meeting was attended by Ms Bridget Chilala, Mr John Adank, Mr Victor Luiz Do Prado, and Mr Shishir Priyadarshi. Also present at the meeting were Mr Raymundo Valdes (Chief of Course Design and Training Section), Ms Janet Chakarian (Head RTPC Unit) accompanied by Mr Roberto Fiorentino and Ms Anne Deluermoz.

2.2. The Committee considered each of the proposals received by assessing the following criteria: quality and completeness of the proposal; type of institution and of the partnership proposed; appropriateness of the RTPC academic and administrative team; quality of the training infrastructure and facilities; and overall costs. The Committee noted that both proposals were found missing certain elements precluding it from conducting a thorough assessment of either proposal and reaching a decision on any possible site-visits. In light of this situation, the Committee requested the RTPC Unit to revert to the Members concerned and ask for the missing information within a reasonable time-frame (set for 9 November 2018) in order to allow it to complete the assessment of the proposals. The Committee also agreed that eventual site-visits for this selection process would be undertaken by Ms Bridget Chilala and Mr John Adank, accompanied by a staff member of the RTPC Unit.

2.3. The additional information requested was submitted by Qatar on 9 November 2018 and by Saudi Arabia on 12 November 2018. On 26 November 2018 the Committee reconvened to review the proposals in light of the additional information received. Based on their factual assessment, both proposals were viewed favourably by the Committee. The proposals include supporting documentation that meet the requirements listed in the Terms of Reference (ToR). They each put forward established academic institutions and have strong government backing. The proposed training facilities and equipment appear to meet the RTPC requirements as do the proposed accommodation and logistical arrangements. In terms of overall costs, both proposals fall within the average cost of an RTPC.

2.4. The Committee concluded that both proposals are of good standards and deserve further assessment through onsite inspection. The Committee confirmed that Ms Bridget Chilala and Mr John Adank, supported by a staff member of the RTPC Unit would conduct the site visits of the shortlisted institutions. Given the sensitivities relating to this selection process it was also agreed that the DG Office should be briefed of the process before informing the candidate countries of the status of their submission and planned visits. The DGO was briefed on 10 December 2018 and confirmed that the Selection Committee should proceed with the selection process as per normal practice.

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