

# **Public Participation in SIAs of Trade Agreements**

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## Benefits and Costs

- **Credibility and political legitimacy**
- **Broad knowledge base and expertise**
- **Trust and commitment**
- **Costs in terms of time, travel, room, preparation etc.**
- **Opportunity costs for NGO's**
- **Optimal level of participation?**

## Particularities in the trade area

- **Complex legal and technical nature of trade agreements**
- **Difficulties to assess impacts of trade agreements**
- **Traditionally closed trade negotiations & climate of distrust**
- **Limited number of trade experts within civil society**
- **Interplay with trade negotiations**

## Composition of Stakeholders

- **Potential stakeholders**
  - Groups with expertise/experience in the field
  - EU Groups likely to be affected by the assessed trade measures
  - Groups within trading partners countries
- **Optimal balance of stakeholders?**

## SIA as a process

**Can the consultation process be broken up such as to reflect the different stages of the process?**

- **Launching/planning**
- **Screening/scoping**
- **Detailed assessment**
- **Mitigation and Enhancing Measures**

## Decentralised assessment systems

- integrate research efforts at different levels
- take into account the complex multi-level nature of impacts
- might facilitate participation:
  - Greater number of entry points
  - Regional research units
  - Issues of higher local interest

## Trading Partners

### Positive effects of participation of non-EU countries:

- build trust and ownership to SIAs outside the EU
- lead to enriched design of assessments and evolution of SIA methodology and process
- Facilitate negotiations

### Negative effects:

- increasing difficulty to reach consensus
- may collide with confidentiality principle of negotiation strategy
- Costs

## Issues for further Research

- Optimal level of participation
- Criteria for selection of participants to ensure a balanced representation
- Holistic approach to a participation process that matches the different stages of the SIA
- Ex-post evaluation of SIA's impacts on the negotiations

**Thank you for listening.**

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