BAHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS AND PUBLIC POLICY
9 OCTOBER 2023

The incorporation of behavioral insights into the policy-making processes has emerged as a valuable tool in the realm of policy development. Behavioral insights are being applied at various policy cycle stages, from problem identification to policy evaluation. This approach is particularly beneficial across diverse policy areas, including health, consumer protection, education, etc., as it allows policymakers to design interventions that align more effectively with human behavior, thus yielding better policy outcomes. To efficiently integrate behavioral insights, Governments worldwide, including in the Arab region, require capacity building and interdisciplinary collaboration to bolster institutional preparedness, fostering an environment where behavioral science can inform and enhance the policy-making process. As Governments in the Arab region continue to recognize the potential of behavioral insights, regional cooperation and knowledge exchange lead the path toward more effective and evidence-based policies. During this session, policymakers, academics, and experts will provide an in-depth overview of utilizing behavioral insights in policy-making. Additionally, it will highlight the role played by ESCWA and the resources and tools it offers to support member states in incorporating behavioral insights into their national development efforts. Furthermore, this session will feature case studies from Kuwait and the Sultanate of Oman, showcasing their experiences, successes, and challenges in the realm of behavioral insights.

Note: *the session lasts 80 minutes, with each panelist speaking for 12 minutes, followed by a 20-minute Q&A session. This session will examine the theories and methodologies of using Behavioral Insights to enhance decision-making. It will then delve into a case study of Saudi Arabia's energy sector reforms and draw on the experiences and lessons from Kuwait and Oman. Furthermore, this session will highlight ESCWA's efforts and available resources for incorporating behavioral insights into the planning process.*

Topics of Discussion

- Offer a comprehensive explanation of the theoretical backgrounds and methodologies employed in leveraging Behavioral Insights to inform and improve decision-making processes.
- Explore the pivotal factors and insights gathered from experience in addressing the behavioral aspects of energy pricing reforms with a particular focus on the case of the reforms undertaken in Saudi Arabia and the mechanisms utilized during these reforms.
- Highlight the guidelines employed by ESCWA in the strategic planning process, focusing on its specific steps and phases.
- Emphasize the significance of employing nudge strategies in formulating and implementing public policies, drawing insights from Kuwait's specific context and experiences.
- Present the lessons learned from the Sultanate of Oman's journey in establishing the Department of Behavioral Economics and its envisioned future directions.
- Explore the resources, tools, and initiatives offered by ESCWA to facilitate the integration of behavioral insights into national planning.

Speakers

Mohamed El Moctar Mohamed El Hacene
Leader of the Shared Economic Prosperity Cluster - ESCWA

Nathalie Khaled
Economic Affairs Officer and coordinator of the competition, consumer protection and national development planning projects - ESCWA

Adel Hamaizia
Research fellow, Middle East Initiative, Belfer Center, Harvard Kennedy School, Managing director, Highbridge Advisory

Umar Taj
Associate Professor of Behavioural Science, Executive Education, Nudgeathon Founder
Warwick Business School

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