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Abstract

Governance for sustainable development requires policy coherence and Environmental Policy Integration, which are being hindered by difficulties coordinating the two separate impact assessment processes being conducted in the European Commission. One of them, the Commission-wide Impact Assessment process, looks primarily at EU-internal impacts, whereas the other one, Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) in DG Trade, looks outward to other countries and inter-governmental organizations. Ideally, the two processes should complement one another, especially as the two are set to continue being done in parallel. The paper uses a case study of the reform of the European sugar regime under a World Trade Organization ruling to demonstrate how the two impact assessment processes could better complement one another. Feedback from the experience had with existing trade agreements could then promote policy learning and inform the negotiations on new agreements. The number of new bilateral and Regional Trade Agreements is expected to continue rising, thus increasing the importance of the Commission-wide Impact Assessment process required for them.

Keywords: Sustainability Impact Assessment; Integrated Impact Assessment; Evidence-based decision making; Sustainable development; Environmental Policy Integration; Policy coherence; World Trade Organization

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