

## Foreword

Why do certain policies work, improving people's lives, while others fail? This question confronts policy makers and regulators across the world. Some have answered it by actively using behavioural insights (BI) to understand how individuals and organisations make decisions.

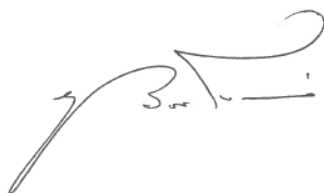
BI is increasingly used in policy making to improve understanding of how context, biases and other influences affect the behaviour of people and organisations. The BI approach is evidence-driven, focussing on understanding what actually drives the decisions of citizens, rather than relying on assumptions of how they *should* act. In doing so, it helps ensure that policies reflect real needs and behaviours for greater impact and effectiveness.

The OECD has been at the forefront of documenting and researching the use of BI in public policy. In partnership with the community of behavioural policy makers and practitioners from around the world, the OECD identifies and develops tools, approaches, knowledge and standards to support the use of BI.

This report responds to a request from the behavioural community for guidance on how to apply BI more systematically and responsibly. It provides policy makers and practitioners with a set of tools that can be applied along with other existing behavioural frameworks. This toolkit guides the policy maker through a methodology that looks at behaviours, analysis, strategies, interventions and change (abbreviated to "BASIC").

The BASIC methodology includes a set of ethical guidelines to help policy makers apply BI responsibly. BI can raise ethical concerns related to collecting data on individual or group behaviours, as well as using experimental methods to test theories on a small scale before implementing them more broadly. Issues can arise around privacy, consent and the ethics of applying certain solutions to only some groups. This toolkit presents both general principles for the ethical application of BI and a set of guidelines to follow during each stage of the BASIC process.

Governments face no shortage of challenges. Addressing these challenges often requires a better understanding of human behaviour. It is our hope that this study will help governments better understand the potential of using BI as a policy tool.



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