

# Public consultation on the Handbook for Sustainability Impact Assessment of EU trade negotiations

Fields marked with \* are mandatory.

## A. Objective of the consultation

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### **Objective of the consultation**

The European Commission is updating its 2006 Handbook on Sustainability Impact Assessments (SIA). A revised edition will be published later this year. We value stakeholder input and are therefore consulting stakeholders on the draft revised Handbook. The consultation period is from 30 April to 14 August 2015.

### **Background**

Sustainability impact assessments (SIAs) are a trade-specific tool developed for supporting trade negotiations. They are essential for conducting sound, evidence-based and transparent trade negotiations. Carried out by independent consultants, during the negotiation itself, they contribute to the steering of the negotiation. They provide the Commission with an in-depth analysis of the potential economic, social, human rights, and environmental consequences of ongoing trade negotiations and are a prime opportunity for stakeholders in both the EU and partner countries to share their views with negotiators.

First developed in 1999 for the WTO Doha Development Agenda negotiations, SIAs have been carried out for all major bilateral and plurilateral trade negotiations ever since. The Commission published the first edition of the SIA Handbook in 2006. It detailed experience to date in carrying out SIAs and described their methodological framework.

Many of the principles outlined in the first edition of the Handbook are still relevant, but experience over the years has led to improvements in how SIAs are carried out. Methods for carrying out impact analyses have evolved and improved over time, and many suggestions have been made by stakeholders. The time has come for a new, updated Handbook.

The SIA Handbook – 2nd edition incorporates all the improvements brought to the conduct of SIAs over the years and reinforces further several elements of the analysis. In particular, we have given careful attention to strengthening stakeholder consultation as well as to analysing in depth potential impacts on human rights.

This new edition of the Handbook sets out the main characteristics, objectives, and principles of the new generation of SIAs. It will be the main reference point for consultants, civil society and all interested stakeholders on how to conduct an SIA.

SIAs are crucial for formulating sound, transparent and evidence-based trade policies. The revision of the 2006 Handbook should be seen in the wider context of the Commission's major on-going revision of its approach to better regulation, which includes specific new guidelines on impact assessment, evaluation and stakeholder consultation.

**Next steps:**

A meeting of the Civil Society Dialogue will be organised on 8 July to further discuss and exchange views with civil society on the proposed revision of the SIA Handbook. For details about how to take part in meetings of the Civil Society Dialogue, please visit: <http://trade.ec.europa.eu/civilsoc/index.cfm>

The Commission will analyse and process the replies received. Based on the outcome of the public consultation, and exchanges held in the Civil Society Dialogue meeting, the Commission will finalise the revision of the Handbook for sustainability impact assessments – second edition, and make it public on Europa.

The contributions received, together with the identification data of the respondent, will be published on the Internet, unless the respondent objects to publication of their identification data by clicking the appropriate box in the questionnaire (see section A in the questionnaire).

Note that this questionnaire must be completed and submitted within 90 minutes, otherwise the data will be lost. We suggest that you print the pdf document of the consultation, draft your replies separately and then copy/paste them into the respective fields in the questionnaire.

For more information or additional questions please contact: [TRADE-SIA@ec.europa.eu](mailto:TRADE-SIA@ec.europa.eu)

Please submit your replies by **14 August 2015**.

**Relevant documents:**

[Draft SIA Handbook](#)

[Questionnaire in pdf version](#)

[Specific privacy statement](#)

[The consultation webpage](#)

## B. Transparency and confidentiality

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To ensure that our public consultation is open and transparent, the report of the consultation will be published on the European Commission's website.

In addition, the contributions and the identification data (name and organisation) of the contributors will also be published, unless a contributor has specifically requested not to have their identification data (name and organisation) published by clicking the appropriate box below.

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Please indicate your preference:

- I agree to the publication of my identification data (name and organisation) alongside my contribution
- I do not agree to the publication of my identification data (name and organisation) alongside my contribution

## C. Identification of the respondents

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Name and surname - not for publication

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Name and surname

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Organisation

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Organisation - not for publication

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E-mail address - not for publication

## D. Questions for all stakeholders

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1. SIAs have two complementary components:

- A quantitative and qualitative analysis of the potential economic, social, human rights, and environmental impacts that a trade agreement could have, in the EU, in the partner country(ies) and other relevant countries;
- A wide consultation of stakeholders inside and outside the EU.

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1.a. Do you agree that this is the right approach?

- Yes  
 No

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1.b. Are the components of an SIA adequately balanced?

- Yes
- No

1.c. Please let us know if you have any comments or suggestions

*2,000 character(s) maximum*

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2.a. Do you consider the themes outlined in the revised SIA Handbook relevant for assessing the impacts of a trade agreement?

- Yes
- No

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If No, please explain:

*2,000 character(s) maximum*

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2. b. Are there other issues SIAs should examine?

- Yes
- No

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If Yes, please specify which issues:

*2,000 character(s) maximum*

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3. a. Do you agree with the approach on how to involve stakeholders in the analysis?

Yes

No

3. b. Please let us know if you have comments and suggestions

*2,000 character(s) maximum*

4. SIAs are carried out by external consultants concurrently with trade negotiations. Following the conclusion of the study, the Commission publishes a position paper explaining how the SIA findings have or will contribute to decisions on the negotiations.

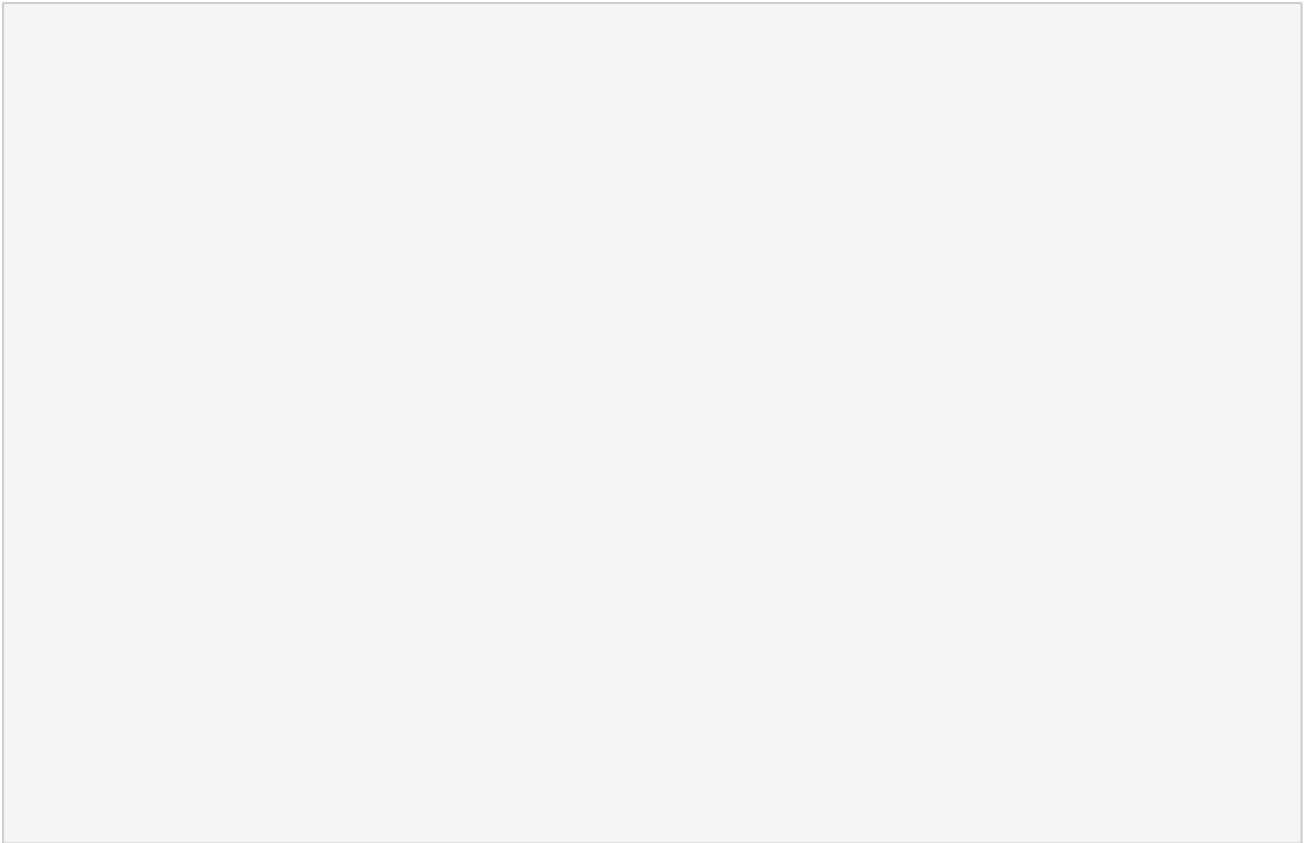
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4. a. Is this the right approach?

- Yes
- No

4. b. Please let us know if you have comments and suggestions

*2,000 character(s) maximum*



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5. Do you have any other suggestion on how to improve the guidance provided to consultants in carrying out SIAs?

Yes

No



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If Yes, please specify

*4,000 character(s) maximum*

