



## ITFA MARTIN ASHURST MENTORING PROGRAMME 2024

Contributed by the *ITFA Emerging Leaders Committee*

### Background:

The ITFA Martin Ashurst Mentoring Programme pairs experienced professionals working within a variety of Trade Finance positions, with aspiring professionals seeking mentorship through the extensive ITFA network. The scheme first started in 2016. Initially, the programme welcomed 10 mentees and 10 mentors all of which were UK based. In 2024, there has been a record number of mentors and mentees who signed up to the programme! Overall, 130 mentors and mentees were carefully placed together to make 65 pairs across 18 countries.

Shortly after the pairing process, an introductory webinar was held which had around 70 people present. Past mentees and mentors were able to share their experience and advice through a live Q&A. Duarte Pedreira shared his thoughts and offered direction to mentors, suggesting that mentors truly take the time to understand their mentees career aspirations to help provide authentic and actionable recommendations.

### Objective of the Programme:

The scheme was created with the sole objective of allowing aspiring trade financiers to be able to better understand the trade finance industry, empowering them to choose trade finance as a career path.

As well as this, the programme also hopes to:

- Demonstrate that Trade Finance is an enjoyable, complex, dynamic, and rewarding career path.
- Provide an insightful and educational perspective on Trade Finance whilst allowing access to the ITFA network.
- Tackle and demystify some misconceptions of the Trade Finance market.
- Position Trade Finance within a wide variety of players.
- Accelerate personal and professional growth by providing advice to professionals on how to take advantage of ongoing opportunities in the industry.

### Other Opportunities:

The programme also offers each mentee the opportunity, at the request of the mentor, to access the special mentors' pool. This group of individuals consists of specialists across a wide range of areas (front office, middle/back office, credit, legal and innovation, amongst others) who are able to represent different industry players (banks, insurance companies, brokers, technology companies and more). This structure of cross-mentoring has been successful in providing further opportunity for networking and professional development!

### Testimonials:

**Amy Cook, 2024 mentee:** *As someone new to the industry, my experience so far as a mentee has been very insightful to learning about different paths within the industry. Overall, my participation in this program has invigorated an excitement early in my career to make a difference and to drive the growth of an everchanging industry!*

**Irene Sanchis Jarque, 2024 mentee:** *This year I've also decided to participate, together with my colleague Amy Cook, on the Emerging Leaders Competition – and we both have found great support from our ITFA mentors on this project. I'd encourage everyone to join the mentorship program, as it's a fantastic opportunity to get to know someone with different experiences and new perspectives.*



**Previous mentees who won the ITFA Emerging Leaders Award:**

- 2019: Alero Arubi, Charlotte Prior and Nigel Atta-Mensah – “A Guide to Trade Finance”
- 2020: Didem Bayseferogullari – “ECA support for software exports in the era of Digitalization”
- 2022: Parth-Mahesh Damani - “Improving UK's Balance of Payments by Increasing Trade Finance opportunities for SME businesses.”2023:
- 2023: Charlotte Russo (AIG, London) - ‘The Trade Finance Talent Gap’
- 2023: Neha Saxena (DBS Bank, New Delhi) – ‘Unlocking the Potential of Deep-Tier SCF’

**Recent highlights:**

- The ITFA Emerging Leaders Main London Summer Event was hosted 18 July near Liverpool St.
- The ITFA Emerging Leaders Award Entries were submitted to the judging panel!

**What's next?**

- Shortlist for the ITFA Emerging Leaders Award Announced 9 August
- Live presentation of shortlisted submissions at the ITFA 50<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting 4-6 September