



Research Success Stories



January 2013

Additional funding for fellowship programmes

COFIT is a fellowship programme that offers generous conditions to researchers: a secure income, academic freedom and many opportunities for career development.

The fellowship programme COFIT of the World Trade Institute in Bern (WTI) sounds almost too good to be true: researchers can pursue their research project at the institute without restrictions while at the same time receiving a salary equivalent to regular University of Bern employees of similar experience and profile. During this time they can also utilise the infrastructure and network of the institute along with various offers for career development.



Dr Susan Brown
 World Trade Institute
 COFIT Scientific Coordinator

researchers from all over the European Union (the funding scheme would also allow for fellows from all over the world). However, this third point is only of any use if the right researchers are attracted. This was the main challenge during the first phase of the programme: "It is vital and rather difficult to select the right people", says Susan Brown, scientific coordinator at the WTI.

"European coffers will be an increasingly important source of our research funding in future."

The benefits for the institute

What then, is in it for the WTI? First, 40 percent of the programme's costs are covered by European funding. Second, the programme reinforces the international contacts of the WTI. Third, it attracts

Selection is all the more important as the fellows, once appointed, are so free in their work.

ABOUT THE PROJECT

COFIT is a fellowship programme of the World Trade Institute in Bern that is partly (40 per cent) funded by a European funding scheme called COFUND. Fellows work in one or more of the institute's six work packages: 1. Trade Governance, 2. Preferential Trade, 3. Innovation and Creativity, 4. Trade Development and Migration, 5. Trade and Climate Change and 6. Impact Assessment. Candidates are assessed on the basis of the quality of their research proposal, its alignment with the work already being conducted in-house, as well as their research record. Successful applicants have the freedom to work independently at the WTI and receive support in developing both their research skills and their career.

The main learning so far

COFIT fellows benefit from being integrated into a research group that meets regularly, offers support with research planning and provides opportunities to present informally and organise workshops. In addition, fellows have access to various courses, seminars and conferences at the WTI and the University of Bern. The WTI learned that these opportunities "hold relatively more appeal for the less experienced researcher", says Susan Brown. More experienced researchers are more likely to treat their fellowship as basically a "sabbatical". Thus, in the second phase of the programme, the WTI will focus on researchers with less than 4 years of post-PhD experience.

COFIT was the first experience of the WTI with a European-funded project. This first experience was all the more valuable as the project is only the beginning of a more long-term strategy: "European coffers will be an increasingly important source of our research funding in the future."

FACTS AND FIGURES

Project Name:	COFIT (COFUND International Trade)
Organisation:	World Trade Institute (WTI), Bern
Start Date - End Date:	31.01.2011 – 30.01.2015
Duration:	48 months
Project Cost:	1,171,898 Euros
Project Funding:	468,759 Euros
Project Reference:	246005
Contract Type:	Co-funding of Regional, National and International Programmes (COFUND)

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