



Institute for
European
Environmental
Policy

Policy report

Enhancing the environmental credentials of EU Free Trade Agreements

The case for a holistic approach

Eline Blot – 8 June 2022

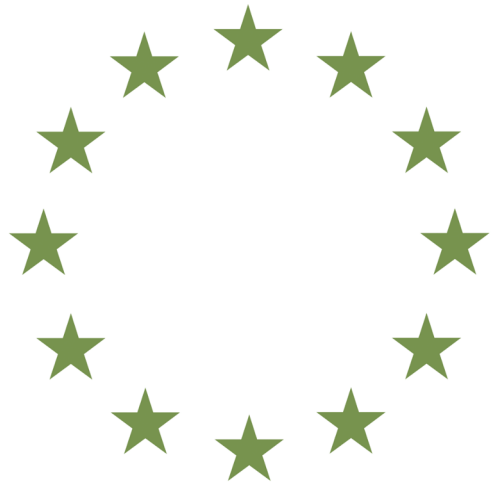
www.ieep.eu



@IEEP_eu

WHAT WE WILL DISCUSS

CONTEXT



TSD CHAPTERS



SUSTAINABILITY
IMPACT ASSESSMENTS

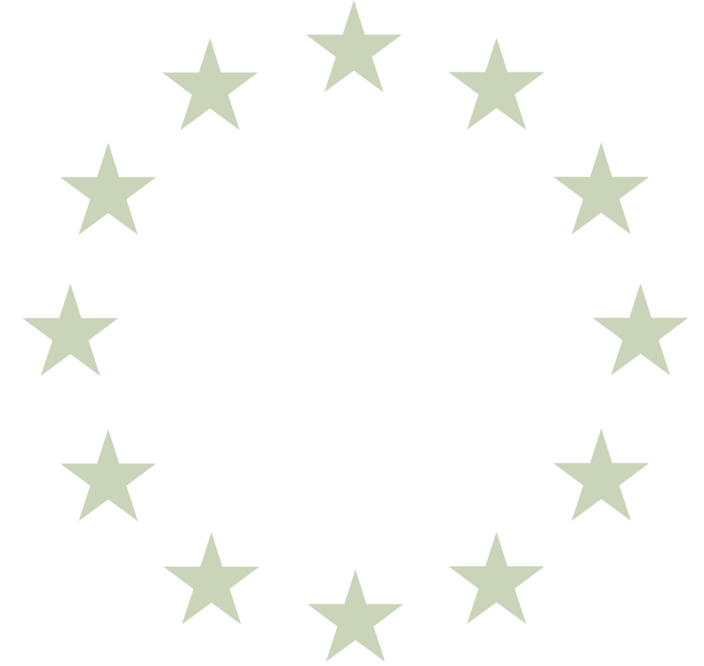


STAKEHOLDER
ENGAGEMENT



Context

- EU pledges to increase trade policy sustainability
 - Under European Green Deal
 - 2021 Trade Policy Review
- Pressure from civil society (e.g. EU-Merocsur)
- EU is a leader on SDGs globally
- Yet, EU trade policy linked to negative external spillovers



General finding

Conclusion: none of the reviewed EU FTAs provide fully adequate provisions for protecting the environment:

- Neither in terms of mitigating negative impacts of trade
- Nor in terms of using trade to boost environmental sustainability

Although some agreements appear to be headed in the right direction,

no single existing trade agreement can yet be considered a 'gold standard'

Trade & Sustainable Development Chapters

Finding: environmental performance of TSD Chapters lacking

Recommendations:

1. Pursue **tailor-made** provisions & commitments (e.g. targets and timelines)
2. '**Trigger**' **clauses** in cases of failure to meet commitments
3. Make TSD dispute settlement process more **pro-active** & **outcome-oriented**



Sustainability Impact Assessments

Finding: underutilisation & variable treatment of environment

Recommendations:

1. Improve **quality** impact assessments
 - Provide sufficient resources
 - Foster co-ownership
 - Review the impact assessment guidance
2. Provide **transparency** as to how insights were taken up in the final FTA
3. Set up a **systematic process** for ex-post assessments



Stakeholder engagement

Finding: underutilisation of stakeholder expertise

Recommendations:

1. Engage **earlier** in EU Member States & trade partner countries
2. Stimulate discussion in smaller **thematic groups** & involve relevant DGs
3. Incentivise participation by establishing a **feedback procedure**





Institute for
European
Environmental
Policy

Thank you for your attention

Eline Blot

eblot@ieep.eu

Studies available at www.ieep.eu

www.ieep.eu



@IEEP_eu