



Trade Remedies
Authority

R E S E A R C H R E P O R T

Evaluation of TRA Investigation Process

PREPARED FOR

The Trade Remedies Authority

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1. Executive Summary

This report presents the findings of a comprehensive process evaluation of the Trade Remedies Authority (TRA) – the UK’s independent public body responsible for investigating complaints of unfair international trading practices such as dumping or subsidised imports, and unforeseen surges in imports. Since its creation in 2021, the TRA has conducted trade remedy investigations and reviews spanning anti-dumping, subsidy, and safeguard investigations, providing evidence-based recommendations on appropriate measures to defend UK economic interests.

This report uses three key terms as a focal point of analysis: **Staff** (i.e., TRA employees working on investigations), **Stakeholders** (i.e., organisations interested in or affected by the TRA’s work), and **Participants** (i.e., organisations among the stakeholder cohort who have participated in investigation(s)).

The TRA commissioned this evaluation to understand how organisations become aware of, participate in, and experience TRA investigations, and to pinpoint ways to make these processes more accessible, balanced, and impactful.

The evaluation aims to:

- Identify how to build on what works well in TRA investigations
- Identify where and when stakeholders face the greatest engagement challenges and barriers in TRA investigations
- Inspect the underlying causes of these – whether statutory, procedural, technical, or communication-related
- Provide evidence-based recommendations to support continuous improvement in guidance, tools, and resource planning for the TRA

The evaluation drew on a mixed-methods approach, combining a survey of 24 external stakeholders, 5 in-depth qualitative interviews with case participants of varying size and sector, and a staff survey with 38 responses from across TRA functional teams. All data collection, analysis, and reporting complies with UK GDPR and the Market Research Society (MRS) Code of Conduct and the TRA privacy policy.

Overall Picture

The evaluation presents a broadly positive picture of stakeholder engagement with TRA investigations. **Over seven in ten participants (72%) report overall satisfaction with the investigation process**, reflecting strong performance across a range of engagement areas. Participants consistently praise the TRA for its professionalism, responsiveness, and the clarity and quality of direct staff interaction. The organisation performs particularly strongly in protecting confidentiality, providing clear and timely responses, and sharing relevant information and advice throughout the investigation lifecycle.

Staff and participants alike value early, direct contact with TRA case teams, which is seen as setting a constructive and collaborative tone for investigations. Where in-person or facilitation visits have taken place, these are consistently highlighted as a positive feature, building trust and supporting smoother evidence gathering. TRA staff are described across interview and open-ended responses as approachable, supportive, and willing to answer questions, including for participants with limited prior experience of trade remedies.

Key Findings and Challenges

Awareness, Motivation, and Barriers

Stakeholder participation depends in the first instance on awareness, which is often facilitated by third parties such as trade associations and industry networks. Engagement is primarily driven by business self-interest, particularly where there is direct risk to the firm or sector. Both participants and staff are strongly aligned on this point. Disengagement is most commonly associated with the resource burden of participation, proportionality of the resource burden from being involved in investigations, and, particularly in the qualitative interviews, uncertainty about whether individual input will make a difference. Limited direct outreach from the TRA, and variation in awareness among less-connected or first-time stakeholders, remain obstacles to broader participation.

Process Experience Across Stages

While TRA staff are consistently praised for responsiveness and the quality of direct support, most participants encounter their greatest challenges at the evidence-gathering, questionnaire, and verification stages. Documentation volume, complex requirements, and tight timelines are cited as persistent barriers, particularly for SMEs and those new to the process. The verification stage, which directly follows two resource-intensive investigation stages, is an additional pressure point. The final stages of the investigation (awaiting initial findings, final recommendation, and post-recommendation) score more favourably on clarity and ease, though participants highlight the extended period of uncertainty as challenging from a business planning perspective.

Alignment Between Participant and Staff Perspectives

Both participants and staff recognise resource, information, and communication as central challenges, and there is broad agreement on the commercial drivers of engagement. Differences between the two groups tend to relate to the emphasis placed on particular challenges rather than their existence: participants place notable weight on the sheer volume of evidence required, while staff focus more on technical bottlenecks (such as the TRS platform) and the need for further training and process clarity. Staff may also underestimate the extent to which the waiting periods before key publication points feel challenging for participants.

Pathways for Improvement

The most impactful improvements are those that demystify the process for less experienced participants, reduce resource 'surprises', and keep participants informed throughout the investigation. Regular progress updates and clearer framing of evidence requirements are named by both staff and participants as priorities. Critically, many of these improvements do not require reducing the actual workload or changing legal requirements, but can be addressed through clearer upfront communication, better expectation-setting, and more targeted support for SMEs and first-time participants.

Key findings at a glance

Strengths

72% of participants report overall satisfaction with the investigation process (8 out of 10 or above).

TRA staff are consistently described as professional, approachable, and responsive, with participants valuing the quality of direct communication and willingness to answer questions.

The TRA performs particularly strongly on protecting confidentiality, providing clear responses, and sharing relevant information and advice.

Early, in-person engagement and facilitation visits are highlighted by both staff and participants as effective in building trust and supporting smoother investigations.

Challenges and improvement areas

Awareness is often dependent on third-party networks, meaning organisations outside well-connected sectors may miss relevant investigations.

The evidence-gathering, questionnaire, and verification stages are the most consistently challenging, particularly for SMEs and first-time participants.

Resource burden and tight timelines are the most frequently cited barriers, with the questionnaire stage identified as difficult by 44% of participants.

Psychological barriers (including uncertainty about the value of participation and feeling that the process is not designed for smaller organisations) are particularly acute for SMEs.

Participants report feeling in the dark; during the final waiting periods before publication of findings and recommendations.

Priority Recommendations

(NB. Recommendations have been set out by Savanta and do not factor the interaction with statutory requirements, government guidance and TRA strategic objectives, which will need to inform any TRA decisions on implementation.)

#	Recommendation	Theme	Priority
1	Personalise Onboarding Provide clear, plain-English onboarding with named contacts, practical examples, and targeted outreach through trade associations, particularly to SMEs and newcomers, ensuring guidance is received and understood.	Advisory Service	High
2	Further tailor Evidence Requests and/or Timelines Align evidence requirements with each organisation's capacity where possible, and, where legal or process constraints prevent this, clearly communicate expected resource needs and offer flexible deadlines where appropriate. Where flexibility is not possible, focus on mitigating any perceived surprises for participants by clearly communicating the resource commitment at each investigation stage.	Case Work	High
3	Enhance Progress Updates Commit to providing regular, proactive progress updates throughout each investigation, for example through a visible progress tracker or dashboard in the Trade Remedies Service (TRS) or as a regular status update, to set and manage participant expectations at key decision and publication points.	Comms and Case Work	Medium

2. Introduction

Background and Policy Context

The Trade Remedies Authority (TRA) is the UK's independent arms-length body responsible for investigating suspected unfair international trading practices such as dumping or subsidised imports, and unforeseen surges of imports, and recommending appropriate measures to defend UK economic interests.

The TRA was formally established as an independent body in 2021 following the UK's departure from the European Union. Since then, it has undertaken reviews of measures transitioned over from the EU system, alongside new investigations and expiry reviews. In this time, the TRA has also set out its Annual Report and Accounts, and Corporate and Business Plan.

Prior to this, from October 2018 to June 2021, its functions were carried out by the Trade Remedies Investigations Directorate (TRID) within the Department for International Trade (DIT). TRID initiated the UK's first trade remedy case, a transition review of anti-dumping measures on Welded Tubes and Pipes from Belarus, China, and Russia (TD0001) in February 2020.

In its new investigations, the TRA decides whether new trade remedies are needed to prevent injury to UK industries caused by unfair international trading practices and makes recommendations on appropriate measures to defend UK economic interests. The TRA also reviews existing trade remedies and makes recommendations on whether they should be maintained or removed.

Trade remedies usually take the form of tariffs on imports of certain goods:

- Anti-dumping measures address goods being sold in the UK at prices that are below the normal value in the exporting country.
- Countervailing measures address imports of goods that are subsidised by foreign authorities.
- Safeguard measures protect domestic industries against an unforeseen surge of imports.

TRA investigations are conducted using evidence including data received from stakeholders participating in these investigations. A typical investigation is concluded within one year (but could take up to 18 months) and consists of multiple stages.

Since its inception, the TRA has operated in an international trade environment that continues to evolve in scope and complexity. Against this backdrop, the TRA places particular importance on the quality, accessibility, and effectiveness of its stakeholder engagement. Transparency and inclusivity are central to ensuring the TRA's investigation processes are trusted, balanced, and deliver robust outcomes for all parties involved.

This process evaluation is timely, as it comes at a point when the TRA is seeking to refine its ways of working, strengthen engagement across sectors, and ensure the TRA's investigation process is as fair and transparent as possible for all parties. The policy challenge addressed by this evaluation is how the TRA can best foster participation and build trust, particularly among smaller businesses, first-time users, and sectors with less historic engagement.

Objectives of the Evaluation

Stakeholder engagement is not only a matter of procedural fairness in the TRA's investigation process, but it is integral to the quality and legitimacy of TRA decisions as well as evidence-based policy. Thorough, representative submissions allow for evidence-based conclusions and ensure trade remedy measures are proportionate and effective, serving UK economic interests. This process evaluation of the TRA's investigation process is therefore timely and necessary.

This evaluation has several concurrent objectives:

- Identify how to build on what works well in TRA investigations: pinpoint stages and features of TRA investigations where engagement challenges and barriers are highest.
- Diagnose Causes: systematically analyse whether engagement challenges and barriers stem from statutory requirements, internal processes, technical systems, or communication and guidance.
- Inform Continuous Improvement and Strategic Development: provide evidence-based recommendations that enable the TRA to enhance its resource allocation, refine key guidance and digital tools, and support wider strategic planning.

The evaluation adopts a mixed-methods framework, combining quantitative survey results from case participants and TRA staff, as well as qualitative interviews from case participants. This approach ensures that statistical patterns are enriched with real-world backing, allowing recommendations to address both overall strategy and the day-to-day participant experience of TRA investigations. The findings are designed to inform process improvements, guide future engagement strategy, and help ensure the TRA remains transparent and trusted by those it serves.

Structure of this Report

This report is structured to provide a clear, evidence-based evaluation of stakeholder engagement with the TRA's investigation process. Each main section builds on the last: setting the policy context, outlining the methods used, presenting rigorous analytical findings, and offering actionable recommendations for improvement.

The rest of the report is structured as follows:

Section 3 – Methodology: Outlines the evaluation's mixed-methods design, detailing how data was gathered and analysed from surveys and interviews with case participants and TRA staff.

Section 4 – Research Participants: Profiles the range and characteristics of survey and interview case participants, evidencing the breadth and diversity of perspectives underpinning the findings.

Section 5 – Findings: This section synthesises quantitative and qualitative evidence across four thematic areas:

- **Section 5.1** reviews key participation drivers, channels of engagement, and the main barriers to participation in an investigation.
- **Section 5.2** provides a stage-by-stage analysis of case participant experience through the lifecycle of a typical investigation, from pre-application through to post-recommendation.
- **Section 5.3** sets out a comparative alignment of case participant and TRA staff perspectives, highlighting areas of convergence, divergence, and the implications of any gaps for the investigation process.
- **Section 5.4** synthesises the most frequent and impactful improvement suggestions, separating 'quick wins' (e.g., clearer process explainers and more regular progress updates) from deeper, structural changes (e.g., overhauling the TRS digital platform), with each illustrated by examples identified through case participant and TRA staff feedback.

Section 6 – Conclusions and Recommendations: This section brings together the overall conclusions of the research, linking them directly to the original objectives. It sets out a prioritised set of evidence-based, actionable recommendations for improving the TRA investigation process, matched to key themes.

In the interests of breadth and clarity, analysis is anchored around core survey and interview questions, identified on the basis of their relevance to key process issues. This focused approach allows us to pinpoint specific pain points and areas where case participant and TRA staff perspectives diverge.

3. Methodology

Overview of the Research Design

This section sets out how the evaluation was designed and delivered, covering who was included, how information was gathered, and the principles shaping analysis and reporting. A key goal was to collect a balanced mix of quantitative and qualitative data from both external stakeholders and TRA staff, allowing for a more complete understanding of how the investigation process works in practice and where improvements are most needed.

Methodological and Analytical Approach

This evaluation uses a mixed-methods approach, combining quantitative survey data with qualitative insights from interviews and open-ended survey responses. Quantitative results are summarised using statistics and charts (for example, identifying which stages of the investigation process participants found most challenging). Qualitative data, such as stakeholder interviews and open-ended feedback, are systematically reviewed to identify recurring themes, participant experiences, and practical suggestions for improvement. Throughout the report, the two types of evidence are brought together, so that statistical patterns are explained and enriched by real-world context, helping ensure that recommendations reflect both the broad trends and the lived experience of those engaging with the TRA.

Also, throughout the report, NET figures refer to the cumulative totals that have been ‘netted’ together from multiple positive or negative answer options (for example, ‘very easy’ plus ‘somewhat easy’). This approach is used to provide a more meaningful summary of stakeholder and staff attitudes (especially at each stage of the investigation process).

Sampling Strategy

Sampling was conducted on a best-effort basis, with outreach to over 300 stakeholders identified by the TRA as relevant (i.e., with investigation experience). This approach prioritised maximising the diversity and relevance of perspectives among case participants. External stakeholders were contacted via tailored emails and telephone calls using details provided from the TRA’s stakeholder database. Staff survey outreach was undertaken directly by the TRA through the distribution of an open link to all relevant staff. In practice, the achieved samples include:

Sample Type	Sample Count
Staff Survey Responses	38
Stakeholder Survey Responses	24
Participant In-Depth Interviews	5

Data Collection

External Stakeholder Survey

The external stakeholder survey was designed to capture both broad perceptions and stage-by-stage experiences of engaging with TRA investigations. The survey featured a mix of scaled, single-code, multi-code, and open-ended questions, with fieldwork being conducted online between 06 February 2026 and 13 March 2026. Stakeholders received an invitation by email from Savanta or were contacted by phone to ensure broad coverage.

External Stakeholder Interviews

In-depth interviews were conducted with five individuals who had participated in at least one TRA investigation. These semi-structured interviews used a discussion guide tailored to explore participation motivations, barriers, challenges, pain points, and recommendations in detail. Interview length ranged from 45–60 minutes, and conversations took place via Microsoft Teams between 06 March 2026 and 24 March 2026. Interviews were recorded (with consent) and transcribed for analysis.

Only core Savanta project team members had access to the individual responses from the external stakeholder survey, the TRA staff survey, and the qualitative interviews. At no stage did anyone in the TRA see identifying or individualised survey or interview data; all responses were anonymised during analysis and in reporting. This approach ensured full compliance with the [UK General Data Protection Regulation \(GDPR\)](#) and the [Market Research Society \(MRS\) Code of Conduct](#) regarding data privacy and participant confidentiality.

TRA Staff Survey

To understand the staff perspective, an internal TRA survey was fielded among relevant employees (i.e., those normally involved in case teams or working on trade remedy cases, whether currently or historically, including those whose responsibilities may have changed over time). The questionnaire, administered via an open link distributed by internal teams, elicited views on process bottlenecks, barriers to participant engagement, effectiveness of communication, and improvement priorities. The survey received 38 staff responses, with fieldwork running between 03 March 2026 and 19 March 2026.

Ethical Considerations and Data Protection

All research conducted for this evaluation adhered strictly to the MRS Code of Conduct. Informed consent was sought and documented at the point of survey completion or just prior to interviews (i.e., verbally), with clarification that participation was voluntary and responses would be anonymised. Names of individuals and organisations are removed from all analysis and reporting outputs to ensure privacy and confidentiality. Data was stored securely and processed in line with the UK GDPR; participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage. Only aggregated, non-identifiable findings are cited throughout this report.

Strengths and Limitations

A core strength of this evaluation is its mixed-methods design, allowing for both broad quantitative analysis and richer exploration of stakeholder experiences. Findings were triangulated from surveys and interviews with both stakeholders and staff to ensure robust, actionable insights. However, because survey sample size sits well below 100¹, results should be considered indicative rather than statistically significant. This limits the ability to analyse differences between subgroups or to draw conclusions about less common situations. In addition, some perspectives, especially those of less engaged or non-participating stakeholders (i.e., no investigation experience), may be underrepresented.

It is also worth noting that the TRA's stakeholder pool is relatively small compared to other research contexts. For example, nationally representative UK studies can draw from an eligible population of several million adults, with final sample sizes of 2,000 or more. Furthermore, contacts within the stakeholder pool are subject to research outreach across

¹ There is no universal 'minimum n=' for statistical significance specified by market or social research standards. However, it is common industry practice is to approach sample sizes below 100 with caution (especially in subgroup analysis) e.g., by viewing these as indicative, not statistically robust.

multiple projects of the TRA. This may have contributed to a lower-than-anticipated response rate for the survey, as well as the limited number of qualitative interviews achieved (n=5), as stakeholders who have participated in previous projects of the TRA may have been less inclined to engage with a further research request.

Additionally it should be noted that the Trade Remedies Advisory Service was launched during the period covered by this research, meaning some participants' pre-application experiences predate its availability. Findings relating to pre-application support should be interpreted with this in mind.

Lastly, all findings rely on self-reported experiences, which may be influenced by memory or what felt most important at the time of answering. This presents the potential challenge of responses being incomplete, selective, or affected by the timing and salience of particular events, rather than a neat or comprehensive account the investigation process. Nonetheless, the combined evidence of the research offers a credible and practical overview of the stakeholder and staff investigation experience, as well as potential process improvements for the TRA.

4. Research Participants

This section profiles participants across all research strands: external stakeholder survey, qualitative stakeholder interviews, and the TRA staff survey. This is to evidence the breadth and diversity of perspectives on which the evaluation's findings are based.

External Stakeholder Survey Respondents

Attribute	Breakdown	Proportion	Count
Organisation type	UK producer	46%	11
	UK importer	13%	3
	Trade association or business group	21%	5
	Legal adviser/representative	13%	3
	Overseas producer/exporter	8%	2
Organisation size	0–9 employees	21%	5
	10–249 employees	38%	9
	250+ employees	38%	9
	Prefer not to say	4%	1
Investigation experience	Anti-dumping investigation	88%	21
	Subsidy investigation	33%	8
	Safeguard investigation	13%	3
	New investigation	58%	14
	Transition review	38%	9
	Expiry review	29%	7
TRA engagement	<1 year	8%	2
	1–2 years	21%	5
	3–4 years	33%	8
	5+ years	33%	8
	Prefer not to say	4%	1
Total	All Respondents	24	24

(Please note that due to rounding or multiple options being selected percentages may not add up to 100%)

TRA Staff Survey Respondents

Attribute	Breakdown	Proportion	Count
Team/function	Investigations Delivery	40%	15
	Analysts	34%	13
	Verification	11%	4
	Policy	3%	1
	Legal	3%	1
	Comms	5%	2
	Other	5%	2
Investigation experience	Anti-dumping investigation	100%	38
	Subsidy investigation	90%	34
	Safeguards investigation	29%	11
	New investigation	95%	36
	Transition review	81%	31
	Expiry review	47%	18
Tenure with TRA	<1 year	11%	4
	1–2 years	26%	10
	3–4 years	34%	13
	5+ years	26%	10
	Prefer not to say	3%	1
Total	All Respondents	38	38

(Please note that due to rounding or multiple options being selected percentages may not add up to 100%)

Qualitative Interview Participants

Overview

- Five in-depth interviews were conducted with individuals sampled from across the stakeholder database, ensuring a range of perspectives were represented.
- To protect confidentiality, given the small sample size (n=5), we are not disclosing the respondent type here. However, interviewees reflected a range of organisational sizes, sectors, and levels of engagement, including from both companies and trade associations.
- The sample captured the views of SMEs and those representing them, as well as participants with direct and indirect experience of TRA investigations (i.e., those who have participated in day-to-day investigation activity, as well as those who may manage or oversee this process from a distance).

5. Findings

This section presents findings across the four thematic areas covered by the evaluation. Quantitative data from the external stakeholder survey and TRA staff survey are presented alongside qualitative insights from the stakeholder interviews and open-ended survey responses.

Participation Drivers and Barriers

Awareness and Routes to Engagement

Awareness is a crucial first requirement for stakeholder participation in TRA investigations, but the journey to it is not always direct. Stakeholders, especially SMEs, sometimes report first hearing about TRA cases through networks such as trade associations, industry newsletters, or professional contacts, rather than from the TRA itself. These intermediary groups act as important conduits, notifying their members of new investigations and flagging relevant opportunities based on industry trends or reports from within the sector.

However, this reliance on third-party channels means that organisations outside such networks, or operating in less-connected sectors, may remain unaware of relevant investigations, presenting an ongoing challenge for achieving broad and equitable stakeholder engagement.

While some participants report challenges such as unclear requirements and a complex process at the earliest stages of engagement, direct interaction with TRA staff is consistently viewed positively across interview and open-ended feedback, with responsiveness being a notable highlight here. When asked in the survey about guidance from the TRA at this stage, nearly three-quarters of participants (72%) rated it as ‘somewhat clear’ or ‘very clear’.

Overall, while barriers exist around the earliest stages of engagement, the precursory periods of awareness-building and outreach (i.e., to SMEs) are most critical in determining whether stakeholders engage in an investigation.

“If you drop them an email, you get an email pretty much straight back from them with a response with the name of the person.”

Case Participant

Triggers for Participation

The decision to engage with TRA investigations is most commonly driven by commercial self-interest, particularly where there is direct risk to the business or sector. Interviews with participants and survey responses consistently reference the material impact that trade remedy outcomes could have, whether as a (UK) producer that alleges an injury, an importer, or another directly affected party.

“Because it had major implications to our business [...] and it's still having major implications on our business.”

Case Participant

This is aligned with TRA staff perceptions: staff overwhelmingly identify commercial interests and the desire to influence outcomes as the primary reasons stakeholders choose to participate, showing strong alignment between audiences here.

For participants, the first step into participation is simply hearing about a new investigation, often through a trade association alert or industry network. These third-party channels remain important for raising awareness and clarifying why engagement could be relevant.

“We got flagged as of the situation occurring, if you like, via our trade body.”

Case Participant

Once an organisation participates in an initial TRA case or engages directly with the TRA, they are more likely to be notified directly about future investigations, with repeat engagement facilitated by TRA communications and mailing lists.

Barriers to Participation

Looking at barriers to future engagement among those who have participated in investigations previously, the most frequently cited obstacle is the burden of required documentation (29%), with this being closely followed by a lack of time or available resources, and the perception that the overall process is too complex to navigate. Looking at the interviews and open-ended responses, the latter two factors are particularly acute for SMEs and those new to the investigation process.

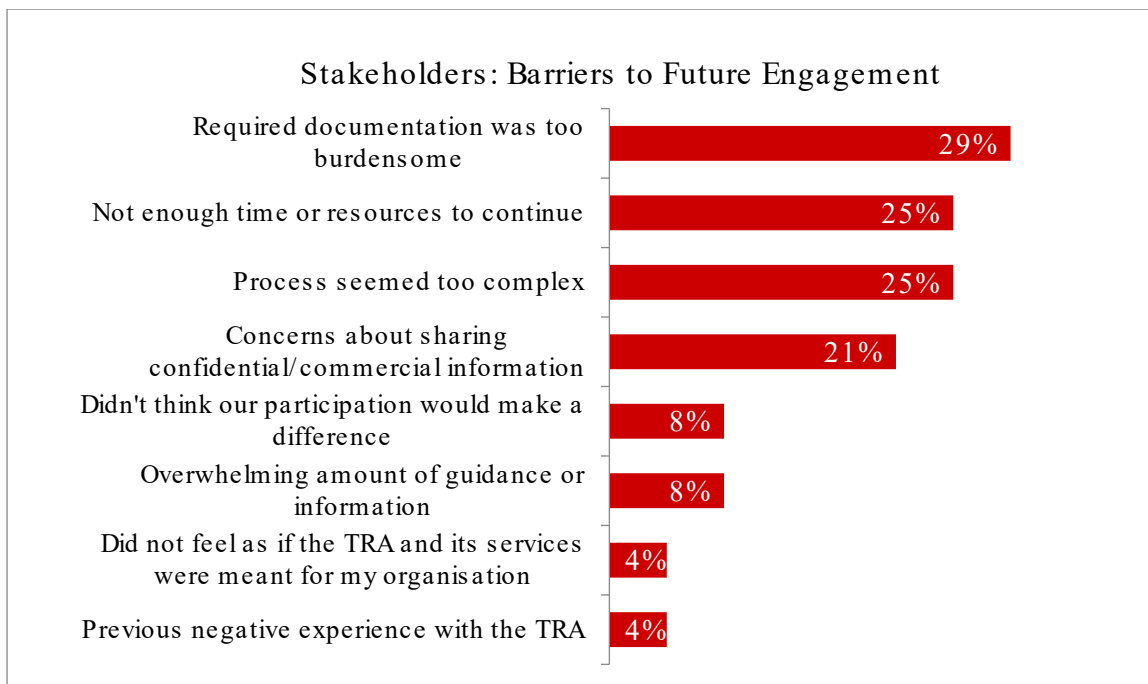


Figure 1: Thinking about your experience with the TRA, have there been any points where you or your organisation faced barriers that discouraged you or your organisation to engage further (for example, in an investigation)? Respondents were able to select multiple answers (n=24)

These findings largely corroborate respondents' stage-by-stage experiences, although the discussion around future barriers is less focused on the challenges and barriers of unclear timelines and delays in publication. This indicates that the timelines, while a key criticism among participants, is not a key determinant in terms of actively discouraging future investigation involvement.

Looking at barriers to engagement among SMEs and less engaged stakeholders, interview and open-ended responses tend to mirror the challenges faced by more involved stakeholders – such as a resource deficit, inflexible timelines, and the (perceived) inherent evidence burden of an investigation. However, opinion is more pronounced along psychological lines with concerns about what an investigation would involve acting as a barrier particularly for SMEs. Even those representing larger companies noted that smaller companies “*have no idea how to do this and they're just intimidated*”. This highlights that it is not simply the logistical burden that may be required in an investigation, but the concern about how much it may involve that can prevent SMEs looking further into a perceived injury. In the most acute cases, these psychological barriers can manifest as outright avoidance, even among those previously interested in participation. Overall, this exemplifies that SMEs and less engaged stakeholders do not face an entirely unique set of barriers to engagement – rather, they are encountered in more inhibiting ways compared to larger, more experienced organisations.

“I thought, right, first of all, is my voice going to matter? In this decision? Probably not. Is it worth my time and effort to invest in giving all this information? Probably not.”

Case Participant

Recommendation

- Increase proactive, targeted outreach, especially to SMEs, by working closely with trade associations and industry networks to ensure all relevant organisations are aware of investigations and opportunities to participate.
- Prioritise plain-English comms and practical examples at the earliest stages to dispel the impression of the investigation process as being inaccessible or ‘not for my organisation’.

Process Experience: Stage by Stage

This section presents a stage-by-stage evaluation of the investigation process, drawing on both survey and interview evidence to assess the experience of stakeholders as they progress from pre-application through to post-recommendation.

Pre-Application

The pre-application stage functions as the initial gateway to participation for stakeholders in trade remedy investigations, serving both as a practical test of readiness and a significant filter for ongoing engagement. For stakeholders with limited prior exposure to trade remedies, this stage can present a high level of uncertainty, which could deter them from entering an investigation to act upon a perceived injury.

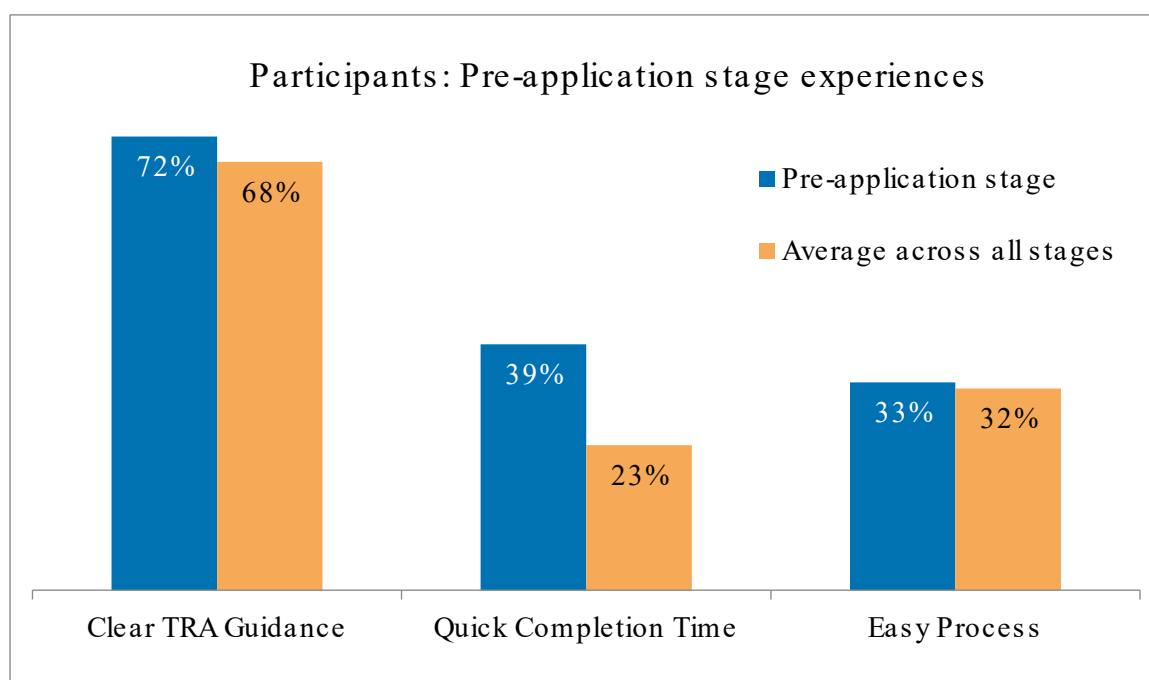


Figure 2: How clear or unclear did you or your organisation find the guidance and instructions at each stage of the investigation process? / How did you or your organisation find each stage of the investigation process in respect of time to complete? / How easy or difficult did you or your organisation find navigating each stage of the investigation process? (n=18)

While the participant survey shows that a majority of stakeholders (72%) found the TRA's guidance during the pre-application stage to be clear, only a third (33%) actively described this stage as easy. Interview and open-ended responses highlight a key divergence here, with particular challenges being reported around SME and first-time case participants. For these cohorts, the challenges of specialist language and a perceived expectation of participant regulatory expertise made the first step of engagement feel daunting. To address these issues, suggestions were made across the research, including the introduction of a scalable toolkit that provides both plain-English and detailed legal guidance.

"I would slash it... the initial form... I know it's all very legalistic, the writing. It doesn't have to be completely impenetrable."

Case Participant

Despite recognised efforts by the TRA to engage directly with prospective participants, interview and open-ended responses indicate that the pre-application period remains the highest point of attrition, particularly for SMEs and those unfamiliar with the TRA's processes. Participants tended to indicate a sense of 'once you're in, you're in,' committing fully to the investigation only after successfully completing the application and weighing whether the resource investment is justified. This reflects the reality that launching or participating in a trade remedies investigation is a significant, long-term commitment, often demanding substantial time and costs over 12 months or more. At this critical tipping point, emphasis should be placed not only on making the process accessible, but also on clearly signalling the scale of commitment required, so that those who proceed do so with full awareness.

Pre-Initiation and Registration

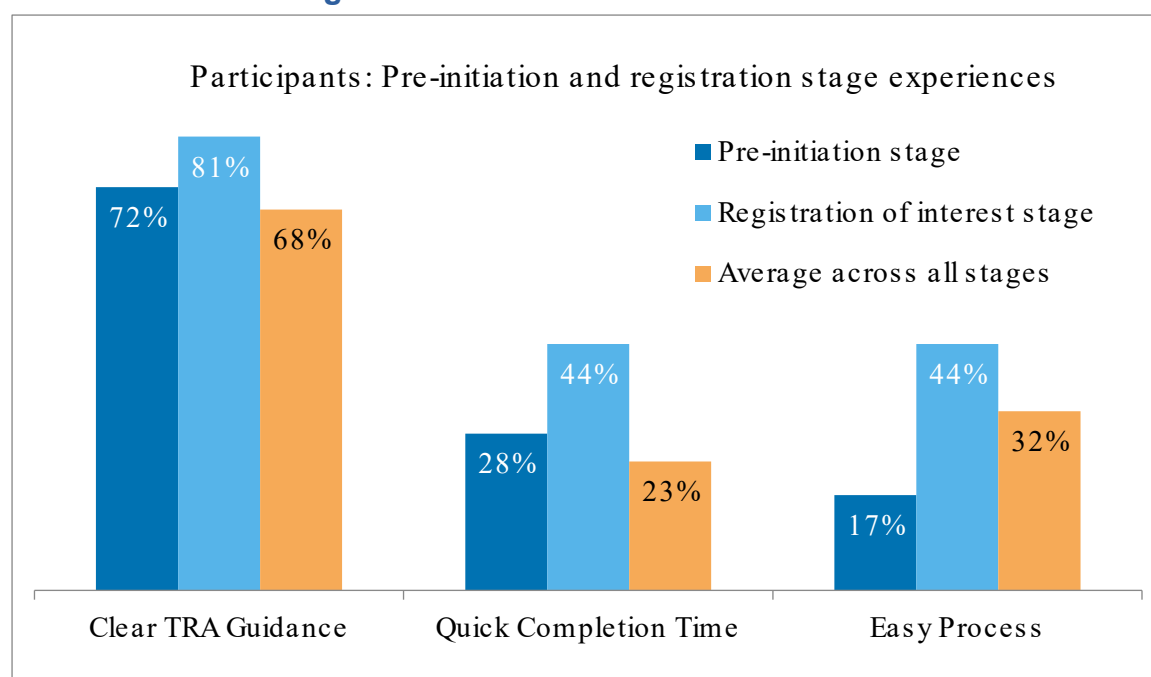


Figure 3: How easy or difficult did you or your organisation find navigating each stage of the investigation process? / How clear or unclear did you or your organisation find the guidance and instructions at each stage of the investigation process? / How did you or your organisation find each stage of the investigation process in respect of time to complete? (n=18)

Relative to the all-stage average, the pre-initiation and registration stages were more likely to be seen as involving clear TRA guidance, as well as a quicker completion time – albeit with interview and open-ended responses nonetheless indicating participants experiencing a 'surprise' when the full scope of resource and evidentiary demands became apparent. Looking at both survey and interview responses together, this stage did not emerge as a focal point of concern, with focus instead being placed on the later evidence gathering/questionnaire completion and verification stages.

Evidence Gathering and Questionnaire Completion

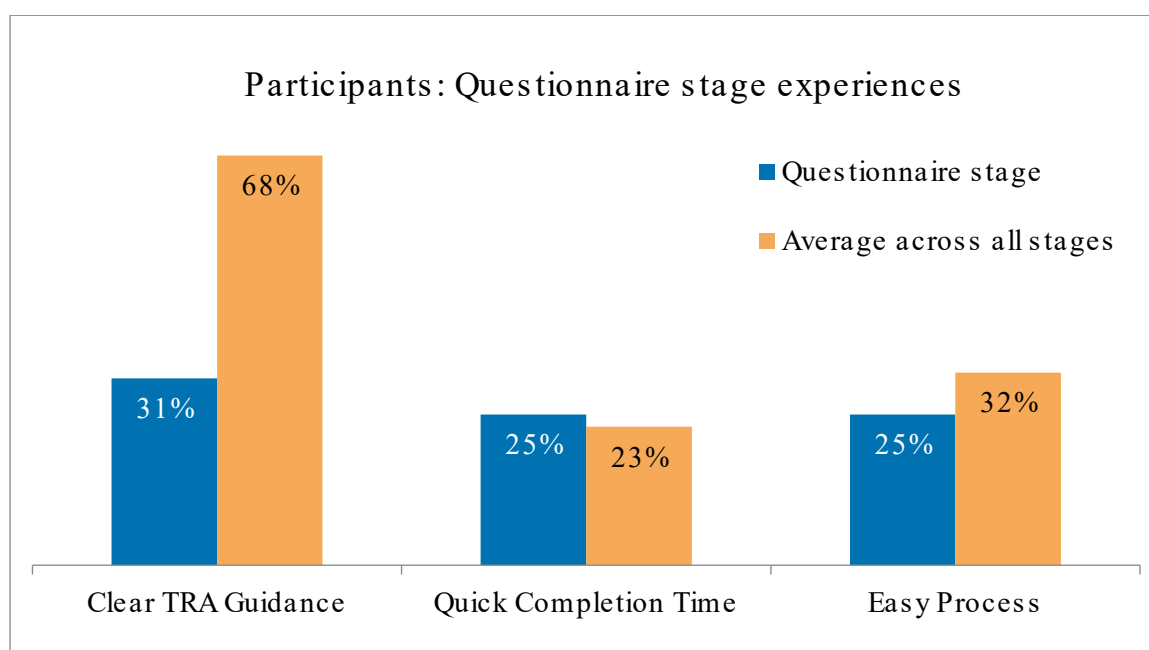


Figure 4: How easy or difficult did you or your organisation find navigating each stage of the investigation process? / How clear or unclear did you or your organisation find the guidance and instructions at each stage of the investigation process? / How did you or your organisation find each stage of the investigation process in respect of time to complete? (n=18)

The evidence gathering and questionnaire completion stage emerges as being a key pain point of the TRA investigation process for participants. Across the survey responses, this stage is most likely to be viewed as difficult (44%), relative to all other stages (0-36%). Looking at open-ended responses exploring how the overall investigation process could be made easier, recommendations around this stage most often centre on simplifying and clarifying questionnaires, offering more practical guidance upfront about requirements, and making timelines more realistic to account for resource pressures and busy periods. Reducing the unnecessary duplication of work also emerged as a priority for participants, a finding that also emerged from the participant in-depth interviews.

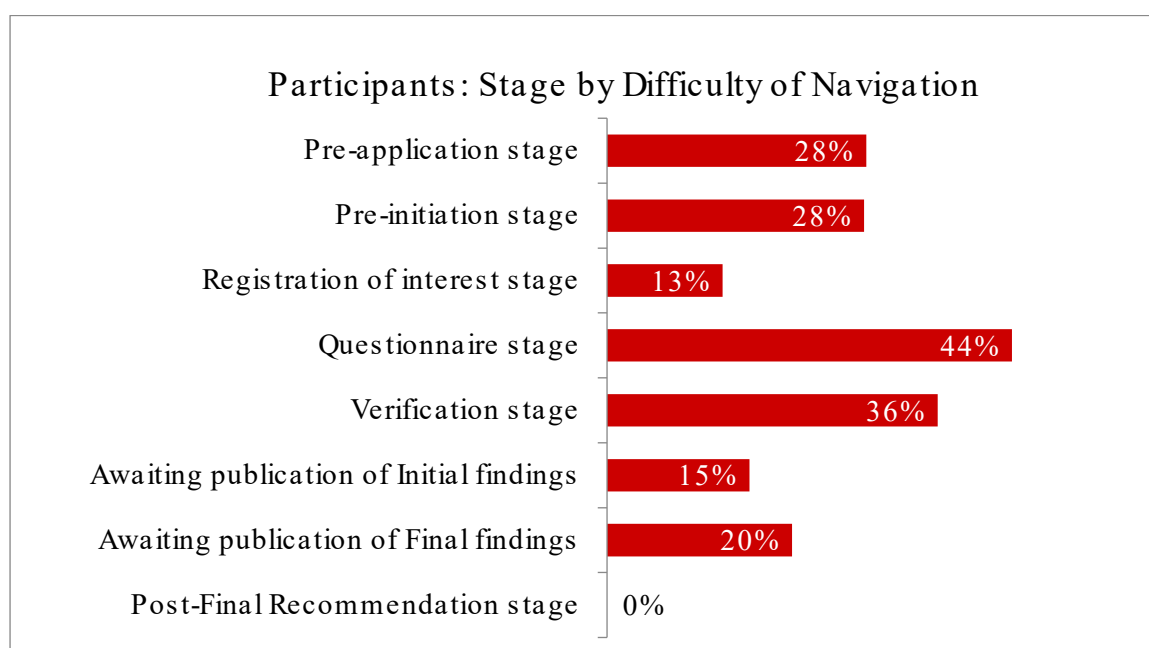


Figure 5: How easy or difficult did you or your organisation find navigating each stage of the investigation process? (n=18)

Looking at the in-depth interviews further, SME and non-SME responses are aligned regarding the latter cohort being more equipped in terms of resource at this stage, due to a lack of a bespoke team that handles trade remedies internally. Here, there is recognition that responsibility for collating evidence among SMEs typically falls to a single individual, often a senior leader or director, who must divert substantial attention from core business to manage the complexity and specificity demanded by TRA questionnaires. For SMEs, this defines their investigation experience, with larger organisations generally being able to manage resource through established teams.

“It was kind of left to me to fill out all the questionnaires sort of on my own with some support from my direct team, who there are 4 people in, and a few others within the sort of data team... the TRA timeframes can be like sort of within 15 days, within 30 days. It's not a lot of time for business.”

Case Participant

Staff responses largely concur with the above – for this audience, the questionnaire stage was perceived as being most likely to be seen as unsatisfactory for participants (24%), based on their impressions of all stages (0-16%). In the open-ended responses, staff most commonly advocated for simplifying and shortening questionnaires, providing practical worked examples or demo versions, and improving guidance on both what is expected and how to complete each section. There were repeated calls for clearer, more transparent communication of timelines and the level of time and effort required up front, to help participants prepare and avoid being surprised by the process demands. There was also particular emphasis placed on the importance of communicating expected time and effort upfront, so participants can more realistically plan their involvement – and to avoid the resource ‘surprise’ as outlined previously.

Verification

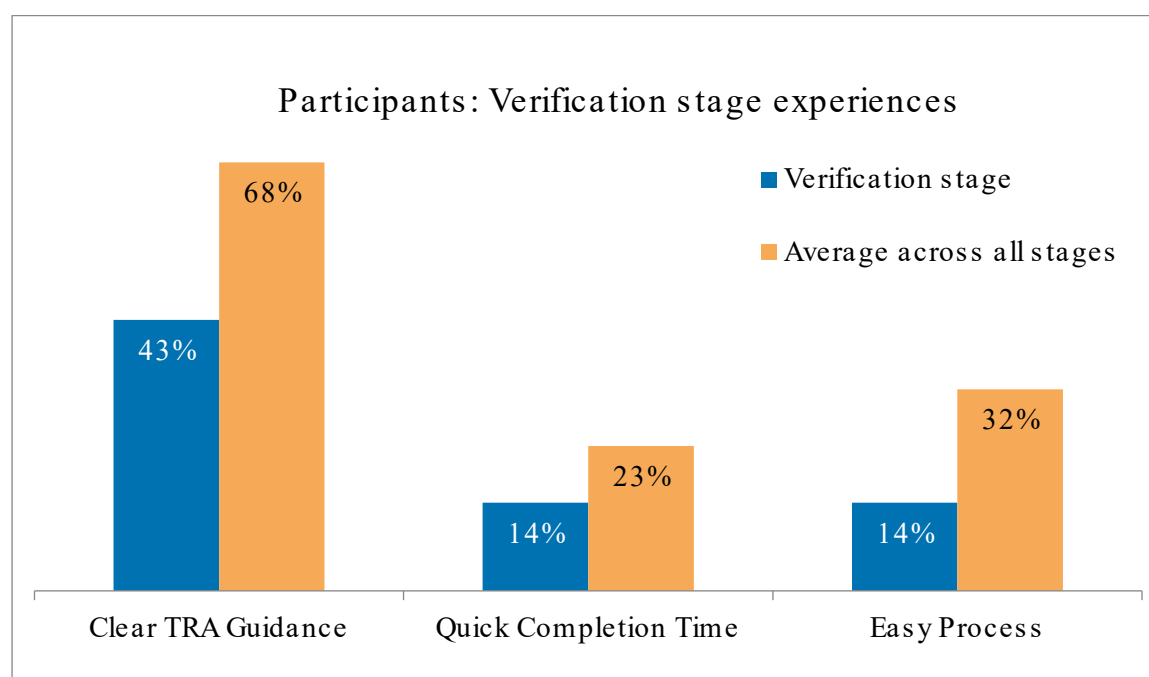


Figure 6: How easy or difficult did you or your organisation find navigating each stage of the investigation process? / How clear or unclear did you or your organisation find the guidance and instructions at each stage of the investigation process? / How did you or your organisation find each stage of the investigation process in respect of time to complete? (n=18)

Looking at the verification stage in terms of guidance clarity, pace and ease of completion, participants are less likely to view this stage favourably compared to the all-stage averages, with this reflecting a similar picture to the questionnaire stage. Looking at this stage comparatively, particular participant dissatisfaction here may be driven by the cumulative burden of having completed multiple labour-intensive stages already, with this being the last high-demand stage for participants.

Interview and open-ended responses indicate that the primary challenges at this stage are logistical. Participants most commonly report difficulties when verification visits coincide with financial year-end or other peak business periods, or when visits are delayed, cancelled, or rescheduled at short notice. Some participants noted that requests to adjust the timing of a verification visit could go unacknowledged, causing frustration and the need to rapidly divert resources.

“They did request a verification visit, and then they decided that they didn’t want to request a verification visit anymore. So I was all open for a verification visit and sort of started to make plans, and they changed their mind about it. I suppose something around why and how they select the people they want to go and verify, and what does that mean for a business [...] because it was sort of a bit of a random.”

Case Participant

However, once the verification took place, participants offered positive feedback regarding TRA staff. Open-ended responses and interviews frequently describe TRA case handlers as collaborative, approachable, and supportive, and valued opportunities for two-way dialogue during the process.

Initial findings, final recommendation, and post-recommendation stages

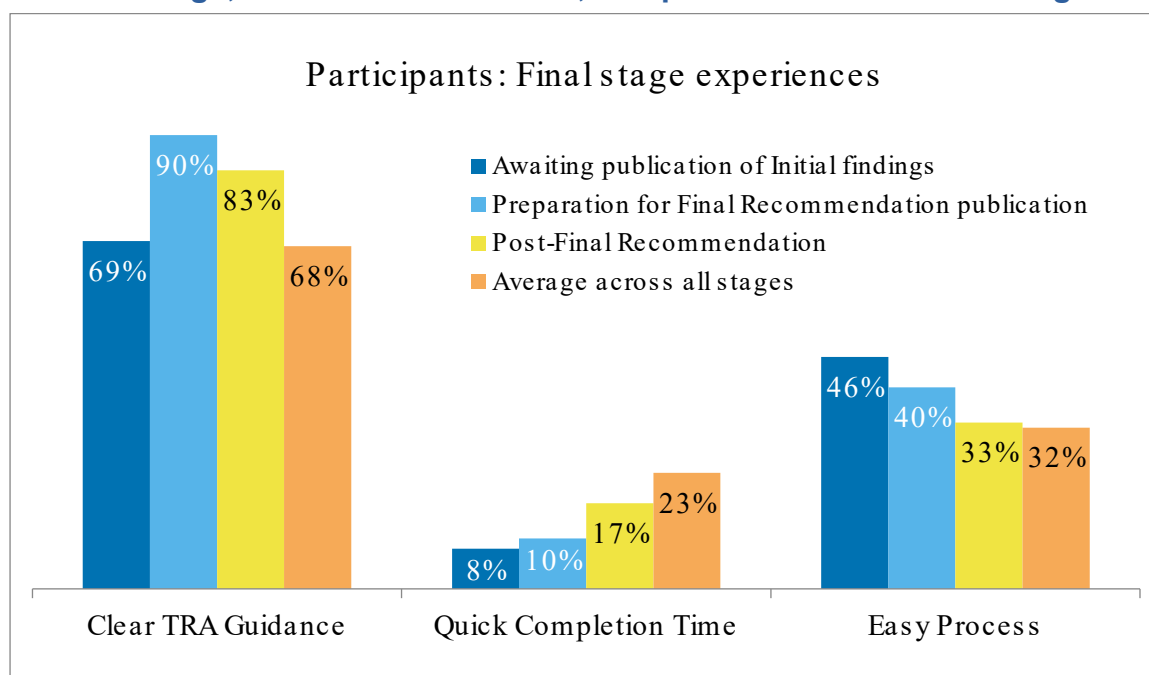


Figure 7: How easy or difficult did you or your organisation find navigating each stage of the investigation process? / How clear or unclear did you or your organisation find the guidance and instructions at each stage of the investigation process? / How did you or your organisation find each stage of the investigation process in respect of time to complete? (n=18)

The last three stages of the investigation see relatively strong participant scores in terms of clarity of guidance, and process ease, albeit with particular attention across both the survey and interview/open-ended responses relating to the ‘waiting game’ of this period.

“Overall the process was manageable and the case team were responsive and helpful throughout. The main difficulty from a business perspective was the length of time taken during the final stages before the decision was concluded. Even where the likely outcome appears relatively clear, the period of uncertainty can be challenging for businesses affected by the investigation. Any steps that could shorten or provide greater visibility over the timing of the final decision stage would be helpful.”

Case Participant – Large Importer

Staff members explore the nature of this ‘waiting game’ further, with criticism being placed on internal process bottlenecks and a lack of communication. Several staff members report that complex decision routes, repeated review and approval steps, and demands from multiple internal review groups can delay outcomes and leave both case teams and participants waiting longer than they perceive necessary.

“Review times are by far the largest time waster in our investigations. [...] Challenges to documents are being raised at the wrong stages of investigations, a problem with calculations or process should be brought up at the PAD or SEF² stage.”

TRA Staff Member

There are also calls for clearer communication with stakeholders about likely timelines during these phases, with suggestions that regular, proactive updates and greater transparency over the status of final decisions would help manage expectations and reduce participant uncertainty.

² PAD - Provisional Affirmative Determination.

SEF - Statement of Essential Facts.

See additional information at: [The TRA's investigation process - GOV.UK](#)

The Investigation Process at Large

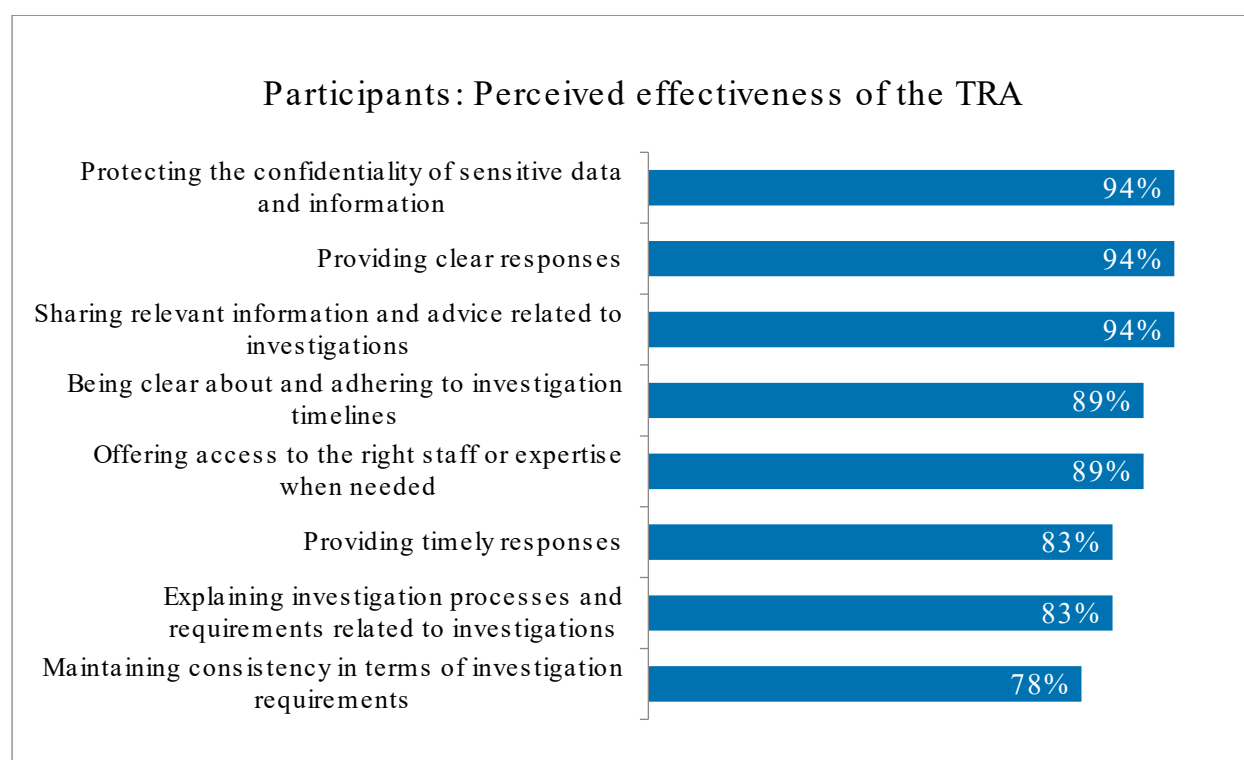


Figure 8. Thinking about your or your organisation's investigation experience, how effective was the TRA in each of the following areas? (n=18)

Points of Strength

It should be noted that, despite the concerns and recommendations made by participants across the various investigation stages, there is broad satisfaction with the way the TRA approaches its investigations. The vast majority of respondents viewed the TRA as effective across a range of different contexts, with the organisation performing particularly strongly in terms of protecting confidentiality, providing clear responses, and sharing relevant information and advice.

Furthermore, when asked as an open-ended question what stood out about their experience, participants most frequently praised the TRA's professionalism, clarity of communication, willingness to answer questions, and constructive, supportive approach throughout the process, including for those with limited previous experience. While several noted that the process could be lengthy and resource-intensive, there was broad recognition that the TRA staff remained approachable and responsive, providing guidance and timely feedback whenever needed.

Looking at staff examples of investigations working well, similar themes emerge. This cohort commonly attribute positive engagement outcomes to early and in-person contact, noting that initial facilitation visits build trust and set a productive tone for the rest of the investigation process. Open and proactive communication, whether through regular updates, clear agendas, or timely responses to queries, is seen as essential for smoothing data gathering and ensuring stakeholder cooperation. Many staff also highlight the benefit of stepping through questionnaires with stakeholders and explaining technical terms in plain language, which is particularly valued by those less familiar with trade remedies. Staff responses suggest these practices are now embedded across a range of investigations, with multiple team members highlighting the positive impact on stakeholder relationships.

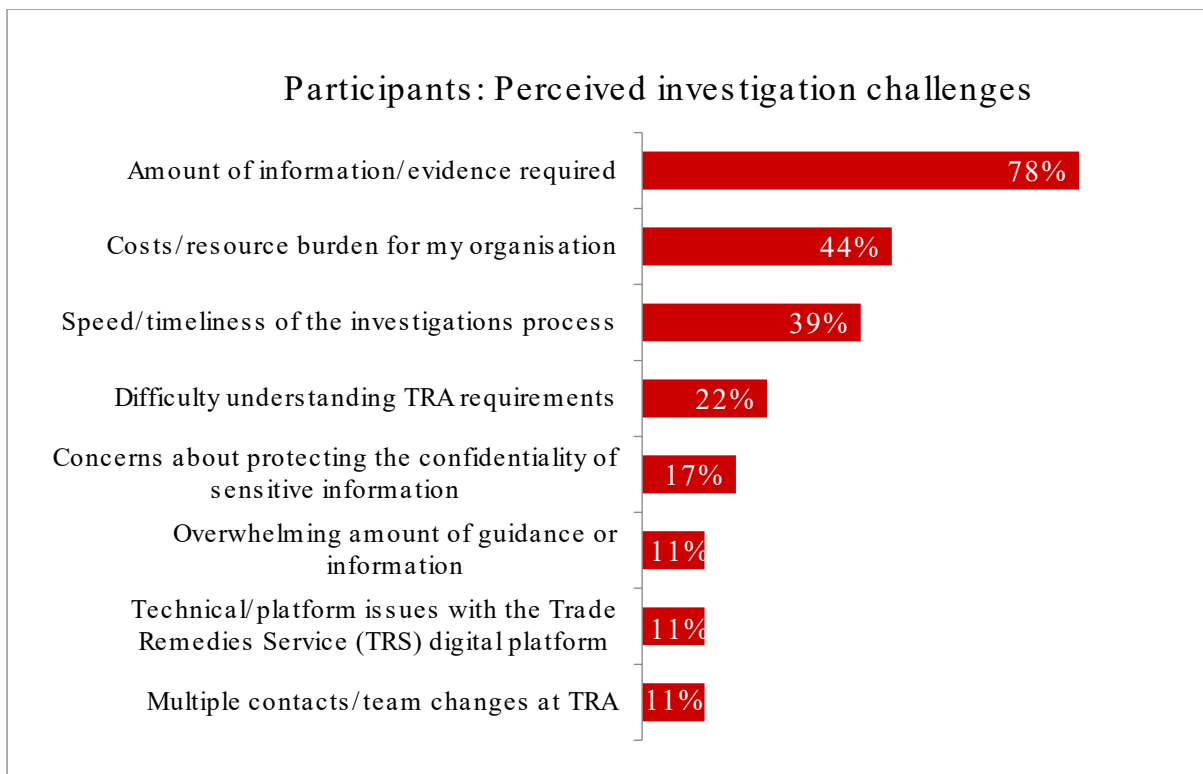


Figure 9: During your most recent investigation experience with the TRA, which of the following challenges, if any, did you or your organisation face? (n=18)

Pain points

Across the investigation stages, three key challenges emerge for participants: the amount of evidence needed to contribute to a case, the resulting resource and timeliness burdens. The amount of evidence required in particular was identified as a challenge by **over two thirds (78%)** of participants. Many open-ended participant responses highlight that assembling the required documentation often draws heavily on limited staff and diverts attention from core business priorities. For smaller organisations in particular, the sheer volume and detail of information requested was seen as a hurdle to participation, with some suggesting it may favour larger businesses with more administrative capacity. This latter concern is critical to address, as it runs the risk of (accidentally) painting the TRA as an organisation that has a steer toward only certain ‘types’ of businesses.

From the staff perspective, challenging stakeholder interactions most often arose when there was a mismatch in understanding of process, capacity, or expectations. Staff noted that from their perspective investigations became more difficult if stakeholders lacked experience and as a result found the administrative demands more challenging or had business pressures that impacted their ability to prioritise engagement with an investigation. These issues frequently led to delays, confusion, or incomplete information, sometimes resulting in missed opportunities for robust input from all parties. Looking at both audience perspectives together, it is clear that properly communicating the extent of time, resource, and evidence needed to participate in an investigation should be prioritised promptly to avoid misaligned expectations/‘surprises’ down the line.

Summary

Overall, while participants and staff recognise notable strengths in the TRA's approach, especially around clarity, support, and professionalism, there are persistent pressures around process complexity, resourcing, and the volume of evidence required. These challenges weigh disproportionately on smaller organisations and first-time participants, creating barriers to engagement and risking critical voices being left out – especially at the fatigue-prone questionnaire and verification stages. This issue has particular sting among participants who perceive this as unexpected or not tailored for their organisation type, thus upfront communication about what an investigation fully involves is a key opportunity area in mitigating this risk going forward. Nonetheless, with over seven in ten participants reporting satisfaction with the investigation process overall (72%), there is clear evidence that the TRA's processes require a refinement rather than an overhaul.

Recommendation	➤ Prioritise early, personalised support: Ensure access to knowledgeable staff who can guide applicants through terminology, requirements, and evidence standards, reducing uncertainty from the start. ➤ Enhance practical guidance: Provide worked examples, demo applications, and step-by-step walkthroughs to illustrate strong submissions, lowering the perceived risk for newcomers. ➤ Increase flexibility and accessibility: Implement tailored checklists (i.e., spelling out stage requirements in layperson's terms) and realistic timelines for smaller firms, allow flexible submissions around recognised industry pinch points, and bolster TRS onboarding for less resourced participants. Where flexibility or shortened timelines is not possible for legal reasons, the TRA could instead prioritise emphasising the extent of time/resources required to avoid participant 'surprises'.
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Alignment Between Participant and Staff Perspectives

This section compares TRA staff perceptions of the factors influencing stakeholder participation and engagement with the investigation process, compared to the perspectives shared by participants themselves. Key areas of convergence and divergence are identified, with implications of these perception gaps explored as it relates to TRA's internal training and communications.

Comparative Outlook – Investigation Participation

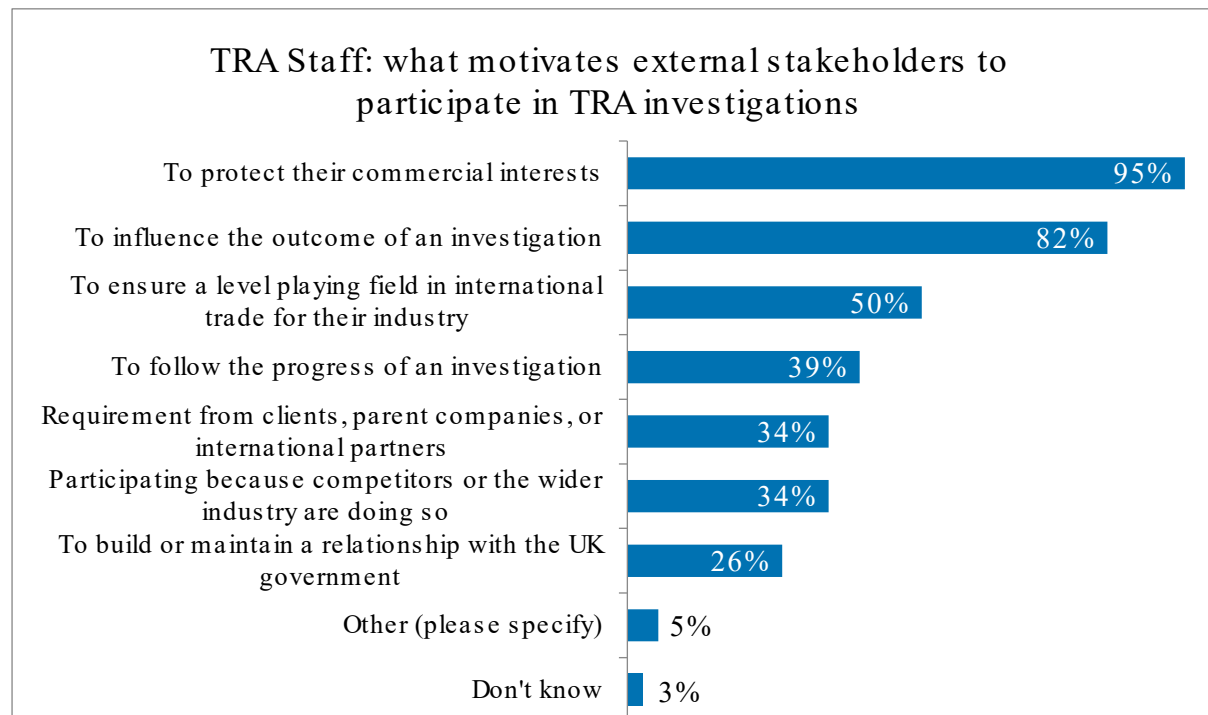


Figure 10: In your opinion, what motivates external stakeholders to participate in TRA investigations? (n=38)

When asked to estimate the motivating factors that encourage participation in TRA investigations, two key themes emerge among staff: protecting one's commercial interests (95%) and influencing the outcome of an investigation (82%). This is broadly aligned with participant interview and open-ended survey responses, with these consistently citing the commercial imperative to engage. Among participants, involvement is often described as necessary to limit the injury caused by unfair international trade, with this being perceived as existential in the most critical circumstances.

"So we've gone to anti-dumping duties and broader safeguards simply because it's that or death in a lot of cases."

Case Participant

Comparative Outlook – Investigation Challenges

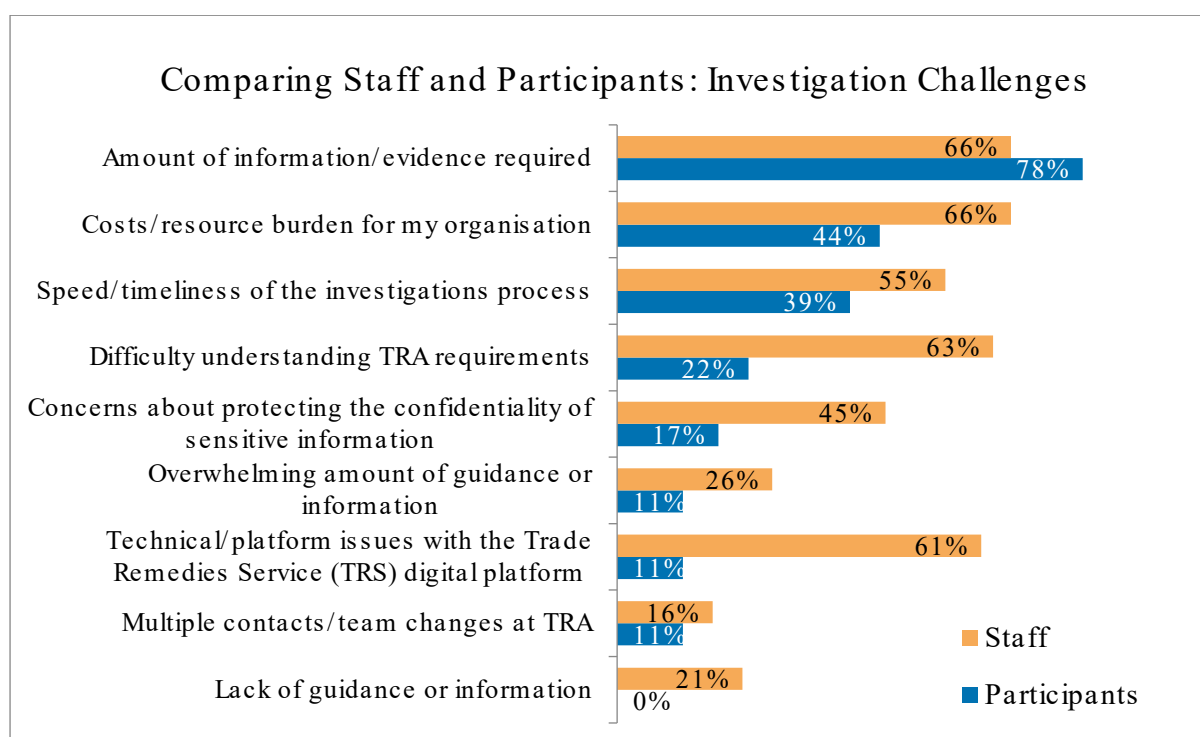


Figure 11: During your most recent investigation experience with the TRA, which of the following challenges, if any, did you or your organisation face? (n=18) / Based on your experience of working on cases, which of the following challenges, if any, do external stakeholders encounter during investigations? (n=38)

Looking at investigation challenges cited by participants and staff, there is widespread recognition of information requirements being a key inhibitor to participation. This challenge was raised frequently across the participant interviews as being “*an incredible amount of work... it takes you away from the day job for days on end*”.

While both audiences are aligned on the information burden being a key challenge, participants place notable emphasis on this issue – with **over three quarters** of this audience saying this (78%), compared to two-thirds (66%) of staff. This underscores how the investigation process may create misaligned perceptions of the severity of particular challenges based on the role each party plays here – with the burden of evidence-gathering largely falling on participants.

In contrast, staff concern is more pronounced regarding TRS digital platform issues and understanding TRA requirements. This may be due to the burden being placed on staff to explain how to navigate the TRS/overcome tech issues, as well as outline the requirements necessary for an investigation. As such, there is strong evidence that participant-staff perceptions diverge on the basis of exposure to each challenge – with participants being notably exposed to the burden of evidence.

This issue cannot be neatly resolved, as certain investigation commitments are inherently one-sided, nonetheless it is useful for the TRA to be conscious of this going forward when it engages both externally and internally (e.g., flagging to staff the most likely challenges to be brought up by new or less experienced participants).

Comparative Outlook – Stage Timeliness

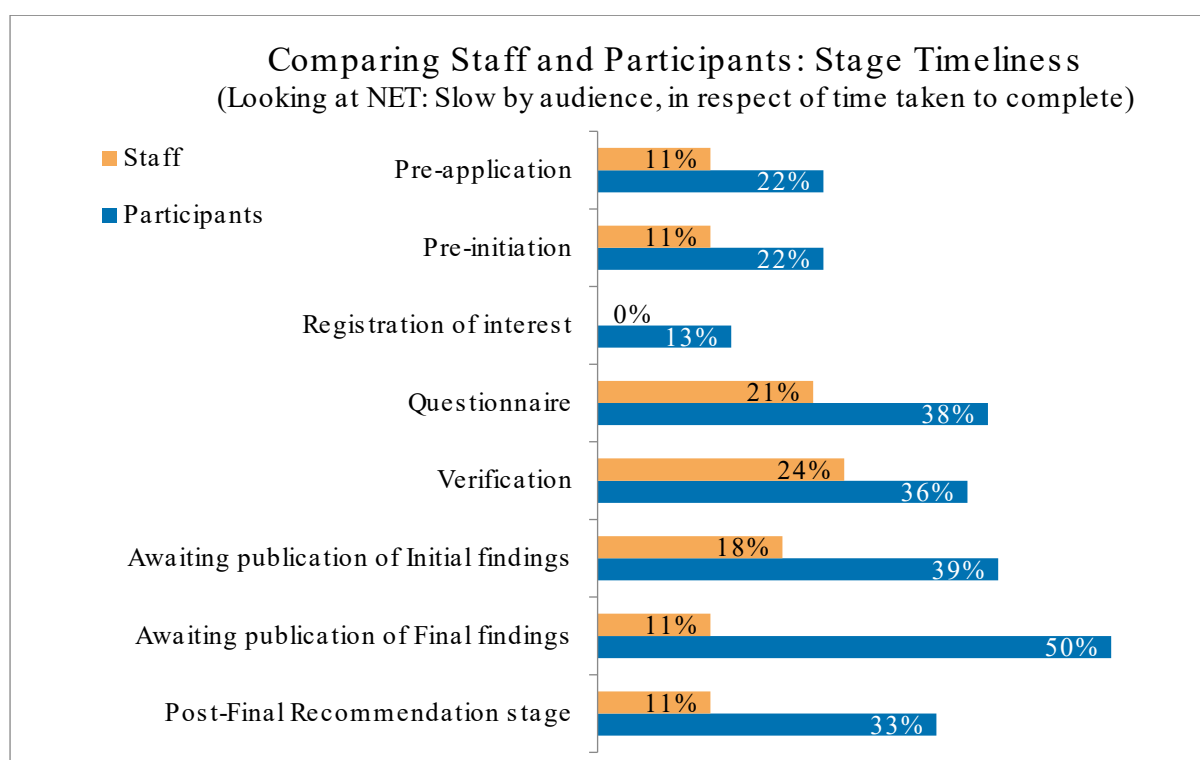


Figure 12: How did you or your organisation find each stage of the investigation process in respect of time to complete? (n=18) / How would you rate the time it took to complete each stage you participated in? (n=38)

Participants are notably more likely across the board to identify slow points of the investigation process, with this peaking at the Initial findings (39%) and Final Recommendation (50%) stages. In contrast, staff are more restrained in explicitly identifying pain points of slowness (0-24%), with verification emerging most commonly among this audience. This picture suggests that staff may underestimate how acute the 'waiting game' of decision publication feels for participants, instead focusing on stages where internal workload or process steps are most robust. To ensure aligned expectations, it is important for staff to align their communication around each stage's perceived time commitments, while prioritising progress updates during these pre-publication periods.

Comparative Outlook – Investigation Satisfaction

72% of participants report satisfaction with the TRA investigation process overall*.

**(i.e., 8 out of 10 or above)*

Among staff, estimated participant satisfaction is broken down by stage:

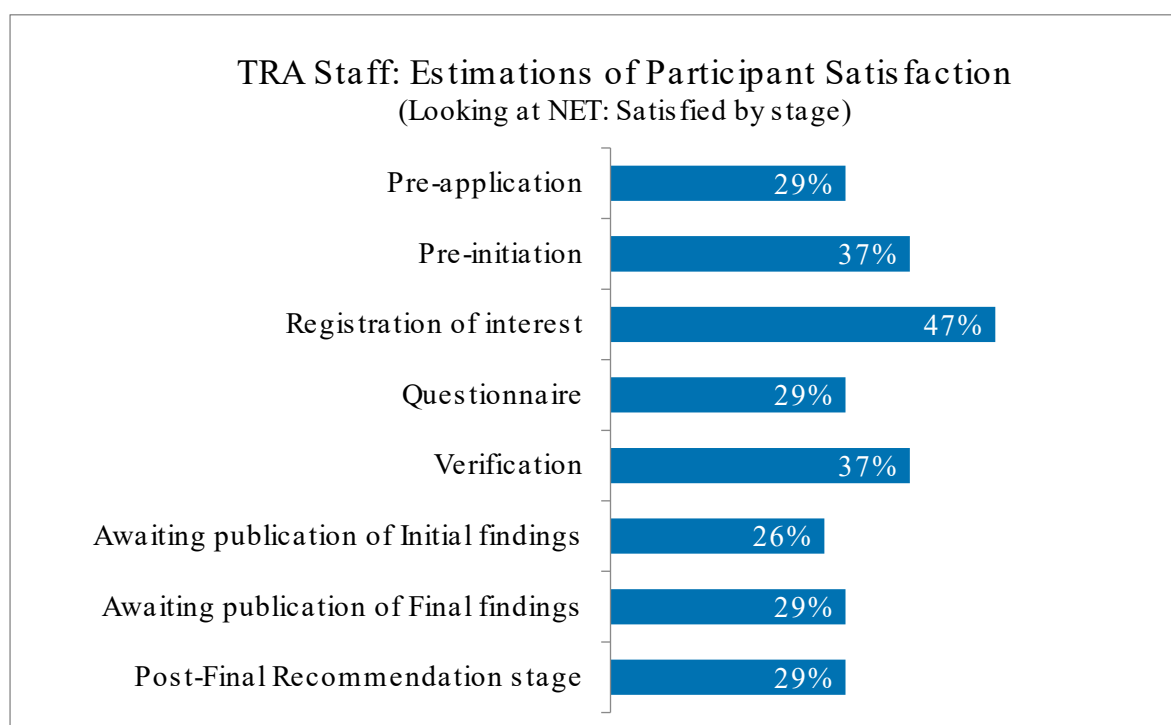


Figure 13: In your opinion, how satisfied or dissatisfied would external stakeholders be with the process of participating in each stage of a trade remedies investigation? (n=38)

Looking at the participant interviews, there is broad alignment with the above staff expectations. The overall satisfaction arc painted by the results of the staff survey, peaking at registration and declining through the questionnaire and later ‘waiting game’ stages, is mirrored in participant interviews. However, verification sees more pronounced criticism among this latter cohort, due to its onerous evidence requirements, visit logistics, and the resource burden this is perceived to involve.

Comparative Outlook – TRA Communications

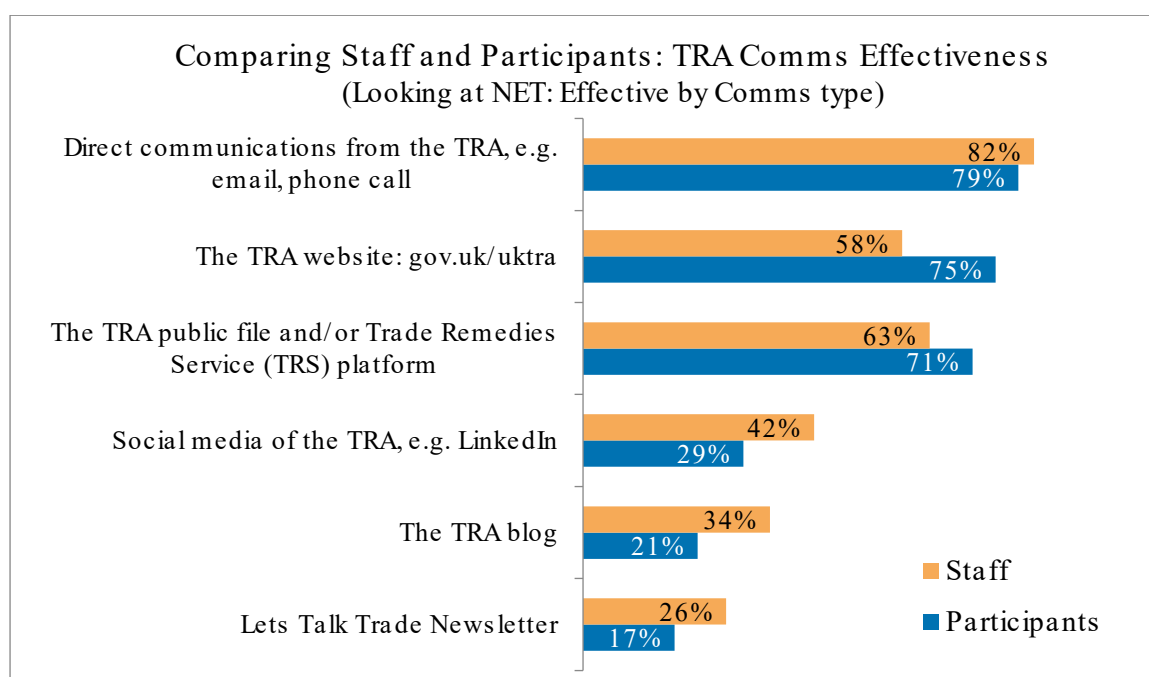


Figure 14: How effective do you find each of the communication methods with TRA? (n=24) / Looking at the TRA's communication channels, how would you rate the effectiveness of each in the context of engaging with case participants? (n=38) – **NB. Only showing answer options asked to both audiences**

Looking at communications, direct contact (such as email and phone calls) is rated as the most effective (NET) method by both staff (82%) and participants (79%), with clear alignment across both groups. This is also the only channel where a majority of both audiences perceive it as 'very effective' (58%). In contrast, the TRA blog and the 'Let's Talk Trade' newsletter are far less widely used or valued: over 70% of participants are unaware of these latter two channels (71% and 75% respectively), while only one in five find these effective. With a lack of awareness dominating perceptions here, there is a clear opportunity to raise the profile of these channels, so that the TRA's outreach approach can be diversified (rather than being reliant on resource-intensive direct contacting).

When asked in an open-ended question how TRA communications can be improved, staff responses point to the need for guidance that is not only clearer and more accessible but also tailored to the specific needs of different audiences. Many suggest consolidating and simplifying public guidance, which is seen as overly fragmented or technical, and making greater use of targeted outreach for key user groups such as SMEs. Some staff also value interactive support (such as stage-by-stage and TRS walkthroughs) as a way to make the investigation process more approachable. Overall, there is a consistent call for greater consistency in communications across the board, particularly in terms of style and the explanations provided by different teams at each stage. Any future approach should remain mindful of the multiple purposes of TRA guidance (e.g., technical advice for lawyers) which may limit how far simplification and adaptation can be applied for certain audiences.

"On the whole the information is clear – but the issue may be the volume of the information and trying to locate the relevant parts that need to be understood at the relevant time."

TRA Staff Member

Staff – Training Implications

Open-ended staff responses indicate a need and desire for targeted training among this audience, particularly for new starters. When asked about how best this could be delivered, responses highlight the benefit of scenario-based training, particularly on how to communicate confidently with different types of applicants, and how to handle technically complex or challenging questions from external parties. Others suggest that shadowing colleagues, attending more facilitation visits, and ongoing peer learning (rather than one-off inductions) would help new staff develop practical engagement skills. Several call for greater clarity from TRA management on best practices, and for training to be refreshed and reinforced throughout the first year. A few recommend specialist training in plain-English communication, especially toward the effort of producing jargon-free, beginner-friendly versions of existing guidance.

“I think probably the biggest thing would be a clearer organisational steer on how to respond to certain kinds of challenging questions about how we work, why we do things the way we do, etc... something similar as a general TRA guide for common questions that we might expect...”

TRA Staff Member

Summary – Areas of convergence and divergence

Across the research, there is broad alignment between staff and participant perspectives on the major drivers and barriers to effective engagement in TRA investigations, particularly around resource burden, evidence demands, and the importance of regular one-to-one communication. However, participants place particular emphasis on the sheer volume of information required in investigations (at the evidence gathering/questionnaire completion stage and the verification stage). Staff feedback tends to be more evenly distributed, with a focus on the need for preparatory training (e.g., a ‘how-to’ guide for stakeholder engagement) as well as simplified versions of existing TRA guidance/comms for new participants. To address these jointly, any training and resource improvements should, as a priority, focus on helping staff support participants most effectively during the most demanding, information-heavy stages of investigations.

Recommendation

- Consider developing concise, user-friendly guidance and checklists for participants to help them navigate pain point stages (e.g., evidence gathering/questionnaire completion and verification).
- Consider scenario-based training for staff focused on supporting participants during demanding investigation stages and handling complex queries with clarity and confidence.

Areas for Improvement

This section summarises the most frequently mentioned and impactful improvement suggestions from staff and participant feedback, distinguishing between quick wins and longer-term structural changes.

Stakeholder-led Improvements

Theme	Demand raised by stakeholders
Timeliness and Deadlines	➤ Greater certainty around investigation statuses, timings and deadlines (especially upfront) ➤ More discretion with deadlines for questionnaire returns, especially during busy periods ➤ Pre-engagement period with external stakeholders during change periods (e.g., when a measure is expiring or up for review)
Evidence Burden and Simpler Requirements	➤ Allow duplication from other cases (i.e., information submitted in a previous, similar investigation copied/transferred over) ➤ Source evidence from public data/information where available ➤ Simpler requirements and forms ➤ Reducing the time/resource burden for participants
Communication, Guidance, and Support	➤ Basic, beginner-friendly process explainers ➤ Discovery calls to help TRA teams understand industry/category in depth
Technical and Digital Improvements	➤ When the TRS notifies users of updates, consolidate all file notifications into a single email ➤ Prioritise platform intuitiveness (e.g., glitch-free, simple layout)

Summary Table: What single change would most improve your experience of TRA investigations? (n=24)

The above highlights the top changes participants believe would have the greatest impact on improving their experience with TRA investigations – when asked directly. Here, reliability and upfront communication is particularly critical, especially in circumstances where this may drop off from the TRA's usual responsiveness (i.e., during circumstances where regular communication may not be regularly baked-in such as the waiting period before publication).

Improvement Area – Timely Updates at Crunch Points (Quick Win)

Participants repeatedly express frustration at being left in the dark during long waits for decisions or key document releases. A more reliable system of progress updates and advance notice about timings could relieve much of this uncertainty and anxiety. While not transformative, keeping participants in the loop may alleviate any sense of the investigation process being beyond their reach.

Improvement Area – Basic, Accessible Process Explainers (Quick Win)

Providing simple, step-by-step explainers and practical examples, tailored for less experienced users, would help demystify the process and empower a wider range of businesses to participate confidently from the outset. This would not require an immediate overhaul of all TRA communications to case participants across the board. Some audiences have a greater need for process explainers than others (e.g. stakeholders in

businesses/industries which have not had significant previous involvement in trade remedies investigations).

Improvement Area – Information and Evidence Burden (Longer Term)

Across interviews and open-ended survey responses from participants, the sheer volume and specificity of data requested is seen as a major barrier to participation, with some participants feeling the process is better suited to large companies with dedicated trade remedies teams. Reviewing and streamlining evidence requirements (e.g., sourcing available information from public data where feasible) would help ensure the investigatory process remains equitable across organisation types. With this area involving structural changes to questionnaires, this would be a longer-term improvement area.

Improvement Area – TRS Digital Platform (Longer Term)

In open-ended responses and interviews, participants occasionally highlight challenges with the TRS digital platform, including unclear navigation, upload errors, fragmented notifications, and a lack of clear status updates. Enhancing TRS usability, by improving navigation, providing clearer instructions, consolidating alerts, and offering intuitive onboarding, would significantly reduce participant frustration and streamline the investigation process, particularly for first-time and less-resourced users. As this requires technical platform changes to a service that has already been enhanced in recent years, this would be a longer-term improvement area.

Improvement Area – Flexibility and Realism in Deadlines (Longer Term)

Rigid, organisation-blind deadlines are a key source of stress for participants, particularly for SMEs or those representing them. Participants describe how evidence collection or questionnaire return periods sometimes clash with peak trading periods or holidays, leading to missed deadlines or disengagement. Introducing more flexible, negotiated timelines for the less historically engaged stakeholders would reduce participant dissatisfaction here and may encourage wider, more consistent engagement across sectors. If not possible due to legal requirements, further communication about the inherent requirements of these timelines may prevent any expectation ‘surprises’ (particularly among SMEs).

Recommendation

- Prioritise easy wins to focus resource most efficiently on working toward these improvement areas.
- Keeping stakeholders ‘in the loop’, even during quiet periods, stands out as an easy win – not requiring an overhaul of the TRA’s existing outreach approach.

6. Conclusions and Recommendations

Conclusions

This process evaluation research reveals a broadly positive but nuanced picture of stakeholder engagement with TRA investigations. Most investigation participants view the TRA positively for its professionalism, responsiveness, and the clarity of direct staff interaction. The TRA's proactive and plainspoken communication is a particular strength among this cohort, helping many feel supported through a time and resource-intensive process.

The primary drivers for engagement are commercial: organisations participate to manage direct risks or influence outcomes affecting their sector. Initial awareness and entry into the process is highly dependent on third-party networks, meaning some organisations, particularly those outside well-connected sectors, may still be overlooked.

Once engaged, the most significant barriers are the resource and information demands associated with evidence gathering and questionnaire completion (plus verification as directly following the former stage). The volume and specificity of required data, compounded by perceptions of inflexible timelines and dense forms, often result in participant fatigue and strained commitment to the process, with a small minority, especially among SMEs, contemplating withdrawal from the process. Here, hurdles are both psychological (perceived challenges that deter further engagement) and practical (challenges around the time required and evidence needed to be collated), with the former dynamic playing a notable role among less experienced participants (i.e., due to potentially feeling intimidated about a process they are not familiar with and about the quantity of evidence needed and questioning the value of contributing).

Both participants and staff agree on the importance of early, clear, and proactive communication, while staff additionally highlight the need for further formal training. Further considering the challenges staff face with newer participants, training focused on supporting new engagers, and SMEs approaching trade remedies would be particularly beneficial. There is broad alignment (in open-ended responses) on the need for streamlined guidance, an intuitive digital platform, and regular communication throughout the entire investigation lifecycle. Divergence between the two audiences occurs based on the priority placed on specific issues, with the information burden being widely recognised challenge among stakeholders.

Critically, a spectrum of opportunities emerges here, from quick wins (e.g., streamlining communications, plain-English explainers, and regular update practices) to longer-term, structural changes (e.g., proportional evidence requirements and a continued digital overhaul). This process evaluation research underscores supporting a wider range of stakeholders depends on building trust and lowering both practical and psychological barriers.

Recommendations

((NB. Recommendations independently set out by Savanta. TRA implementation may be subject to or limited by statutory requirements or ministerial guidance.))

#	Recommendation	Theme	Priority
1	Personalise Onboarding The TRA should consider providing plain-English, practical onboarding tailored specifically for SMEs and newcomers. This could include assigning a named contact at the outset, hosting introductory briefings or webinars, and distributing checklists and sample forms that clearly illustrate what is required, in terms that suit different business profiles. Early engagement with trade associations, especially those working with SMEs, will help reach those beyond regular investigation participants. Broadcasting any guidance is as important as its production here – if materials don't achieve cut-through, their effectiveness in encouraging participation will be limited.	Advisory Service	High
2	Tailor Evidence Requests and/or Timelines To avoid overwhelming businesses, especially those with limited resources, the way evidence requests are communicated and supported should, ideally, take into account each organisation's size and capacity. Where legal or process constraints prevent fully tailoring evidence requests, the TRA could instead focus on accurately communicating expected time and staffing commitments well in advance, while offering as much flexibility as possible in deadlines (especially around busy periods or industry pinch points).	Case Work	High
3	Enhance Progress Updates Participants can be left in the dark during the long intervals between submitting evidence and receiving outcomes. The TRA should consider committing to providing regular, proactive progress updates throughout each investigation, and, where appropriate, explaining any delays or changes in timeline. Developing a visible progress tracker or dashboard, in the Trade Remedies Service (TRS) digital platform or as a regular status update, would further help set and manage expectations at key decision and publication points.	Comms and Case Work	Medium
4	Embed Accessibility into the Digital Platform Repeated participant and staff feedback (i.e., in open-ended responses) highlight specific frustrations with the TRS digital platform, including confusing navigation, upload errors, lack of real-time status updates, and difficulties onboarding first-time users.	Digital	Medium

#	Recommendation	Theme	Priority
	The TRA should look at undertaking a focused user-experience review of the platform, prioritising clearer instructions, as well as intuitive upload functions and step-by-step digital onboarding support, to ensure new users are not left behind here.		
5	Expand Staff Training While both TRA staff and stakeholders value ‘learning by doing’, responses make clear that hands-on experience alone is not enough – especially for reaching out to and encouraging participation among harder-to-engage stakeholders. Written staff responses highlight a need for further training and guidance in stakeholder engagement and digital onboarding, especially around the use of the TRS digital platform and supporting less experienced or SME participants. Several opportunities emerge here, including clearer step-by-step process materials, focused resources for communicating with diverse business types, shadowing senior TRA staff and practical demonstrations of participant scenarios. Expanding formal and scenario-based training may help staff engage purposefully with less experienced stakeholders.	Staff	Medium

7. Glossary

Please note the terms and definitions below are interpretations and simplifications that may not fully align with the wording in WTO law and the UK legal framework.

Term	Definition
Anti-dumping investigation	A process to determine whether goods have been or are being dumped in the UK, and whether dumping has caused or is causing material injury to a UK industry in the like goods.
Dumping	Goods are dumped if they are imported into the UK and their export price is less than their normal value.
Expiry review	A process to consider whether injury to a UK industry in the like goods would be likely to continue or recur if the measure were to expire, and to determine whether the measure should be let to expire, or be amended to continue to apply at the same level or a different one.
Trade remedy investigation	A formal, evidence-based process carried out by the TRA to determine whether imports have caused, are causing or threaten to cause material injury (in anti-dumping and subsidy investigations) or serious injury (in safeguard investigations) to a UK industry.
Trade remedy measure	A measure adopted by the Secretary of State for Business and Trade, on the recommendation of the TRA or otherwise, to help protect UK businesses from unfair trading practices and unforeseen surges in imports.
New investigation	An original case conducted by the TRA into suspected dumping, subsidisation, or unforeseen surges in imports causing serious injury to UK businesses.
Open-ended response	A free-text response to a survey question from a respondent (i.e., staff or stakeholder – written answer rather than chosen from pre-set answer options).
Participant	An organisation that has previously engaged with a TRA investigation.
Safeguard investigation	A process to consider whether an unforeseen and significant surge in imports of goods has caused, is causing or threatens to cause serious injury to UK producers of like and directly competitive goods.
Stakeholder	Any organisation with an interest in, or affected by, the work of the Trade Remedies Authority, including UK producers, importers, exporters, trade associations, legal representatives, and other parties that may participate in or be impacted by TRA investigations.
Subsidy investigation	A process to assess whether unfairly subsidised goods have been or are being imported into the UK, and whether those imports have caused or are causing material injury to a UK industry in the like goods.
TRA	Trade Remedies Authority, an independent public body established to defend UK economic interests against unfair international trade practices and unforeseen surges in imports.
Transition review	A review of existing EU trade remedy measures carried over into UK law after EU Exit, assessing whether to maintain, vary or revoke them in the UK context.
TRS	The Trade Remedies Service, the TRA's online case management platform through which stakeholders register and submit evidence.
Verification visit	A visit (in-person or remote) by TRA investigators to a stakeholder's premises to audit and validate information submitted in their responses to questionnaires.

8. Appendices

Appendix A: External stakeholder survey questionnaire (main body)

ASK ALL

Size. How many employees are in your organisation?

Please select one option

SINGLE CODE – FLIP 1-5

Answer Options

0-9	1	
10-249	2	
250+	3	
Don't know	97	
Prefer not to say	96	

ASK ALL

Scope. Looking at your relationship with UK trade remedies and the Trade Remedies Authority (TRA), please state whether each of the following applies to you.

Please select all that apply

MULTI CODE

Answer Options

I have participated in a TRA investigation	1	
My organisation has undergone a remote or on-site verification conducted by TRA	2	
I have engaged with the TRA Pre-Application Office / Trade Remedies Advisory Service	3	
My organisation has used the Trade Remedies Service (TRS) digital platform	4	
I work in the field of trade remedies, international trade law and/or trade policy	5	
Other (please specify)	98	OE, FIX
None of the above	99	EXC, FIX

ASK ALL

D1. In what types of UK trade remedy investigations are you currently participating, or have you previously participated?.

Please select all that apply

MULTI CODE

Answer Options

Anti-dumping investigation	1	
Subsidy investigation	2	
Safeguards investigation	3	
None of the above	99	EXC, FIX

ASK ALL

D2. In what types of UK trade remedy investigations are you currently participating, or have you previously participated?

Please select all that apply

MULTI CODE

Answer Options

New investigation	1	
Transition review	2	
Expiry review	3	
Other (please specify)	98	OE, FIX
None of these	99	EXC, FIX

ASK ALL

Tenure. When did your organisation first begin working with the TRA?

Please select one option

SINGLE CODE – FLIP 1-4

Answer Options

Less than 1 year	1	
1-2 years	2	
3-4 years	3	
5+ years	4	
None of the above	99	
Prefer not to say	96	

ASK ALL

Q1. Which of the following best describes your organisation's role in relation to UK trade remedies?

Please select one option

SINGLE CODE

Answer Options

UK producer	1	
UK importer	2	
Trade association or business representative organisation	3	
Legal adviser/representative	4	
Overseas producer or exporter	5	
Other (please specify)	98	OE

ASK ALL

Q2. Which statement best describes your organisation's relationship with the TRA?

Please select one option

SINGLE CODE

Answer Options

We work closely and regularly with the TRA	1	
We have occasional contact with the TRA	2	

We have only recently engaged with the TRA for the first time	3	
We know about the TRA but haven't interacted	4	
We were not previously aware of the TRA	5	

ASK ALL

Q3. How familiar are you with the TRA and its mission?

SINGLE CODE – FLIP 1-4

Answer Options

Very familiar	1	
Somewhat familiar	2	
Slightly familiar	3	
Not familiar at all	4	

ASK ALL

Q3a. You stated that you were [Q3 ANSWER] with the TRA and its mission. How would you describe the role of the TRA?

OPEN END

--

ASK ALL

Q4. In which of the following ways have you or your organisation interacted with the TRA in the past two years?

Please select all that apply

MULTI CODE

Answer Options

My organisation has participated in a TRA investigation (e.g. as an interested party, contributor, or applicant)	1	
My organisation has submitted a pre-application enquiry to the TRA	2	
My organisation has contributed information or evidence to a TRA investigation	3	
My organisation has used the Trade Remedies Service (TRS) digital platform	4	
My organisation has attended TRA briefings, webinars or stakeholder events related to trade remedies	5	
My organisation has received guidance/advice from TRA staff or teams	6	
My organisation has not been involved in TRA investigations or enquiries	7	
Other (please specify)	98	OE
None of the above	99	
Don't know	97	

INFO SCREEN IF Q4 = 1,2,3,4,5,6

The following questions will explore your experience of TRA investigations.

If your organisation is involved in several investigations, please answer these in relation to the investigation where you most recently engaged with the TRA

ASK IF Q4 = 1,2,3,4,5,6

QInvestigations. How many UK trade remedy investigations has your organisation participated in to date?

SINGLE CODE

Answer Options

1 investigation	1	
2 investigations	2	
3–5 investigations	3	
6–10 investigations	4	
More than 10 investigations	5	
None of the above	99	

ASK IF Q4 = 1,2,3,4,5,6

Q5. At what stage of the TRA investigation is your organisation at currently?

Please select one option

SINGLE CODE

Answer Options

Pre-application stage (you and your organisation are working on an application for an investigation)	1	
Pre-initiation stage (you and your organisation are awaiting to hear if an investigation will be initiated)	2	
Registration of interest stage (it is time for you and your organisation to register as interested party/contributor and to complete and submit the Pre-Sampling Questionnaire (PSQ) to the TRA)	3	
Questionnaire stage (you and your organisation are preparing and submitting a questionnaire to the TRA containing information to be used as evidence in an investigation)	4	
Verification stage (the TRA is working with you to verify information that you and your organisation submitted)	5	
Awaiting publication of Initial findings (the TRA is analysing information to prepare its preliminary findings)	6	
Awaiting publication of Final findings (the TRA has published its preliminary findings and you and your organisation have the opportunity to comment on them)	7	
Post-Final Recommendation stage (the investigation has concluded and the final decision has been published)	8	
Not Applicable – You and your organisation is not involved with any investigations.	9	

ASK IF Q4 = 1,2,3,4,5,6 AND Q5 =/= 9

Q6. Overall, how satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your or your organisation's experience working with TRA on an investigation?

Please select one option
SINGLE CODE – FLIP SCALE

0 – Very dissatisfied	1	
1	2	
2	3	
3	4	
4	5	
5 – Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	6	
6	7	
7	8	
8	9	
9	10	
10 – Very satisfied	11	
Not applicable	99	
Don't know	97	

ASK IF Q6 = CODES 1-5

Q7.

You said that you or your organisation was dissatisfied with working with the TRA on an investigation.

Please explain why below.

OPEN END

ASK IF Q6 = CODES 7-11

Q8.

You said that you or your organisation was satisfied with working with the TRA on an investigation.

Please explain why below.

OPEN END

ASK IF Q4 = 1,2,3,4,5,6 AND Q5 =/= 9

Q9. How easy or difficult did you or your organisation find navigating each stage of the investigation process?

Please select one option

Answer Options

Very difficult	1	
Somewhat difficult	2	

Neither easy nor difficult	3	
Somewhat easy	4	
Very easy	5	
Don't know	97	
Not applicable	99	

Statements

Pre-application stage	1	SHOW IF Q5 = 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8
Pre-initiation stage	2	SHOW IF Q5 = 2,3,4,5,6,7,8
Registration of interest stage	3	SHOW IF Q5 = 3,4,5,6,7,8
Questionnaire stage	4	SHOW IF Q5 = 4,5,6,7,8
Verification stage	5	SHOW IF Q5 = 5,6,7,8
Awaiting publication of Initial findings	6	SHOW IF Q5 = 6,7,8
Awaiting publication of Final findings	7	SHOW IF Q5 = 7,8
Post-Final Recommendation stage	8	SHOW IF Q5 = 8

ASK IF Q4 = 1,2,3,4,5,6 AND Q5 =/= 9

Q10. How clear or unclear did you or your organisation find the guidance and instructions at each stage of the investigation process?

Please select one option

Answer Options

Very clear	5	
Somewhat clear	4	
Neither clear nor unclear	3	
Somewhat unclear	2	
Very unclear	1	
Don't know	97	
Not applicable	99	

Statements

Pre-application stage	1	SHOW IF Q5 = 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8
Pre-initiation stage	2	SHOW IF Q5 = 2,3,4,5,6,7,8
Registration of interest stage	3	SHOW IF Q5 = 3,4,5,6,7,8
Questionnaire stage	4	SHOW IF Q5 = 4,5,6,7,8
Verification stage	5	SHOW IF Q5 = 5,6,7,8
Awaiting publication of Initial findings	6	SHOW IF Q5 = 6,7,8
Awaiting publication of Final findings	7	SHOW IF Q5 = 7,8
Post-Final Recommendation stage	8	SHOW IF Q5 = 8

ASK IF Q4 = 1,2,3,4,5,6 AND Q5 =/= 9

Q11.

What could the TRA have done to help make the process of an investigation process clearer for you or your organisation?

OPEN END

--

ASK IF Q4 = 1,2,3,4,5,6 AND Q5 =/= 9

Q12. How did you or your organisation find each stage of the investigation process in respect of time to complete?

Please select one option

Answer Options

Very quick	5	
Somewhat quick	4	
Neither quick nor slow	3	
Somewhat slow	2	
Very slow	1	
Don't know	97	
Not applicable	99	

Statements

Pre-application stage	1	SHOW IF Q5 = 1,2,3,4,5,6,7,8
Pre-initiation stage	2	SHOW IF Q5 = 2,3,4,5,6,7,8
Registration of interest stage	3	SHOW IF Q5 = 3,4,5,6,7,8
Questionnaire stage	4	SHOW IF Q5 = 4,5,6,7,8
Verification stage	5	SHOW IF Q5 = 5,6,7,8
Awaiting publication of Initial findings	6	SHOW IF Q5 = 6,7,8
Awaiting publication of Final findings	7	SHOW IF Q5 = 7,8
Post-Final Recommendation stage	8	SHOW IF Q5 = 8

ASK IF Q4 = 1,2,3,4,5,6 AND Q5 =/= 9

Q13.

What could the TRA have done to make the investigation process easier or quicker for you or your organisation?

OPEN END

--

ASK IF Q4 = 1,2,3,4,5,6 AND Q5 =/= 9

Q14. Thinking about your or your organisation's investigation experience, how effective was the TRA in each of the following areas?

Please select one option for each answer

CAROUSEL – FLIP 1-5

Answer Options

Very Effective	5	
Somewhat effective	4	
Neither effective nor ineffective	3	
Somewhat ineffective	2	
Very ineffective	1	
Don't know	97	
Not applicable	99	

Statements

Offering access to the right staff or expertise when needed	1	
Sharing relevant information and advice related to investigations	2	
Explaining investigation processes and requirements related to investigations	3	
Providing timely responses	4	
Providing clear responses	5	
Being clear about and adhering to investigation timelines	6	
Maintaining consistency in terms of investigation requirements	7	
Protecting the confidentiality of sensitive data and information	8	

ASK IF Q4 = 1,2,3,4,5,6 AND Q5 =/= 9

Q15. During your most recent investigation experience with the TRA, which of the following challenges, if any, did you or your organisation face?

Please rank up to 3 options, with 1 being the greatest challenge

RANK 1-3

Amount of information/evidence required	1	
Speed/timeliness of the investigations process	2	
Multiple contacts/team changes at TRA	3	
Technical/platform issues with the Trade Remedies Service (TRS) digital platform	4	
Lack of guidance or information	5	
Costs/resource burden for my organisation	6	
Difficulty understanding TRA requirements	7	
Overwhelming amount of guidance or information	8	FIX AS ADJACENT TO 5
Concerns about protecting the confidentiality of sensitive information	9	
No notable challenges	10	
Other (please specify)	98	FIX OE
None of the above	99	FIX EXCLUSIVE

ASK ALL

Q16. How manageable was the workload and resource required for you or your organisation to engage with the TRA's investigation process?

Please select one option

SINGLE CODE

0 – Not at all manageable	1	
1	2	
2	3	
3	4	
4	5	
5 – Neither manageable nor unmanageable	6	
6	7	
7	8	
8	9	
9	10	
10 – Completely manageable	11	
Don't know	97	

ASK IF Q16 = 1 - 11

Q17. On a scale of 0 (Not at all manageable) to 10 (Completely manageable), you rated the TRA's investigation process a [SCORE]. Please explain why below.

--

ASK IF Q4 = 1,2,3,4,5,6 AND Q5 =/= 9

QExp. Thinking about your most recent TRA investigation experience, how did the reality of participation compare to your expectations before the investigation began?

Please select one option

SINGLE CODE – FLIP SCALE

0 – Much more negative than expected	1	
1	2	
2	3	
3	4	
4	5	
5 – Neither more positive nor negative than expected	6	
6	7	
7	8	
8	9	
9	10	
10 – Much more positive than expected	11	
Don't know	97	

ASK IF QExp. = 1–5 or 7–11

QExpb.

You said your experience was different from what you expected.

Please explain why below.

OPEN END

--

ASK ALL

Q18. Thinking about your experience with the TRA, have there been any points where you or your organisation faced barriers that discouraged you or your organisation to engage further (for example, in an investigation)?

Please rank up to 3 options, with 1 being the greatest challenge

RANK 1-3

Not enough guidance or information about what was required	1	
Overwhelming amount of guidance or information	2	
Did not receive a timely response or update	3	
Required documentation was too burdensome	4	
Process seemed too complex	5	
Previous negative experience with the TRA	6	
Did not feel as if the TRA and its services were meant for my organisation	7	
Didn't think our participation would make a difference	8	
Not enough time or resources to continue	9	
Concerns about sharing confidential/commercial information	10	
Decided against participating for commercial reasons	11	
Other (please specify)	98	FIX OE
None of the above	99	FIX EXCLUSIVE

ASK IF Q4 = 1,2,3,4,5,6 AND Q5 =/= 9

Q19. Even if you completed your most recent engagement or investigation with the TRA, were there any factors that almost prevented you or your organisation from participating or completing the process? If so, please select all that apply.

Please select all that apply

MULTI CODE

Answer Options

Lack of awareness of relevant investigations	1	
Unclear instructions or process	2	
Volume of information/evidence required	3	
Difficulties with the TRA's digital tools	4	
Concerns about data confidentiality	5	
Internal resourcing/capacity issues	6	
Complexity of forms/documentation	7	
Cost or perceived financial risk	8	

Lack of support or response from the TRA	9	
Other (please specify)	98	OE
None of the above	99	

ASK ALL

Q20. Through which of the following channels have you heard about the TRA and TRA investigations?

Please select all that apply

MULTI CODE

Answer Options

The TRA website: gov.uk/uktra	1	
The TRA blog	2	
Lets Talk Trade Newsletter	3	
Social media of the TRA, e.g. LinkedIn	4	
Direct communications from the TRA, e.g. email, phone call	5	
The TRA public file and/or Trade Remedies Service (TRS) platform	6	
Referred by a professional contact	7	
Business and industry events	8	
Other (please specify)	98	OE

Q21. How effective do you find each of the communication methods with TRA?

Please select one option for each answer

CAROUSEL – FLIP 1-5

Answer Options

Very effective	5	
Somewhat effective	4	
Neither effective nor ineffective	3	
Somewhat ineffective	2	
Very ineffective	1	
Don't know	97	

Statements

The TRA website: gov.uk/uktra	1	
The TRA blog	2	
Lets Talk Trade Newsletter	3	
Social media of the TRA, e.g. LinkedIn	4	
Direct communications from the TRA, e.g. email, phone call	5	
The TRA public file and/or Trade Remedies Service (TRS) platform	6	
Referred by a professional contact	7	
Business and industry events	8	
Other (please specify)	98	OE

Appendix B: Staff survey questionnaire (main body)

ASK ALL

Role. Which team do you currently work in?

Please select one option

SINGLE CODE

Answer Options

Investigations Delivery	1	
Investigations Compliance	2	
Policy	3	
Legal	4	
Analysts	5	
Verification	6	
Communications (Comms)	7	
Other (please specify)	98	

ASK ALL

Seniority. What is your current grade?

Please select one option

SINGLE CODE

Answer Options

AO (Administrative Officer)	1	
EO (Executive Officer)	2	
HEO (Higher Executive Officer)	3	
SEO (Senior Executive Officer)	4	
G7 (Grade 7)	5	
G6 (Grade 6)	6	
SCS (Senior Civil Service)	7	
Prefer not to say	96	

ASK ALL

QTenure. How long have you worked for the TRA?

Please select one option

SINGLE CODE

Answer Options

Less than 1 year	1	
1-2 years	2	
3-4 years	3	
5+ years	4	
Prefer not to say	96	

ASK ALL

Q1. Throughout your time at the TRA, how many trade remedy investigations have you worked on?

(NB. This could be at any stage or duration, as well as completed **or** in progress investigations – you do not need to have been present on this work from beginning to end)
Please select one option
SINGLE CODE

Answer Options

None	5	SCREEN OUT
1	1	
2-3	2	
4-5	3	
6 or more	4	
Prefer not to say	96	

ASK ALL

Q2. Which of the following industries have you worked with as part of a trade remedy investigation?

Please select all that apply

MULTI CODE

Answer Options

Steel	1	
Other metals	2	
Biodiesel	3	
Other chemicals	6	
Ceramics	4	
Glass	5	
Other (please specify)	98	

ASK ALL

Q3. Throughout your time at the TRA, what type(s) of trade remedy investigations have you worked on?

(NB. This could be at any stage or duration, as well as completed **or** in progress investigations – you do not need to have been present on this work from beginning to end)

MULTI CODE

Answer Options

New investigation	1	
Transition review	2	
Expiry review	3	
Other (please specify)	98	

ASK ALL

Q4. Throughout your time at the TRA, which type(s) of trade remedy investigations have you worked on?

(NB. This could be at any stage or duration, as well as completed **or** in progress investigations – you do not need to have been present on this work from beginning to end)

MULTI CODE

Answer Options

Anti-dumping investigation	1	
Subsidy investigation	2	
Safeguard investigation	3	

INFO SCREEN

Throughout the survey, we will be referring to ‘external stakeholders’. By this we mean:

- UK producer
- UK importer
- Trade association or business representative organisation
- Legal adviser/representative
- Overseas producer or exporter
- UK upstream businesses
- UK downstream businesses

For the scope of this research, external stakeholders **aren’t** those from international organisations or UK/foreign governments (including MPs).

ASK ALL

Q5. Which of the following external stakeholder types have you interacted with on trade remedy investigations?

Please select all that apply

MULTI CODE

Answer Options

UK producer	1	
UK importer	2	
Trade association or business representative organisation	3	
Legal adviser/representative	4	
Overseas producer or exporter	5	
UK upstream businesses	6	
UK downstream businesses	7	
None of the above	99	FIX, EXC

ASK ALL

Q5b Which of the following external stakeholder sizes have you interacted with on trade remedy investigations?

Please select all that apply

MULTI CODE

Answer Options

Small business (i.e. ~0-9 employees)	1	
Medium-sized business (i.e. ~10-249 employees)	2	
Large business (i.e. ~250+ employees)	3	
Don't know	97	FIX, EXC

ASK IF **MORE THAN ONE** OF Q5B = 1,2,3 SELECTED

Q5c Which of the following external stakeholder sizes do you interact with **the most** on trade remedy investigations?

Please select one option

SINGLE CODE

Answer Options

Small businesses (i.e. ~0-9 employees)	1	
Medium-sized businesses (i.e. ~10-249 employees)	2	
Large businesses (i.e. ~250+ employees)	3	
Don't know	97	FIX, EXC

ASK IF Q5C = 1,2,3

Q5d. You said that you most commonly interact with [PIPE IN ANSWER FROM Q5C].

Thinking about your work with businesses of this size:

- What motivates businesses in this cohort to engage with trade remedy investigations?
- What are the biggest challenges or barriers to engagement among these businesses?

OPEN END

Don't know

ASK IF Q5 = 1-7

Q6

Think of a time when your engagement/interaction with external stakeholders on trade remedy investigations went particularly well.

– What made the experience straightforward (e.g. communication, outcomes, collaboration)?

– What impact, if any, did this have on your work or the investigation?

OPEN END

Not applicable / nothing comes to mind

ASK IF Q5 = 1-7

Q7. Think of a time when your engagement/interaction with external stakeholders on trade remedy investigations was particularly challenging.

- What made the experience challenging (e.g. communication, outcomes, collaboration)?
- What impact, if any, did this have on your work or the investigation?

OPEN END

Not applicable – nothing comes to mind
--

ASK ALL

Q8. In your opinion, what motivates external stakeholders to participate in TRA investigations?

Please select all that apply

MULTI CODE

Answer Options

To protect their commercial interests	1	
Participating because competitors or the wider industry are doing so	2	
Requirement from clients, parent companies, or international partners	3	
To ensure a level playing field in international trade for their industry	4	
To influence the outcome of an investigation	5	
To follow the progress of an investigation	6	
To build or maintain a relationship with the UK government	7	
Other (please specify)	98	
Don't know	97	

ASK ALL

Q9. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements?

Please select one option

CAROUSEL

Answer Options

Strongly agree	5	
Somewhat agree	4	
Neither agree nor disagree	3	
Somewhat disagree	2	
Strongly disagree	1	
Don't know	97	

Not applicable	98	
----------------	----	--

Statements

I understand the purpose and scope of trade remedy investigations at the TRA.	1	
I feel confident in my role and responsibilities within the case team.	2	
The training I received enabled me to contribute effectively to investigations.	3	
I have access to the guidance, tools, and templates needed for my work.	4	
The digital platform (TRAcet/TRS) supports my investigation work efficiently.	5	
Case planning is realistic and supports successful investigation delivery.	6	
Risks are managed effectively on the investigations I've worked on.	7	
Decision-making processes are clear and transparent within the case team.	8	
Compliance processes (e.g. deficiency checks) are effective and efficient.	9	
Communication within the case team is effective.	10	

ASK ALL

Q10. How would you rate the time it took to complete each stage you participated in?

Please select one option

CAROUSEL – FLIP 1-5

Answer Options

Very quick	5	
Somewhat quick	4	
Neither quick nor slow	3	
Somewhat slow	2	
Very slow	1	
Don't know	97	
Not applicable	98	

Statements

Pre-application	1	
Pre-initiation	2	
Registration of interest	3	
Questionnaire	4	
Verification	5	
Preparation for PAD/SEF publication	6	
Preparation for Final Recommendation publication	7	

Post-Final Recommendation	8	
---------------------------	---	--

ASK ALL

Q11. In your opinion, how satisfied or dissatisfied would external stakeholders be with the process of participating in each stage of a trade remedies investigation?

Please select one option

CAROUSEL – FLIP 1-5

Answer Options

Very satisfied	5	
Somewhat satisfied	4	
Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied	3	
Somewhat dissatisfied	2	
Very dissatisfied	1	
Don't know	97	
Not applicable	98	

Statements

Pre-application	1	
Pre-initiation	2	
Registration of interest	3	
Questionnaire	4	
Verification	5	
Preparation for PAD/SEF publication	6	
Preparation for Final Recommendation publication	7	
Post-Final Recommendation	8	

ASK ALL

Q13. What challenges or barriers have you encountered in delivering investigations?

- How have these changed over time? Have some been easier or more difficult to manage over the past 12 months?
- Are there any risk areas for the TRA to be aware of regarding future potential challenges or barriers?

Please explain below.

OPEN END

Not applicable – I have not encountered any challenges or barriers

Q14. Based on your experience of working on cases, which of the following challenges, if any, do external stakeholders encounter during investigations?

Please select all that apply

MULTI CODE

Answer Options

Amount of information/evidence required	1	
Speed/timeliness of the investigations process	2	
Multiple contacts/team changes at TRA	3	
Technical/platform issues with the Trade Remedies Service (TRS) digital platform	4	
Lack of guidance or information	5	
Costs/resource burden for their organisation	6	
Difficulty understanding TRA requirements	7	
Overwhelming amount of guidance or information	8	FIX AS ADJACENT TO 5
Concerns about protecting the confidentiality of sensitive information	9	
No notable challenges	10	
Other (please specify)	98	FIX OE
None of the above	99	FIX EXCLUSIVE

ASK ALL

Q14b. Based on your experience of working on cases, which of the following barriers most discourage external stakeholders from engaging further (for example, in an investigation)?
Please rank up to 3 options, with 1 being the greatest challenge

RANK 1-3

Not enough guidance or information about what is required to participate	1	
Overwhelming amount of guidance or information	2	
Lack of a timely response or update from the TRA	3	
Required documentation is too burdensome	4	
The investigation process seems too complex	5	
Previous negative experience with the TRA	6	
The feeling that the TRA and its services are not meant for certain organisations	7	
The feeling that the participation wouldn't make a difference	8	
Not enough time or resources to continue	9	
Concerns about sharing confidential/commercial information	10	
Decide against participating for commercial reasons	11	
Other (please specify)	98	OE
None of the above	97	

ASK ALL

Q15a. How clear do you think the TRA's **guidance** is for external stakeholders participating in investigations?
Please select one option

SINGLE CODE

Answer Options

Very clear	5	
Somewhat clear	4	
Neither clear nor unclear	3	
Somewhat unclear	2	
Very unclear	1	
Don't know	97	

ASK ALL

Q15b. How clear do you think the TRA's **communications** are for stakeholders participating in investigations?

Please select one option

SINGLE CODE

Answer Options

Very clear	5	
Somewhat clear	4	
Neither clear nor unclear	3	
Somewhat unclear	2	
Very unclear	1	
Don't know	97	

ASK IF Q15a = 4-1 OR Q15b = 4-1

Q15c. In your opinion, how best can the clarity of the TRA's communications be improved?

OPEN END

Don't know

ASK ALL

Q16. Looking at the TRA's communication channels, how would you rate the effectiveness of each in the context of engaging with case participants?

Please select one option for each answer

CAROUSEL – FLIP 1-5

Answer Options

Very effective	5	
Somewhat effective	4	
Neither effective nor ineffective	3	
Somewhat ineffective	2	

Very ineffective	1	
Don't know	97	

Statements

The TRA website: gov.uk/uktra	1	
The TRA blog	2	
Lets Talk Trade Newsletter	3	
TRA social media channels, e.g. LinkedIn	4	
Direct communications from the TRA, e.g. email, phone call	5	
The TRA public file and/or Trade Remedies Service (TRS) platform	6	
TRA events (e.g. Stakeholder forum)	8	
Other (please specify)	98	OE

ASK ALL

Q17. How confident do you feel in your ability to support external stakeholders through the investigation process?

Please select one option

SINGLE CODE

Answer Options

Very confident	4	
Somewhat confident	3	
Not very confident	2	
Not at all confident	1	
Don't know	97	

ASK ALL

Q18. What additional training or resources would help you better support external stakeholder engagement?

Please explain below.

OPEN END

Not applicable

ASK ALL

Q19. Do you have any suggestions about ways in which the investigation process could be changed to improve the experience of external stakeholders participating in trade remedy cases?

Please explain below.

OPEN END

I have no suggestions

Appendix C: External stakeholder interview discussion guide (main body)

Section 1 Introduction [2] minutes	
To start with could you tell me about your role and what your organisation does?	<i>Which sector(s) do you primarily work with?</i> <i>How long has your organisation been involved in international trade?</i>
How does your work relate to international trade?	<i>What are the main countries you trade with? (if applicable)</i> <i>Do you operate / sell your goods in UK market only, or both UK and overseas markets?</i>
Do you have an ongoing investigation with the TRA? [IF YES] At what stage of that investigation process are you? [IF NO] Have you previously participated in a trade investigation?	<i>How many investigations have you taken part in with TRA? What kind of investigations have you taken part in?</i>
Section 2a [IF PARTICIPANT] Initial participation [13] minutes	
<i>[IF UK Industry] Were you clear on how to initiate an application for an investigation?</i> <i>[IF UK importer or NON-UK business] Were you clear on how to request a revies?</i>	<i>What originally motivated you/your organisation to consider participating in a TRA investigation?</i> <i>Who did you speak to about engaging with the TRA?</i> <i>Did you seek any advice before engaging with the TRA?</i>
When did your organisation first begin working with the TRA?	<i>Was it via TRA direct contact, a trade association, legal adviser, or through a peer/colleague?</i> <i>Did you have previous experience of TRA or a similar process (e.g. EU trade remedies)?</i>

How many investigations has your organisation participated in?	<i>Has your organisation participated in new investigation? expiry review? other type of review?</i>
	<i>Has your organisation participated in an anti-dumping investigation / subsidy investigation / safeguard investigation?</i>
How did you first become aware of this specific investigation?	<i>Was there any internal debate about whether the effort was worthwhile?</i>
	<i>Were there any time pressures on that decision — e.g. a tight registration deadline?</i>
Who was involved in the decision about whether to participate — and what was that process like internally?	<i>Did you have any challenges in getting an application together?</i>
How did you find the process of applying for an investigation? [NOTE this used to refer to engagement with the pre-application office/ but is now the Trade Remedies Advisory Service]	<i>Did you know who you needed to reach out to?</i> <i>Did you feel there was adequate resources to guide you on what was needed?</i>

Section 2b [IF NON-PARTICIPANT]
Initial participation
[13] minutes

IF NO / NON-PARTICIPANT] Can you tell me a bit about why you decided not to participate?	<i>What factors impacted this? Were they business specific or wider economic situations?</i> <i>Was there something could have done better?</i>
[IF NO / NON-PARTICIPANT] At what stage did you make that decision? Had you explored doing so?	<i>Did you consider registering an interest but not submitting a full response?</i> <i>Was there anyone you could have turned to for advice — and if so, did you?</i> <i>Could the TRA have been more helpful with communication, help, advice, guidance, information?</i>
[IF NO / NON-PARTICIPANT] Was there a specific moment or piece of information that led you to not participating?	

*What would have needed to be different for you to have taken part?
What resource concerns, if any, played a role in the decision not to engage?*

**Section 3a
Resources
[10] minutes**

Now I would like to move on and talk about your experience of the process of working with the TRA on an investigation. But before I do, I just want to spend a few minutes on the resources involved.

Overall, what were the main resource demands on your organisation in participating in this investigation?

Think about: staff time, external legal or consultancy costs, data and evidence gathering, questionnaire completion, verification preparation.

How did you manage that commitment alongside your other day-to-day priorities?

Which part of the process consumed the most resource? Were any a surprise?

Was the resource requirement in line with what you expected?

[FOR SME] Were there aspects of the investigation process that you felt placed a disproportionate burden on your organisation compared with larger businesses?

Did you need to bring in external expertise (e.g. legal advisers, consultants)?

[FOR LARGE BUSINESSES] Were there aspects of the investigation process that you felt placed a disproportionate burden on your organisation?

Were you able to ring-fence dedicated staff time, or was it spread across multiple people?

Thinking about future investigations — has your experience of the resource commitment affected your likelihood of engaging in the future?

*FOR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVES:
From your experience across multiple clients - which stages tend to be most resource-intensive, and are there patterns across sector specific, business size or business sector?*

Section 3

Process – drivers and barriers

[23] minutes

Could you talk me through your experience of the investigation process with the TRA?

*[Note: if they mention specific stages clarify alignment with these stages:
Pre-initiation stage
Registration of interest stage
Questionnaire stage
Verification stage
Awaiting publication of Initial findings
Awaiting publication of Final findings
Post-Final Recommendation stage]*

Was it clear what was expected of your organisation at each stage?

*IF Not – Why not?
Did TRA maintain consistency in terms of the investigation requirements?*

Did you feel supported by TRA staff and at each stage?

*How frequently did TRA staff / case teams engage?
How did TRA staff engage? (via online meetings? In person meetings? Email? Telephone?
Which were the most beneficial ways you engaged with TRA staff?
Did TRA offer access to the right staff or expertise?
Did TRA share relevant information?
Were responses from TRA clear and timely?*

Did you use the Trade Remedies Service (TRS) digital platform?

*How did you find it?
Think about: staff time, external legal or consultancy about accessibility, ease of use, safety and security of confidential data, information, evidence.
Were you able to ring-fence dedicated staff time, or was it spread across multiple people?
FOR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVES:
From your experience across multiple clients – which stages tend to be most*

Throughout the investigation process, to what extent did you feel as the TRA was listening and responding to your needs and concerns?

*resource-intensive, and are there patterns across business size or sector?
FOR NON-PARTICIPANTS: What resource concerns, if any, played a role in the decision not to engage?*

Did you feel confident that confidentiality of your data, information and evidence was protected at each stage of the investigation?

*IF Yes – What made you feel supported? What type of support did you receive?
IF No – Why not? Where did you feel support was lacking?
What worked well particularly about this?
What impact did this have on you and your organisation?*

Can you give some specific examples of effective working with TRA during the investigation process?

[Probe for specific examples but reassure any findings will be reported anonymously If needed]

And are there any specific examples where you felt that TRA were not as effective as you would have liked them to be?

[Probe for specific examples but reassure any findings will be reported anonymously If needed]

In terms of managing the investigation process, overall how easy or difficult or was it for you to manage?

*Did at any point you consider dropping out of the investigation process? If so why?
Did you need any communication from TRA about the progress of the investigation process?*

Thinking about the overall timeline of the investigation — did the length of the process affect your organisation, and if so, how?

*Did the timeline meet your expectations at the outset?
Were there any periods of uncertainty that had a negative impact?
Were there periods of waiting that were particularly difficult to manage from a business planning perspective?
Did TRA keep you adequately informed during those waiting periods?*

Section 4
How TRA could improve the process
[10] minutes

Did you feel that the TRA were effective as they could be during the investigation process?

*IF Not – Why not? What could they have improved?
If Yes – What made them effective? Are there areas they could have done better?
Is there anything you expected that TRA would provide or would do that they did not?*

How do you think the investigation process could have been made clearer?

*Did you know who you could ask questions of?
Were you confident of getting a timely response?
What form could this take—guidance documents, better timelines, clear communication, digital tools, dedicated staff contacts, simplified documentation?*

How do you think the investigation process could be made more efficient?

IF talking about delays - is there anything TRA could do or could have done to address this or is it a wider issue?

Was there enough opportunity to ask questions or resolve concerns?

Did you feel able to reach out to someone? Were you able to talk to people and get answers? IF NOT why not?

Are there stages or touchpoints where you think new support/tools/guidance would make the biggest difference?

*[probe for specific stages, e.g.,
Pre-initiation stage
Registration of interest stage
Questionnaire stage
Verification stage
Awaiting publication of Initial findings
Awaiting publication of Final findings
Post-Final Recommendation stage]*

If the TRA made one single change to its process and ways of working with external stakeholders like your organisation what would make the

biggest difference to your likelihood of engaging in future?	<i>Is this something that is within TRA's control to change, or does it relate to wider legal or statutory requirements? If you were advising TRA on where to focus its improvement efforts first, what would your priority be?</i>
Has your organisation experienced other regulatory or compliance processes? [IF YES] How does the TRA's process compare to other regulatory or compliance processes your organisation deals with — in terms of complexity, support, and overall burden?	<i>FOR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVES / TRADE ASSOCIATIONS: What do you observe consistently across your clients or members? Are there systemic issues that TRA should be aware of? Think about processes like HMRC compliance, CMA investigations, Ofcom engagement — where does TRA sit on a spectrum of difficulty?</i>
[FOR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVES] How do TRA procedures compare to EU/US/Australian processes?	

Section 5

Next steps and wrap up

[5] minutes

Thanks –before we finish I just wanted to ask a couple of final questions

Is there anything else, positive or negative, you'd like to add about your engagement with the TRA and/or your participation in TRA investigations?

What advice would you offer to the TRA for encouraging participation from more diverse types of stakeholders in future?

Is there anything else you would like to share with TRA?

Based on your experience, would you engage with the TRA in a future investigation? Why? What would influence your decision?

Thank you for your time. Do please let me know if you have any questions. We will be using this to analyse and report on the effectiveness of TRA investigations going forward.