Regional Induction Meeting
Integration of Behavioural Insights in Public Policy
9 October 2023

Agenda

1. BACKGROUND

Behavioural insights offer a scientific and evidence-based understanding of actual human behaviour. This provides an opportunity to build tailored policymaking tools, processes, and structures to better cope with drivers of human behaviour as well as address the irrational factors that influence decision-making and lead to suboptimal choices. Across the world, there are 328 behavioural insights units within the government or working with the government to integrate these insights into public policy.[1] However, so far, these insights are used relatively late in the policy cycle, for example, to finetune and improve implementation and compliance with rules and regulations in areas like health, education, labor, pension, and inclusion, to name only a few.

Behavioural insights are being increasingly adopted and applied by governments to inform public policy. Given the need to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of policymaking in the Arab region, introducing and enhancing the application of behavioural insights is very timely, as it allows for the use of innovative policy instruments through analysis of human behaviour to improve the design, implementation, and evaluation of public policies in different policy areas.

Against this background, ESCWA is currently working on enhancing policymaking in the Arab region by introducing behavioural insights. The technical assistance provided by ESCWA includes developing capacity, building tools, and advising on best practices and processes for coherent and transparent policymaking processes for more efficient implementation and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals, mainly SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth and SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. Among ESCWA's exerted efforts is developing tools and guidelines on the use of behavioural insights in national development planning.

ESCWA is organizing an induction meeting on the introduction and integration of behavioural insights in public policymaking. The meeting will provide the attendees with an overview of behavioural science and its insights into different sectors and policy areas, with a focus on strategic and national planning.

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE MEETING

The main objectives of this Induction Meeting are to:

➢ Introduce behavioural insights and highlight their importance in informing evidence-based and innovative public policy.
➢ Disseminate guiding principles and best practices through showcasing case studies from within and outside of the Arab region in national development planning as well as other policy areas.
➢ Discuss with government officials the institutional preparedness, opportunities, and challenges for the use of behavioural insights in policymaking.
➢ Discuss member states' needs and areas of improvement which behavioural insights can enhance.
➢ Discuss the role of data and digitalization in supporting behavioural interventions.

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[1] https://oecd-opsi.org/bi-units/.

3. PARTICIPANTS

The participants in the induction meeting are expected to include government officials from the ministries of planning and economy as well as heads of planning authorities in the ministries from ESCWA member states.

The meeting will also feature world-renowned experts in the field of behavioural insights, who will participate and present relevant knowledge.

4. ORGANIZATION OF THE MEETING

The meeting will be held virtually on 9 October 2023. To participate, please register via the Zoom link provided here: [Register here]. The discussions during the meeting will be conducted in both Arabic and English.

For additional details and resources, kindly refer to the meeting materials available on the dedicated webpage by clicking the provided link.

5. AGENDA

Monday 9 October 2023	
11:00 – 11:10 am	Welcome and Opening Remarks • Mohamed El Moctar Mohamed El Hacene, Leader of the Shared Economic Prosperity Cluster, ESCWA
11:10 – 12:30 pm	Session I: Behavioural insights and public policymaking This session will provide an overview of the use of behavioral insights in decision-making and a theoretical background on the use of behavioural insights, combining behavioural science and psychology, with a focus on the cognitive biases and social factors standing behind human actions. In addition, the application of behavioral insights at different stages of the policy cycle and across different policy areas will be examined. The session will address the institutional aspects and preparedness for incorporating behavioral insights into policymaking, as well as requirements and enablers, including data and digitalization. The session will also feature ESCWA's resources and tools on the use of behavioural insights in national development planning. Finally, case studies from the Arab region showcasing the effectiveness of behavioral insights in improving different policy domains will be presented. Moreover, this session will provide Member States with an opportunity to showcase their advancements, case studies, successful approaches, and the obstacles they have faced while incorporating behavioral insights into public policy. This session will address the following key topics: • Theoretical background, context, and approaches for the use of behavioural insights in decision making. • Insights and essential factors related to addressing behavioral aspects in energy pricing reforms, focusing on Saudi Arabia's reform case. • Guidelines Employed by ESCWA in the strategic planning process, focusing on its specific steps and phases. • Importance of employing nudge strategies in the formulation and implementation of public policies drawing insights from Kuwait's experiences. • Lessons from the Sultanate of Oman's journey in establishing the Department of Behavioral Economics and its envisioned future directions. • ESCWA's resources, tools, and initiatives on the use of behavioural insights in national planning. **Chair/Moderator:** Mohamed El Moctar Mohamed El Hacene, Leader of the Shared Economic Prosperity Cluster, ESCWA

	Speakers: • Umar Taj, Associate Professor of Behavioural Science, Executive Education, Nudgeathon Founder, Warwick Business School • Adel Hamaizia, Research fellow, Middle East Initiative, Belfer Center, Harvard Kennedy School, Managing director, Highbridge Advisory • Nathalie Khaled, Economic Affairs Officer and coordinator of the competition, consumer protection, and national planning and development projects, ESCWA. • Ahmed Al-Janahi, Director of the Kuwait Public Policy Centre, General Secretariat of the Supreme Council for Planning and Development, State of Kuwait • Mubarak Al-Hamdani, Director of the Behavioral Economics Department, Ministry of Economy, Sultanate of Oman • Member States' experiences in the application of Behavioural Insights. Open discussion
12:30– 1:00 pm	Session II: Roundtable discussion on the way forward Chair/Moderator: ESCWA During this session, participants will identify key takeaways and crucial areas for intervention aimed at advancing the integration of behavioral insights into public policy across the Arab region. The session's objective is to foster consensus on tangible recommendations for enhancing the incorporation of behavioral insights into the policymaking process among member states. ESCWA and member states will also share their future plans, emphasizing the pivotal role of cooperation in this endeavor.