

Executive summary

Many, if not most, issues that governments seek to address involve human behaviour. Governments worldwide are increasingly embracing a people-centred and evidence-informed approach to policymaking, known as behavioural public policy. Applying a behavioural lens equips policymakers with a more realistic understanding of the issues at hand and provides evidence on potential policy consequences that may not be uncovered using traditional policy analysis methods that make assumptions about people and their behaviour that may not be true in practice. The strategic use of behavioural science enables policymakers to identify the most cost-efficient interventions, reducing risks associated with their policy decisions, and can help determine the success or failure of an initiative.

Despite the growth of behavioural public policy practices, systemically integrating a behavioural perspective in policymaking remains a challenge, suggesting that barriers remain to the use of behavioural science evidence.

The Good Practice Principles for Mainstreaming Behavioural Public Policy provide guidance for governments and organisations seeking to embed behavioural science insights and methods into their standard policymaking practices.

LOGIC: Good practice principles for mainstreaming behavioural public policy

The OECD has collected successful management and governance practices on the generation and use of behavioural science evidence in policymaking from various public sector organisations and identified a broadly applicable framework for encouraging the consistent production and application of useful behavioural science evidence in governments and government organisations.

The 14 good practice principles that make up this framework are categorised under the five dimensions of LOGIC: Leadership, Objectives, Governance, Integration, and Capability.

- **Leadership.** The actions and words of influential leaders can play a critical role in encouraging the uptake of behavioural science evidence in policymaking. Senior leaders in government can advocate for a people-centred approach and request a robust evidence base, and managers can actively develop this mindset in their organisations.
- **Objectives:** Governments can include behavioural science in their strategic plans and monitor its use over time. A formal definition of how a behavioural perspective can help a government achieve its strategic objectives can motivate and guide policymakers' choices. A strategy for using behavioural science can apply to both public policy (involving citizens, businesses, and other stakeholders) and internal policy (the processes and mechanisms of public administration itself).
- **Governance:** A clear accountability structure around how resources and activities are managed and organised can help a government more efficiently and effectively embed behavioural science into policymaking procedures and practices. Governments should clearly allocate the responsibilities for mainstreaming behavioural public policy and fund associated activities appropriately.

- **Integration:** Partners, stakeholders, and structures can form an enabling environment for behavioural public policy that makes relevant evidence more likely to be sought, produced, and heeded. Governments can build behavioural considerations into standard policy processes and guidelines and adopt behavioural science responsibly and openly to build citizens' trust. They can also develop processes and structures for behavioural data collection that allow them to diagnose problems and develop solutions more efficiently and effectively.
- **Capability:** Policymakers can learn how to approach a policy problem in a people-centred, evidence-informed way, and ensure they have sustainable, ready access to behavioural science experts. Governments can also establish mechanisms to bring behavioural science evidence into the policy process in a way that is relevant and useful, and to share knowledge and practices among practitioners.

Governments and organisations can use these principles to assess their progress in mainstreaming behavioural public policy. Mainstreaming behavioural science into a government's standard policymaking practice is a complex, long-term task. Governments and organisations can carry out a systematic assessment of how well they have mainstreamed behavioural public policy by comparing their practices to the principles outlined in this document. Such assessments can help pinpoint strengths and areas needing attention. These assessments not only provide a comprehensive review of the degree to which behavioural science is mainstreamed in policymaking but also lay the foundation for cross-country comparisons and benchmarking.

The 14 good practice principles for mainstreaming behavioural public policy are:

Leadership

1. Senior leaders request and advocate for behavioural science when relevant.
2. Managers build and maintain senior leaders' support for behavioural science.

Objectives

3. Senior leaders and managers define how behavioural science can and should help the government deliver its strategic objectives.
4. Managers monitor the use of behavioural science evidence and its impact on government policy to enable iteration and improvement.
5. Senior leaders and managers encourage the use of behavioural science in designing and improving internal organisational processes, rules, and incentives.

Governance

6. Senior leaders clearly allocate the responsibility for mainstreaming behavioural science and establish lines of accountability.
7. Senior leaders and managers mobilise sufficient resources to ensure policy advice is informed by relevant and reliable behavioural science evidence.

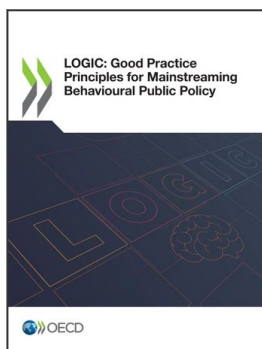
Integration

8. Managers integrate behavioural science into standard guidelines and procedures for policy development, implementation, and evaluation.
9. Managers ensure behavioural science is applied responsibly, openly, and with high integrity standards to build and maintain policy makers' and citizens' trust.

10. Managers support processes and structures for data collection and analysis that make it easier to diagnose behavioural issues and evaluate policy options.

Capability

11. Managers build policy makers' capability to apply a behavioural science lens to their work.
12. Managers develop sustainable ways for policy makers to access behavioural science expertise.
13. Managers ensure that behavioural science evidence can be useful to inform policy making processes through quality brokerage.
14. Managers build mechanisms for dissemination and knowledge sharing, such as networks of behavioural science experts and supporters.



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