PRIME

FRAMEWORK

APPLYING BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS FOR BETTER PUBLIC POLICY

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PREFACE

Director General of
Malaysia Productivity Corporation (MPC)

Behavioural Insights is a growing field that is practised by public service providers around the world to generate low-cost interventions to improve policy outcomes. Its success is based on the premise that policy goals are better achieved when people are encouraged, through positive reinforcement and indirect suggestion, to make better choices. In this regard, MPC has been entrusted to institutionalise Behavioural Insights initiatives in Malaysia. This year, we have conducted various initiatives aimed at spreading knowledge and enhancing the understanding of Behavioural Insights approaches in government. By understanding how and under what circumstances Behavioural Insights can be applied to nudge behaviour change, policymakers are more likely to design and deliver effective policies. To do this, MPC has come up with a simple framework as a reference for the application of Behavioural Insights. The PRIME Framework equips the policymaker with a simple process, design strategies and methods for conducting Behavioural Insights projects.

This publication outlines how behaviourally-informed public policy can be applied in a practical way through its PRIME Framework. The five processes guide the implementation of Behavioural Insights to any policy issue based on the PRIME acronym. They stand for:

I. Purpose: Outline the purpose of the policy goal and target respondents to identify important behavioural issues;

II. Research: Research the behaviour gap and its context;

III. Intervention: Design an intervention using strategies that are the most effective in achieving desired policy outcomes;

IV. Measure: Measure the results to track the effectiveness of the intervention and demonstrate that it led to behaviour change; and

V. Expand: Roll out the experiment to the wider public body.

I hope you find this publication useful and I urge organisations to leverage the PRIME Framework and embark on the journey of public service excellence in designing, reassessing and enhancing policies and services by adopting a more nuanced view of human behaviour that may achieve better outcomes as a result.

Dato Abdul Latif bin Haji Abu Seman
Director General
Malaysia Productivity Corporation (MPC)

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Utilising the growing field of Behavioural Insights to inform public policy is a welcome development. Across the world, application of Behavioural Insights has yielded positive results in areas like healthcare, taxation, school enrolment, energy usage, employment uptake and pension registration.

The PRIME framework is a toolkit for policymakers to utilise when addressing such policy issues. PRIME draws from existing frameworks, implementation processes and policy design strategies whilst considering how to best adapt international benchmarks to a Malaysian context. By understanding the key bottlenecks in decision making processes, public policy can be designed in a way that focuses on citizen engagement which in turn, improves policy outcomes. Subsequently, the PRIME acronym, which stands for Purpose, Research, Intervention, Measure and Expand encompasses a five step approach that will guide Malaysian policymakers to deliver behavioural interventions to support policy goals. Together, the PRIME framework strives to aid policymakers in the design and delivery of public policy through the application of Behavioural Insights.

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INTRODUCTION TO BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS

WHAT IS BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS?

Behavioural Insights is a body of academic research that draws on Psychology, Sociology and Behavioural Economics to generate insights into human behaviour. Spearheaded by academics such as Richard Thaler, Cass Sunstein and writers such as Daniel Kahneman, **Behavioural Insights challenges the notion that humans are purely rational agents that act to maximise utility and value** (BIT, 2014).

Instead, Behavioural Insights has demonstrated across the world, from the United Kingdom, United States, Canada and Australia across the fields of health, education and environmental sustainability, that well-designed human-centric policies that consider the contextual factors of policy intervention tend to **yield better, more successful policy outcomes and drive behavioural change in a positive direction** (OECD, 2019).

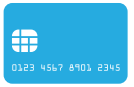
Behavioural insights are generated through the rigorous testing of any behavioural intervention in a public system.Behavioural insights are termed insights because **each insight produces a new understanding of user behaviour.**

BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS IN PRACTICE

The rate of daily medication upkeep increased from 44% to 84% when virtual supervision was provided to patients in Moldova,

Tripling the amount of energy-provider switches to save electricity costs by sending personalised, informative letters to 150,000 households in the UK.

Increasing early filing of taxes in Indonesia by sending personalised, timely reminders, bringing in USD13.2 million in 2018.



Increasing credit card debt repayment by 22% by introducing interactive, data-driven features on bank websites in the UK.

Increasing repayment of red-light running and speeding fines by 7% through simplifying traffic offence notices in Singapore.

Behavioural Insights should be understood as :

A DIAGNOSTICS KIT

Behaviourally driven thinking is a powerful tool for policymakers to diagnose policy issues. By disaggregating policy goals into measurable behaviours, policymakers can better understand how to best design policy initiatives so that **citizen behaviour aligns with the goals of government.**

DATABASE OF EVIDENCE

Behavioural Interventions are held against a high standard of evidence qualifiers. Doing so ensures that any intervention contributes to the growing body of Behavioural Insights allowing practitioners and academics to exchange evidence on **lessons learned to inform policymaking** around the world.

A POLICY TOOL

Behavioural Insights is a valuable addition to the policymakers' toolkit. Behavioural Insights uses behaviours, rather than traditional economic levers to drive the success rate of policies introduced to the general public. Understanding behaviours and their role in driving action enlarges the policymakers' toolkit.

Conversely, Behavioural Insights **is not :**

- **A silver bullet :** Behavioural Insights is not a silver bullet that solves all policy problems. Its emphasis on research and testing might make it unfeasible for large scale interventions, while some policy issues are better impacted by other key variables (machine learning, regulation)
- **A one stop solution :** Each intervention is case and context specific, what works in one instance cannot be generalised to have the same effect in another
- **Only for experts :** Successful interventions depend on multi-disciplinary and cross governmental approaches across all levels to yield insights into user behaviour that feed into optimising policy design and delivery mechanisms.

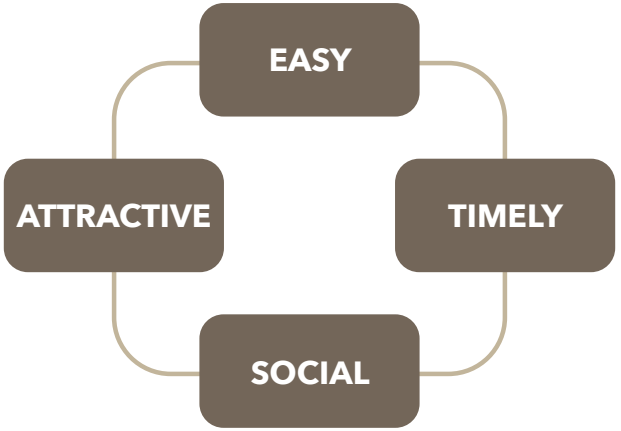
BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS : EXISTING FRAMEWORKS

Behavioural Insights frameworks are comprehensive documents that outline principles and key implementation processes of Behavioural Insights. EAST and BASIC are two frameworks that are presented below

EAST – FROM THE BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS TEAM UK

The Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) in the UK was established in 2010 to spread the understanding of behavioural approaches across the policy community. BIT has worked across a wide variety of policy areas, and their primary framework, EAST is used as a reference point in this paper. EAST details an introduction to designing public policy with Behavioural Insights in mind. By collating evidence from their policy interventions and the wider academic literature EAST provides a first step into the design phase of including Behavioural Insights in public policy.

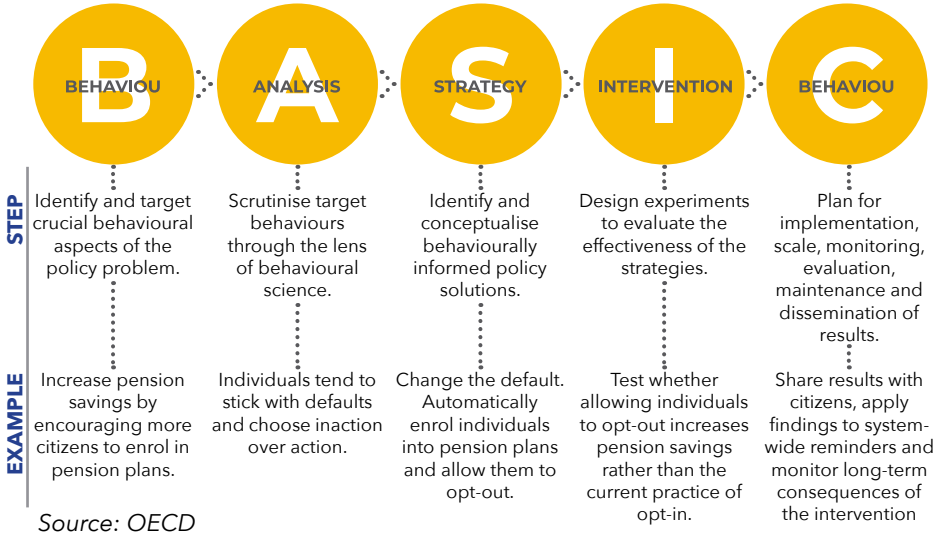
EAST stands for Easy, Attractive, Social and Timely. As a set of guiding principles for designing public policy, **EAST draws from key principles learned from implementing behavioural insights over their 10 years of operations.** As a guiding document, this paper presents key learnings from EAST to guide Malaysian policymakers in implementing behavioural insights.



BASIC – From the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development

The OECD developed BASIC as a toolkit for the implementation and delivery of public policy informed by Behavioural Insights. BASIC outlines a five-stage process for policy interventions and includes ethical considerations for policymakers. Drawing on a considerable body of evidence from behavioural interventions in OECD countries, BASIC makes the point to understand the limitations of Behavioural Insights as a method and the importance of rigorous testing and evaluation.

BASIC emphasises that a **data-driven and nuanced approach to policymaking is key to understanding what actually drives the decisions and behaviours of citizens.** In turn, understanding behaviour from careful research helps design better public policies that do not rely on assumptions about how citizens will act. This paper refers to the five processes outlined in the BASIC framework for policymakers to have a step-by-step guide to the key implementation processes when applying Behavioural Insights.



Source: OECD

BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS : OTHER EXAMPLES

IDEAS42

Ideas42 developed a playbook to give programme administrators and managers at the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) and other social programmes an overview of how they can use insights from Behavioural Science to **improve the effectiveness of their programmes and services.**

BEHAVIOURAL ECONOMICS AT ROTMAN (BEAR)

BEAR conducts leading edge academic research in the field of Behavioural Economics that helps organisations better **understand how real people act and in turn, design better products, services, and programmes for them.** BEAR is supported by the University of Toronto and acts as a contact point for Behavioural Insights in Canada.

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE (IRS)

The Internal Revenue Service in the United States has developed a playbook that details the key principles of Behavioural Insights. The Behavioural Insights Toolkit acts as a how-to guide for the application of Behavioural Insights into the field of tax collection, **designing polices and programmes that help drive compliance, positively impact taxpayer engagement, and reduce taxpayer burden.**

eMBeD - WORLD BANK `

The World Bank's Mind, Behaviour and Development Unit strives to pilot interventions informed by Behavioural Insights across 50 countries. eMBeD **partners with governments, local authorities and policymakers to promote the use of behaviourally informed tools in development policies and projects.** In so doing, eMBeD seeks to institutionalise the use of behavioural science in development organisations and governments. As with most Behavioural Insights teams, eMBeD is committed to providing evidence-based policymaking that further the behavioural solutions which in turn, generate more and better behavioural data.

KEY PRINCIPLES OF BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS

TWO KEY PRINCIPLES

1

Behavioural Insights revolves around what are observable, measurable and ultimately quantifiable behaviour.

2

Positive reinforcement and indirect suggestions are powerful tools to influence the decision making of groups and individuals, at least as efficiently - if not more effectively than direct instruction or legislation.

Behaviours, **formulated as actions or inactions,** are the cornerstone of Behavioural Insights. The importance of studying behaviour stems from the observation that often, humans act in predictable ways that defy rational expectations (OECD, 2019).

Understanding the limitations and bottlenecks in decision-making is key to understanding how individuals act in irrational ways. It is not the case that humans are inherently irrational, but rather that we **rely on mental shortcuts and contextual factors in making quick, snap decisions.** Examples of mental shortcuts that are commonly used, called Heuristics, are outlined on the next page.

Behavioural Insights **contextualises human decision-making;** taking into account the overload of information, the attractiveness of well-marketed choices, the timing of important messages or the social aspects of decision-making (BIT, 2014).

HEURISTICS HUMANISED

Heuristics are mental shortcuts and rules of thumb that can lead to poorer decision making on a daily basis. Some examples of Heuristics include:

Loss Aversion : Adam is hesitant to sell his house at a loss, even though it is the best financial decision he can make.

Framing : Eve sees fruits for sale in a wet market, she decides not to buy any. A boutique fruit store sells her the same fruit later for twice the price.

Temptation : Adam has made resolutions to eat healthier, but is largely unsuccessful. He continues to make poor food choices.

Spotlight Effect : Eve is driving in a rush. During a curve in the road she underestimates her speed and scrapes her car against the barrier.

Status Quo Bias : Adam is trying to decide which WiFi supplier is most cost-effective. Upon research, he is offset by the complications and decides to remain with his current provider.

Anchoring : Eve is trying to decide how much to contribute to charity. In the form, it notes that the average contribution was RM30. She decides to donate RM30.

Scarcity : Adam is deciding wether to invest in a particularly property. Later, he learns that most units have been sold. He decides to invest.

Authority : Eve is wondering if she should sign up for a tax investment scheme. She listens to a webinar by a professional investment banker and decides to invest.

Availability : Adam is assessing the risks involved in travelling to Cambodia. He recalls a Facebook post about increased pickpocketing cases and decides on another destination.

Sunk Cost : Eve attends a concert knowing she has critical work the next day. She is unwilling to bear the price of not attending a ticket she had paid for.

KEY CONCEPT : CHOICE ARCHITECTURE

Adam and Eve demonstrate that their decision-making processes are far from completely rational. The use of mental shortcuts that rely on context, social feedback, economical and psychological biases, self image and aesthetics lead to making poorer choices on a daily basis.

The variety of heuristic devices suggest that it is possible to **engineer how options are presented to influence their outcome.** This is known as **choice architecture** (OECD,2019).

"A choice architect has the responsibility for organising the context in which people make decisions... good architects realise that although they can't build the perfect building, they can make some design choices that will have beneficial effects."

Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein

CHOICE ARCHITECTURE

Choice architecture refers to modifications in the presentation of an option (choice) that attempts to alter people's decision-making **without forbidding any options or significantly changing their economic incentives** (BIT, 2014).

In essence 'choice architects' design choices in a certain way; for example, making certain options the default option, encouraging the collection of receipts through lucky draws, simplifying application forms or streamlining information service systems to make them easier to use.

These examples are designed to 'nudge' individuals towards certain choices by removing or reducing the barriers that stand between the individual and the behaviour that choice architects want to encourage. A well-designed choice architecture uses positive reinforcements, indirect suggestions or persuasions to drive behaviour in the desired direction.

PRINCIPLES IN PRACTICE

Traditional decision-making :

Decision-making with behavioural interventions :

INFLUENCING DECISION-MAKING
A well-designed choice architecture nudges citizen behaviour by anticipating the effects of heuristics and designing around them using key principles of Behavioural Insights. For policymakers to create a successful behavioural intervention, it must be proven that a well-designed choice architecture, or, nudge, was the **driving factor towards changing behavioural outcomes and better decision-making** (OECD, 2019).

It is useful to think of a behavioural intervention as an empirically proven case study. Governments use policies to influence citizens; to file taxes, obey speed limits or separate trash. Behavioural interventions simply use data, research and evidence to make those attempts more effective, and citizens more responsive.

DESIGNING A BEHAVIOURAL INTERVENTIONS

Photo by Marc-Olivier Jodoin on Unsplash

KEY BOTTLENECKS OF DECISION-MAKING

Policymakers should consider the most relevant 'bottleneck' when designing behavioural interventions. Bottlenecks are barriers that impede citizens from performing the desired behaviour. In this way, policy design can be tailored around specific bottlenecks and the most effective strategies to mitigate them.

A wealth of research from Behavioural Insights Teams stationed in Australia, the World Bank, the United Kingdom and the OECD has concluded that **four fundamental bottlenecks influence human behaviour.** They are :

ATTENTION

SOCIAL NORMS

IDENTITY

WILLPOWER

"By understanding how people actually react and behave in different situations, you can better anticipate the behavioural consequences of policy and ultimately design policies that can help citizens make the better choice."

OECD

Having an understanding of behavioural bottlenecks can help policymakers design policies that are more effective in nudging citizen behaviour in the desired direction. The four most common bottlenecks are elaborated below:

ATTENTION SPANS

People have limited attention spans. Attention refers to the limited amount of information that an individual can process, and the tendency for humans to choose the easier, default option given the opportunity. Limited attention and information overload can be mitigated through attracting individuals to particular messages by making them prominent and striking, by sending reminders and prompts when necessary and by making it easier and straightforward for individuals to comprehend a given message.

Evidence Case - Attention Span
When letters sent out to non-payers of car road taxes included a picture of the offending vehicle, payment rates rose from 40% to 49%.

SOCIAL NORMS

People care what other people think. An individual's social network can be leveraged to encourage certain actions by demonstrating that their inaction is deviating from a social norm. Interventions based on social norms are most effective when they are specific, such as including information about locality, socioeconomic status or profession. Social norms can also be used to create communities of interest. Here, interventions are designed to establish reciprocal communities that grow to become self sustaining.

Evidence Case - Social Norms
Letters sent out to doctors with outstanding tax liabilities which explicitly stated their professions and a moral message stating that most people expected their doctor to be trustworthy increased response and repayment rates by 5%.

IDENTITY

People are attached to their identity. Targeting the notion of identity might seem counterintuitive to traditional policy making circles. However, understanding that individuals rely on a coherent worldview in making decisions, are predisposed to bias and tend to overestimate their abilities can be of immense relevance when designing policy. Understanding the underlying beliefs and value systems of target groups allows for a greater understanding of how any intervention will interact with existing belief systems, priorities and views.

Evidence Case - Identity

People tend to overestimate their abilities when taking corners, where drivers are most likely to crash. City planners have found that painting a series of white lines turns gives the illusion of speeding up such that drivers would slow down. In one study, this simple, cost effective intervention reduced the number of crashed by 36%

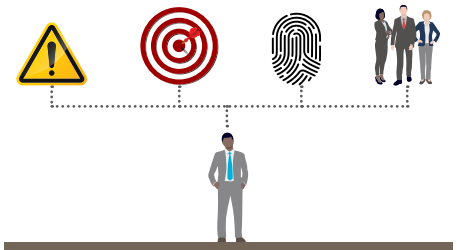
WILLPOWER

People have limited willpower. Considering the issue of willpower addresses the fact that individuals have limited capacity to carry out their desired goals. Often the gap between intention and action is attributed to issues regarding determination, self-regulation or self-control. Addressing the issue of willpower requires policymakers to anticipate behaviour in ensuring that individuals are committed to their goals. Strategies such as providing time-tracked plans, personalised feedback to increase motivation and utilising reminders and commitment devices have been proven to facilitate better long-term decision-making and commitment.

Evidence Case - Willpower

Requiring job seekers to outline a commitment pack that detailed clear, unambiguous goals for the next two weeks, coupled with personalised feedback from job recruitment officers resulted in a 23% increases in employment rates over the course of 4 months

DESIGNING BEHAVIOURAL INTERVENTIONS



Drawing from a wide body of academic research and successful behavioural interventions, there are **five key design strategies** that policy-makers should consider when trying to mitigate the effects of behavioural bottlenecks:

- Designing policies that are as **straightforward** and easy to understand as possible
- Designing policies that are as **welcoming** and attractive as possible
- Designing policies that consider the citizen and his/her **interpersonal** social network
- Designing policies that are **fact-based**
- Designing polices that are **timely** and relevant.

Drawing from successful behavioural interventions, policymakers should design policies that are:

STRAIGHTFORWARD

Straightforward policy takes into account the overload of information presented to people on a daily basis. Straightforward policy design anticipates the attention bottleneck by incorporating strategies such as :

- Making it the default option
- Making it readily accessible
- Making it easy to navigate (e-governance) and obtain information
- Simplifying language
- Presenting key messages early
- Being specific about recommended action
- Removing unnecessary information
- Reducing the 'frictions' associated with action

Making policy straightforward is a relatively inexpensive design tool that aims to **optimise the presentation, accessibility and impact** of policy options to streamline action.
A straightforward policy makes **it easy for citizens to carry out the desired action.**

WELCOMING

A welcoming policy is designed to attract the attention of citizens by making it targeted to a particular audience. Making references to a clear call to action or drawing on carefully calibrated use of incentives to spur engagement. Making policy welcoming encourages action through the following mechanisms :

- Attracting attention through personalisation, using images or colour-coding information
- Framing choices to draw attention to the desired action
- Targeting the specific 'pain-points' of a demographic
- Outlining next steps clearly
- Offering to help with pre-fill applications
- Ensuring that incentives are made prominent
- Gamifying the policy issue to generate interest

Making policy welcoming **considers the emotional biases** users encounter when making choices and also designs policy to appeal to users.

INTERPERSONAL

Adding an interpersonal element to policy design uses the power of social norms to influence decision-making. Interpersonal policy design incorporates this tendency by using social norms to drive user behaviour. Making policy interpersonal includes:

- Demonstrating that a social norm exists and that most people perform the specific behaviour
- Facilitating the growth of social networks that go on to influence user behaviour
- Using social groups to encourage commitment-making between members
- Using social networks to form reciprocal relationships between government and citizen groups
- Using social media as a communication tool

Utilising the power of social networks is a cost effective strategy that has **large potential for scalability.** Making policy interpersonal considers the user as part of a wider network that can be targeted to drive behavioural change.

FACT-BASED

To encourage evidence-based policymaking, a fact-based approach to policy-making should be included in the design phase.

Making policy fact-based can be achieved through :

- Establishing baselines and benchmarks for the current situation before any policy intervention
- Setting out clear, measurable and time-bound goals for the policy intervention
- Outlining methods for assessing the impact and costs of policy interventions
- Facilitating collection of best practices and data to understand what works best

Making policy interventions fact-based is a design approach that sets parameters for any policy goal, ensuring that it is **measurable, time-bound, cost-effective, and feasible.**

TIMELY

Making policy timely involves being aware of the increased effectiveness of messages presented when they are most relevant. For example, sending SMS prompts to individuals to pay outstanding fines 10 days before inspections were carried out increased repayment rates by 3 times in the UK (BIT, 2014). Some strategies in designing well-timed policy include :

- Presenting messages when they are of most relevance
- Understanding the capacity for change when individuals undergo significant life events such as moving house or having children
- Ensuring that important prompts are read or received first

Well timed policy encourages user behaviour by ensuring that policy prompts are received at **opportune moments when they have the most impact.**

In summary, these design elements act as an initial guide for policymakers to consider when designing behavioural interventions. The strategies outlined above are drawn from a comprehensive body of literature which are detailed further in this paper.

EXAMPLES AT A GLANCE

POLICY SUCCESSES

Selangor's SELangkah Hits Scientific Threshold As Effective Contact Tracing App *Source: Codeblue.galacentre.org*	The SELangkah application has found mass adoption success primarily because of its straightforward user interface, making it easy and attractive to use.
Malaysia's Tenaga Nasional Berhad Launches Customer Engagement Program with Opower Personalized Energy Information Empowers Malaysians to Manage Energy Use and Save Money *Source: Businesswire.com*	Using interactive features, personalisation and the power of social norms, TNBs initiative drives user behaviour to save energy.
News: Industry Players Welcome EPF's i-Invest *Source TheEdgeMarkets.com*	Nudging citizens to invest in their future through proactive investment requires clear communication channels, making the choice to invest as welcoming as possible.
PTPTN tax deduction for employers extended *Source: TheStar.com*	By nudging employers to contribute towards student loans by offering tax deductions, PTPTN designed a welcoming and attractive repayment strategy.

IMPLEMENTING BEHAVIOURAL INTERVENTIONS

An insight into behavioural intervention should seek out to achieve three main things :

- To establish a deep understanding of behaviours and their context to enable interventions that address them
- Test and verify the interventions through standardised research methods
- Translate insights into policy outcomes that can be effectively scaled to further governmental goals further governmental goals.

THE PRIME PROCESS

P	R	I	M	E
PURPOSE	RESEARCH	INTERVENTION	MEASURE	EXPAND
Macro policy area Policy goal Target sample size Measurable behaviour outcomes Timeframe	Citizen Behaviour Environmental context Policy delivery teams	Use behavioural design strategies Consider feasibility Consider target sample size	Measure change in user behaviour Use standardised, testing methods	Consider societal impact Consider if resultscan be generalised
Example :				
To increase regular exercise amongst type 2 diabetes patients by 20% over the course of 6 months.	Research key bottlenecks that hinder exercise amongst citizens.	Design interventions such as gamification or incentives to promote exercise.	Collect measurements and track progress to monitor effectiveness.	Share results with the public. Consider scaling incentives and programmes into a larger scale intervention.

DEFINE THE **PURPOSE** OF THE INTERVENTION

P → R → I → M → E

Effective behavioural interventions begin with a strong understanding of the broad policy goals. Macro policy areas such as health, energy or education should be identified and matched to specific policy goals which are then disaggregated into **measurable behavioural outcomes** (MBO).

MBOs are the guiding principles of any behavioural intervention. To outline the **purpose** of an intervention, it is useful to ask:

- What is the desired behavioural change that this intervention aims to influence?
- Is there a way that this behaviour can be measured reliably?
- How do behavioural outcomes relate to the specific policy goals and broader policy areas?

EXAMPLE

Policy Area :
Healthcare
Policy Goal :
Managing type 2 diabetes.
Targets :
Citizens' behaviours
Concrete and measurable behaviours :
Encouraging regular exercise/ reducing intake of sugary foods/ increasing consumption of healthy foods

It is also important to identify a target demographic. Identifying a target demographic is crucial for the eventual design and delivery of the behavioural intervention; **different target demographics will respond differently to an intervention.** Being specific about the needs, limitations and tendencies of a target group is important to streamline the purpose of an intervention.

A purposeful behavioural intervention outlines a timeframe, a realistic and measurable goal and targets a specific group. A well-purposed intervention from Example 1.1 could be :

To increase regular exercise amongst type 2 diabetes patients by 20% over the course of 6 months.

RESEARCH THE BEHAVIOUR AND ITS CONTEXT

P → R → I → M → E

Researching citizen behaviour and the context where and when the behaviour is performed is a fundamental component. Without extensive research and deep understanding of the target behaviour, policymakers rely on traditional assumptions that humans are perfectly rational actors. Understanding the behaviour needs to be considered from two angles:

Citizens & Business

Policy Delivery Teams

Policy delivery teams such as public healthcare workers or teachers need to be considered so that any intervention does not place an unsustainable burden on their workload.
Research teams should focus on understanding:

- The Individual
- The Environmental or Contextual elements

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL RESEARCH

Because citizen behaviour can be irrational, research teams need to understand the driving forces behind suboptimal decision-making. The decisions and strategies to target, whether attention, willpower, identity or social norms should be decided after careful analysis of the behaviour is carried out. Behavioural research follows **a deductive approach, where a hypothesis is created after careful observations.**

ENVIRONMENTAL LEVEL RESEARCH

Understanding the environmental factor means taking account of what the citizen sees, hears, feels when the action is being performed. Because behaviour can be shaped by our surrounding environment, prompts and cues can be built into the environmental factor to facilitate the desired behaviour.

Taken together, researching behaviour involves considering the individual as well as the context or environment that the individual is in when making decisions (BIT, 2014).

Qualitative Data refers to on the ground observations from citizens and providers of a public service. Qualitative data is essential because it focuses on obtaining feedback and observations from people who are most familiar with, or are directly impacted by, the policy problem.

Quantitative Data refers to macro level data tracked by governments such as average household income, age demographics and employment levels to establish a landscape view of the policy issue. Complementing quantitative data with qualitative detail is important for narrowing the scope of the behavioural intervention.

Experimental Data refers to testing and tracking an intervention to measure the impact of the intervention. Experimental data is used to determine if an intervention is having the desired effect. Gathering experimental data through standardised research methods is essential for benchmarking the behavioural intervention such that it can be used as proof-of-practice.

Complementing different data sets to create a comprehensive picture of the policy problem is a key success factor in Behavioural Insights.

INTERVENTION

Designing a behavioural intervention is an iterative process that needs to align with the government or policy goal, and an understanding of the behavioural context.

During the intervention phase, it is helpful to consider the target behavioural bottleneck, alongside the 5 policy design elements :

For instance, if the policy goal and behavioural intervention sets out to increase the amount of individuals signed up for pension schemes, policy-makers can consider if :

- Applications for pension schemes are as Straightforward as possible
- Applications for pension schemes are Welcoming
- Prompts to apply for pension schemes are delivered in a Timely manner

Design principles for behavioural interventions are a set of **action-oriented principles.** By identifying the design strategies most relevant for increasing the number of individuals signed up for pension schemes, policymakers can then consider designing an intervention that nudges citizen behaviour in the desired direction.

Matching interventions to key bottlenecks is a useful strategy for policymakers in the intervention phase. Understanding how bottlenecks might drive or inhibit behaviour allows policymakers to design around them to **improve upon compliance rates, policy cost effectiveness, citizen awareness and commitment.**

Designing an intervention is a creative exercise that draws on prior research of citizens, policy delivery teams and an understanding of behavioural bottlenecks to design innovative policies that improve policy outcomes.

MEASURE RESULTS

P → R → I → M → E

In the measure phase, policymakers need to demonstrate that an intervention is successfully driving citizen behaviour. Some questions to consider at this stage are :

- How can we collect the data about the effectiveness of the intervention?
- Can we compare the data collected against an established baseline to measure its effectiveness?

Because behavioural interventions rely on a deep understanding of citizen behaviour **it is important to define a specific target group that acts as an initial sample size.** A successful behavioural intervention will demonstrate a change in the behaviour of the target group.

A positive result in the initial sample size is the foundation for generating a behavioural insight.

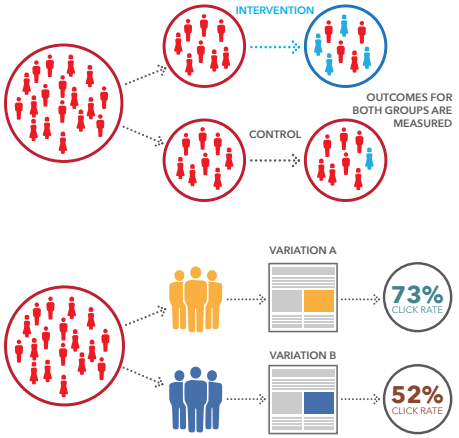
An insight is usually formulated in cause-effect terms, such as:

Increasing the **visibility** of early credit card interest **repayment benefits** by **bolding key messages** and **placing them at the top of forms** sent out to debtors increased loan repayment rates by 5% over the course of 3 months

Because piloting interventions usually target a smaller sample size, it is important to measure results such that proof-of-practice can be obtained to be used as a benchmark for further interventions. It is important to use standardised research methods such as Randomised Control Trials to ensure that measurements are as accurate as possible.

Measuring an intervention is to obtain evidence that a well-designed choice architecture is successfully driving citizen behaviour.

Measuring the success of an intervention can be done through two main methods:



RANDOMISED CONTROL TRIALS

Randomised Control Trials (RCTs) are experiments that are run to test the effectiveness of an intervention. One group receives the intervention, whilst the control group does not. By measuring outcomes for both groups, the intervention can then be isolated to be the main variable in driving user behaviour. RCTs are widely held to be the gold standard in measuring behavioural interventions.

AB TESTING

A/B testing is the process of comparing two versions of a programme or policy and measuring the difference in performance. By giving one version to one group and the other version to another group policymakers can measure how each variation performs. AB Testing is most relevant for identifying user preferences and designing policies around them.

EXPAND THE INTERVENTION

TRADITIONAL POLICY MAKING

Policy Goals

Policies and Programmes

Nationwide Rollout

?

POLICY MAKING WITH BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS

P PURPOSE → R RESEARCH → I INTERVENTION → M MEASURE → E EXPAND

Societal Impact

Cost Effective

High Compliance

Expanding a smaller scale intervention places Behavioural Insights squarely in the policy making agenda. If successful, scaled interventions could drive far-reaching positive impact.

In the expand phase it is important to **demonstrate that the intervention led to a change in behaviour** through the use of Randomised Control Trials. Policymakers should also consider if results are generalisable across the wider population.

Keeping in mind that **an unsuccessful intervention can also be valuable,** the expand stage of behavioural interventions encourages policymakers to troubleshoot why an intervention was unsuccessful and revise expectations or assumptions about the target behaviour or target group to better understand the forces driving action or inaction.

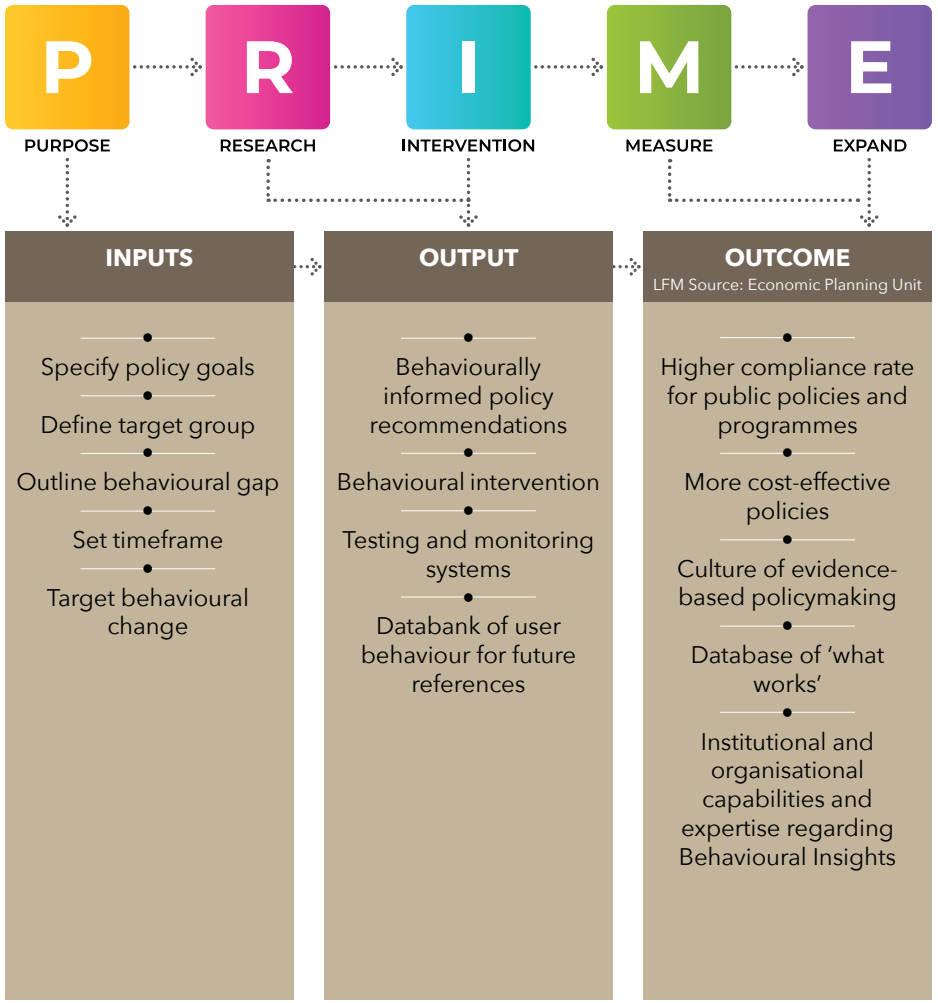
Ultimately, the PRIME process is an approach to **evidence based policymaking.** The expand phase will allow policymakers to demonstrate the effectiveness of Behavioural Insights in driving user behaviour on a large scale.

PRIME PROCESS BREAKDOWN

CONSIDER :

- Are macro policy goals and micro policy outcomes linked?
- Is there a clear problem statement that is measurable, time- bound and specific?
- Are specific behaviours that can be changed being targeted?
- Is there a clear research agenda?
- Have key stakeholders been identified?
- Can we complement data sets?
- Is the environmental or other context being considered?
- Is there a clear hypothesis of which bottleneck is impeding the desired behaviour?
- Have baselines been established?
- Is the intervention acceptable in the current political climate?
- Is the intervention designed with a key bottleneck in mind?
- Does the intervention make use of one or a combination of behaviourally informed design principles?
- Is there sufficient funding, infrastructure and manpower in place?
- Can we run a Randomised Control Trial?
- Are there short, medium and long term measurement protocols?
- Are the results convincing, i.e. did the intervention lead to a behavioural change?
- How can the knowledge from this intervention be disseminated into best practice?
- Is scaling the intervention feasible in the current political climate?
- Is there clear societal impact if the intervention is expanded?
- Can the intervention be scaled upwards across other demographics?

PRIME IN THE LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX



CASE STUDY #1 : INCREASING ORGAN DONATIONS

PURPOSE

Policy goal :
Improve uptake on organ donations in Canada.
Target group :
All visitors to a government service centre over 8 weeks.

RESEARCH

Design of behavioural intervention :
To test the effectiveness of simplifying forms, making relevant information easier to understand.
Nudge - The intervention made a point of handing out donor registration forms before visitors took their numbers and sat down to wait, giving them time to read the forms while waiting for their turn. Furthermore, this intervention simplified the application process to make it easier to register as an organ donor.

INTERVENTION

Results from Randomised Control Trials :
The nudge resulted in an increase in donor registration of 2.29 times relative to the previous, longer registration forms.

MEASURE

User profiles :
The trial targeted all visitors to a government health centre in Ontario, Canada.

Source: OECD, 2019

This intervention attempts to make policy more **straightforward** and takes note of the **timing** of when the policy is presented to increase policy compliance and uptake.

CASE STUDY #2 : INCREASING FLU VACCINATION UPTAKE

PURPOSE

Policy goal :
Increasing uptake of flu registration in New Zealand.
Target group :
All Inland Revenue Employees.

RESEARCH

Design of behavioural intervention :
To test the effectiveness of making it easier and more attractive to vaccinate by making administering vaccinations on-site and personalising emails.
Nudge - The intervention sent out personalised emails to employees of the Inland Revenue to encourage them to apply for the vaccine under the government-funded programme. The intervention also reduced the frictions associated with vaccination by bringing a doctor into Inland Revenue offices to administer the vaccine.

INTERVENTION

Results from Randomised Control Trials :
The nudge increased the number of employees in the vaccine programme by 75% leading to a decrease in the number of medical leave taken by Inland Revenue employees by 18%.

MEASURE

User profiles :
The trial targeted all employees of the Inland Revenue in New Zealand.

Source: OECD, 2019

This intervention makes the decision to sign up for flu vaccinations **straightforward** by arranging for the doctor to administer vaccines on-site. It also makes it **welcoming** by personalising the emails sent to employees.

CASE STUDY #3 : IMPROVING JOB-MATCHING SERVICES

PURPOSE

Policy goal :
Improving the take up of job matching services in Canada.
Target group :
750,000 job-seekers.

RESEARCH

Strategies :
To test four different nudges on a job-seeking website to increase the number of accounts created on job-seeker websites.

- Nudge 1 - Framing the decision to find a job as a productive quality
- Nudge 2 - Using social norms to encourage job-seeking
- Nudge 3 - Including a 'call to action' to encourage job-seeker applications
- Nudge 4 - Outlining a sense of commitment to finding a job as a desirable trait

INTERVENTION

Results from Randomised Control Trials :
All four nudges registered between a 67% - 120% increase in clicks on the Job-seekers website.
Of these there was a recorded increase of 109% in completed job profile applications

MEASURE

User profiles :
Job-seeker applicants. Signed up to website with age, gender, and experience information. Bottom 40% of households.

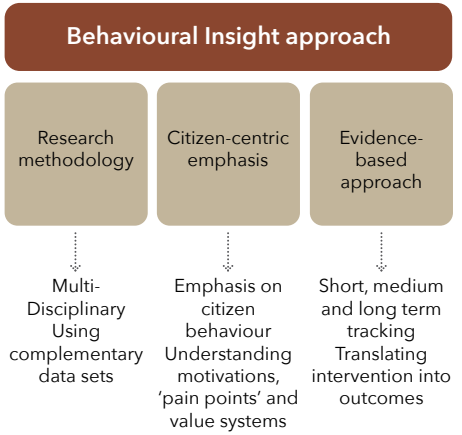
Source: OECD, 2019

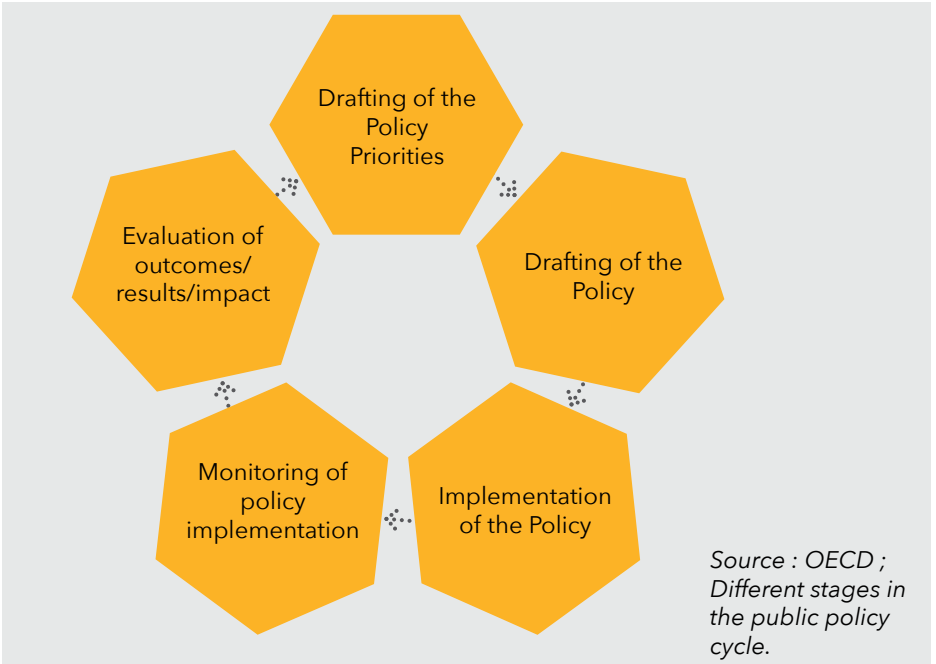
This intervention frames the choice to find a job as productive and desirable, making it **welcoming**. It also uses **social norms** to encourage job-seeking.

BEHAVIOURAL INTERVENTIONS IN THE POLICY CYCLE

When are Behavioural Interventions implemented?
Behavioural interventions are applied primarily in the implementation stage of public policy.

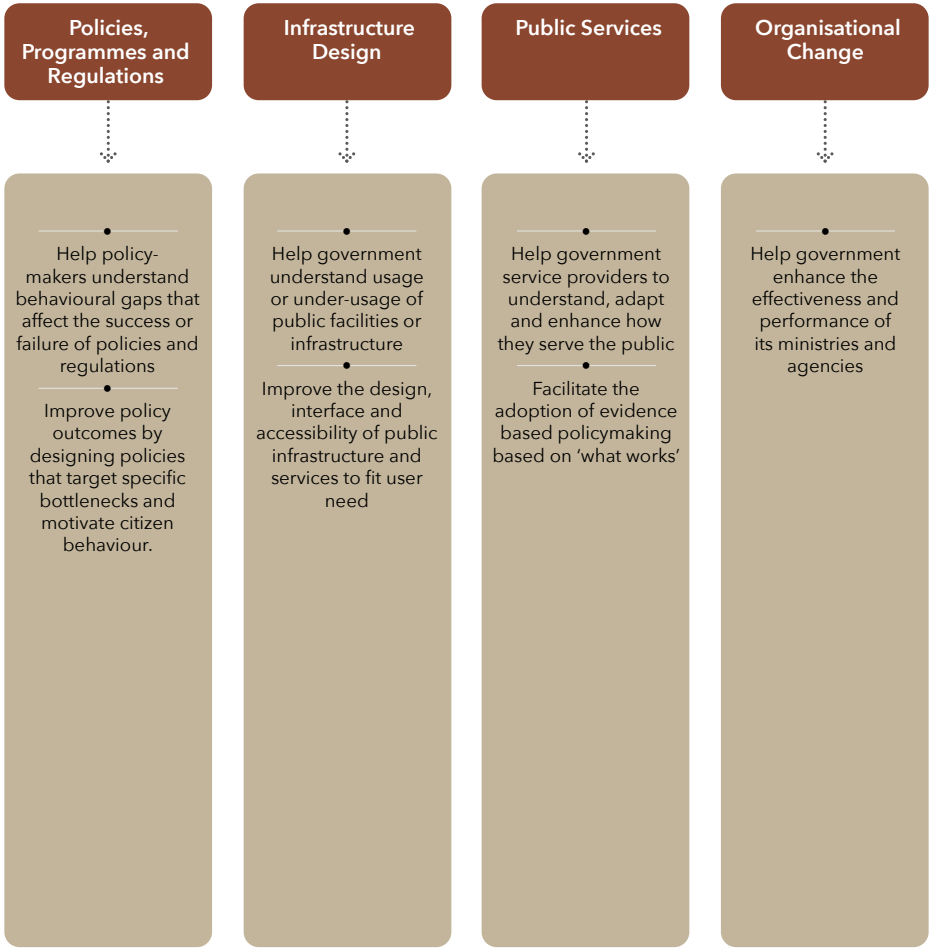
However, **a behavioural insight approach** can be applied across all stages of the policy cycle.
Behavioural Insight principles can be applied as an approach to policy-making that focuses on user-centricity, a multi-disciplinary research methodology and focusing on an evidence-based approach.





Source : OECD ; Different stages in the public policy cycle.

POTENTIAL OUTCOME OF BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS



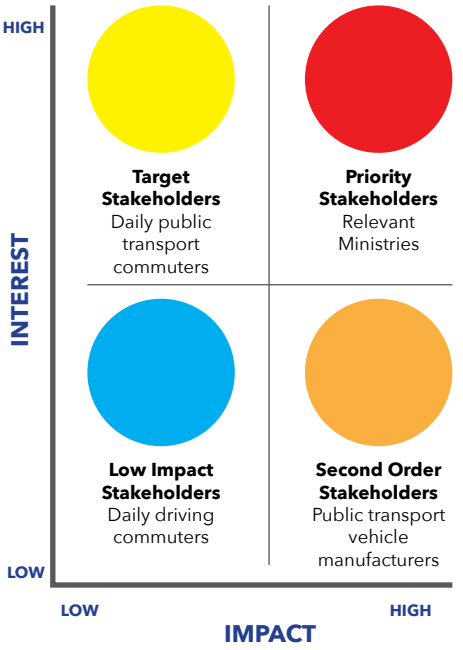
STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS

Photo by Muhammad Azmi on Unsplash

STAKEHOLDER MATRIX

When designing policy interventions, it is helpful to understand the relative weighing of stakeholders. Using a matrix can help in mapping key stakeholders to focus resources on.

Using a public transport policy intervention as an example, different stakeholders are mapped into the matrix below:



"Stakeholder engagement is a crucial element of public policy. It helps to ensure that policies are in the public interest by involving those that are affected by regulations, including citizens, businesses, civil society and other community members."

OECD

MANAGING THE STAKEHOLDER MATRIX

Stakeholders can be mapped and classified according to their relative impact and interest to the successful delivery of the policy goal. Managing the stakeholder matrix relates to the different strategies government can employ to facilitate buy-in, improve compliance or uptake, and drive policy outcomes.

Following the public transport policy example above :

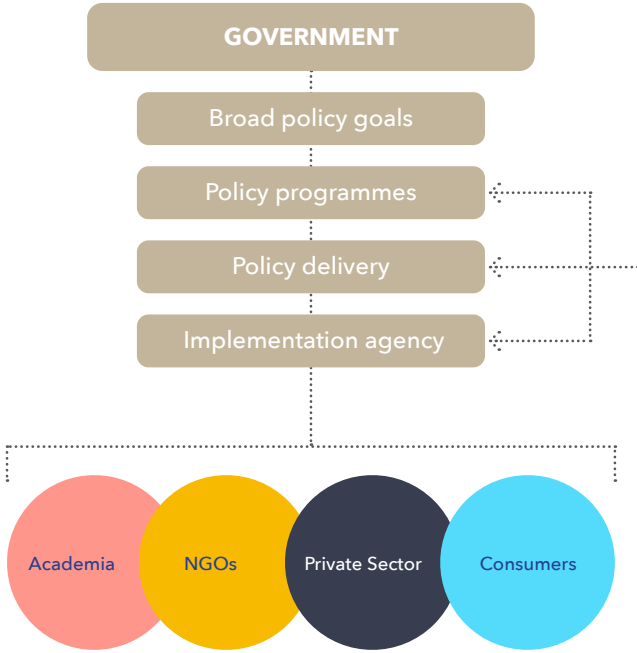
PRIORITY STAKEHOLDERS
To be managed closely through communicating policy progress, feedback systems and evaluation of policy intervention. Priority Stakeholders are the point of contact for funding, operational, logistical and ultimately the success of policy interventions. They have a direct stake in seeing the policy succeed.

TARGET STAKEHOLDERS
This group of stakeholders are those most directly affected by policy interventions. It is important to keep this group well-informed of changes and progress through public communication channels to facilitate stakeholder buy-in. Focus groups (FGs) are an effective tool to better understand stakeholder concerns, needs and user experiences. It is important to include relevant delivery and operational parties in the policy design process.

SECOND ORDER STAKEHOLDERS
These stakeholders are important to the success of the policy, but their interest in success has more to do with the knock on benefits for themselves. In this instance, increased demand for public utility transport vehicles.

LOW IMPACT STAKEHOLDERS
This group of stakeholders are least affected by the policy in question. Forward looking policymakers will consider this group a point of interest. Effective targeting and communication might facilitate their interest and support into a policy programme that does not directly address their concerns or needs.

STAKEHOLDER IDENTIFICATION DIAGRAM



Malaysia Productivity Corporation

BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS APPROACH IN POLICY DESIGN AND DELIVERY

Key competencies :

- Research Behavioural Insights to build expertise
- Build rapport with key stakeholders
- Communicate the potential impact of Behavioural Insights
- Establish a portfolio of successful behavioural interventions in public policy

GOVERNANCE MODELS

Behavioural Insight Teams operating in the United Kingdom, Singapore and Australia each function under different governance models (World Bank, 2019).

Broadly speaking, there are three governance models outlined by the OECD. These are :

- Centralised
- Diffused
- Project-based

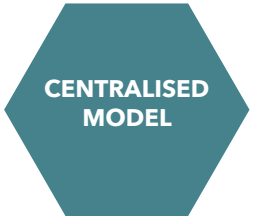
CENTRALISED MODEL

The Behavioural Insights Team (BIT) in the United Kingdom (UK); BIT started in 2010 as a unit with 8 staff, a budget of £500,000 and a trial period of 2 years. Their performance deliverables were to create a 10-fold return on investment, to spread an understanding of Behavioural Insights across government, and to transform two major policy areas.

Since its inception, BIT has achieved considerable success in its interventions, saving government costs and far exceeding its 10-fold return on investment.

Due to its success, BIT has been listed as a limited company, jointly owned by the U.K. government, Nesta (an innovation charity), and their employees.

BIT is an example of a centralised model of governance, acting closely within the centre of government (e.g Prime Ministers Office) to focus fully on applying, supporting and advocating the use of Behavioural Insights across government. As a centralised Behavioural Insights unit, BIT engages in strategic thinking to infuse policy-making with behaviourally informed thinking.



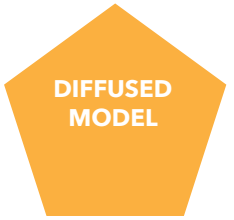
Key Features :

One centralised strategy promoting Behavioural Insights

Acts as a central point of contact for anything related to Behavioural Insights

DIFFUSED MODEL

The Behavioural Economics Team (BETA) of the Australian government was launched in 2016. **BETA operates on a diffused model, where they form partnerships with smaller Behavioural Insight Units across ministries.** In this model, BETA acts as a coordinator rather than a task-force - ministries that seek to run behavioural intervention liaise with BETA to co-fund and co-staff the project. In this way, government ministries build their independent capacity to run behavioural interventions whilst creating a multi-disciplinary working environment. Furthermore, costs are kept lower and a collaborative, cross-governmental culture is fostered.



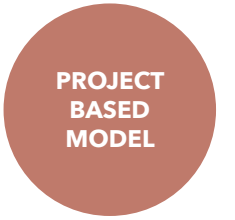
Key Features :

Builds network of relationships with different ministries to implement behavioural interventions

Less involved in implementing a centralised strategy

PROJECT BASED

A project based model is one where there is a looser network of behavioural insight practitioners, across the public and private sphere. In Singapore, behavioural interventions usually take place on the agency level partnering with universities and private consultancies to promote behavioural driven thinking into public policy. **A project based model has no formal steering unit but a network of practitioners who support and co-ordinate activities,** for example, through an annual conference or forum or ongoing engagement with relevant ministries.



Key Features :

Loosely connected network of practitioners, academics and institutions that champion Behavioural Insights and interventions in policy circles

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Piloting behavioural interventions raises particular ethical concerns. This is because Behavioural Insights diverges from traditional policymaking's 'command and control' functions. Using Behavioural Insights in a public setting raises questions about:

- Consent
- Autonomy
- Responsibility

Policymakers need to note that the application of Behavioural Insights is an intentional effort to drive behaviour in a certain direction. Concerns about the **autonomy of citizens** and the **consent to have interference in their day-to-day lives** are legitimate questions that need to be answered before piloting a behavioural intervention. Apart from this, the **responsibility for the collection of data** at all cycles of the intervention falls on policymakers. Some scoping questions to ask are:

- Is a change in behaviour an institutional priority?
- Can the change be defended in the public interest?
- Are there potential or uneven risks involved in the intervention?
- Will changing the behaviour have a significant societal impact?
- Is data readily available, or, is it controversial to collect data on

Raising ethical concerns is good governance practice. If a strong case can be made for piloting the intervention, it is important to be as **transparent** as possible when **communicating the purpose of the intervention** and **offer ways for citizens to opt-out.** Finally, it must be made clear that **legal responsibility for the intervention** does not fall on citizens. Stringent policies on data collection, use and storage also need to be set in place to protect the privacy of citizens (OECD, 2019). Before piloting an intervention, consider if it has:

Having established the justifications for a behavioural intervention it is important to organise ethical safeguards that can guide the intervention.

Ideally, an **ethical review board** will be present at the onset of any intervention. This will aid in ensuring that the intervention follows stringent ethical practices and seeks the proper ethical approvals where required from various stakeholders.

Behavioural interventions collect data on user behaviour to design choice architectures. Because of this, an **ethical supervisor for the collection, use and storage of data** should also be appointed. It is important to be transparent about how the data will be used and to seek consent in collecting data from individuals and other stakeholders.

Finally, a **code of conduct should be formalised** that applies across institutional boundaries. Because behavioural interventions often involve collaborations between various stakeholders in government, it is important that all team members follow a standardised guideline that aligns with ethical considerations.

"Behavioural Interventions intentionally give one group a treatment that is believed to have a positive impact, while withholding this treatment intentionally from another group. Policymakers need to consider and address the potential ethical issues that arise from one group receiving treatment, and the other not."

OECD

CONCLUSION

This framework acts as a guiding document in the Behavioural Insights initiative for public policy in Malaysia. As Behavioural Insights are better understood over time, policymakers stand to benefit from its usefulness as a policy tool to further governmental goals. Implementing Behavioural Insights in policy design and delivery is not meant to be an expensive or overly complicated task. It requires a keen understanding of behavioural matters such as bottlenecks, a comprehensive research agenda, and tools for measuring and evaluating the effectiveness of interventions. The most effective policies are those that allow the public to make their own choices, are not overly regulated, as regulation and enforcement have inherent costs, and that take into consideration the everyday challenges, biases and limitations that citizens face. Behavioural Insights are useful in addressing all these issues.

In this regard, the PRIME process collates best practices from international organisations to outline a step-by-step approach for implementing behavioural interventions. However, Behavioural Insights will be useful not only for public policies but also for the design of physical infrastructure, the delivery of public services as well as organisational change and excellence. Ultimately, the use of Behavioural Insights moves governments towards evidence-based policymaking. By using qualitative data, experimental trials, rigorous testing and evaluation to know what 'works,' policymakers promote change towards better outcomes for both government and their citizens.

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INTERVENTION TOOLKIT APPENDIX

TARGET BOTTLENECK : ATTENTION

Key Strategy : To highlight information about incentives and options in a way that attracts the desired behaviour through drawing attention, simplifying messages and using multiple mediums of communication.

Considerations :	Actionable Steps :
Are there clear incentives	Consider making incentives more attractive or prominent
Are there associated costs?	Consider reducing 'frictions ' or costs associated with performing the behaviour
Is there a complicted application process?	Streamline the application process
Are there a large number of options?	Reduce the number of options presented or summarise the available options
Is the default action clear?	Consider making individuals opt-out of the default option
Is one option more prominent that others?	Draw attention to the desired option, or, reframe exiting options to be less attractive
Is the information presented in an optimal sequence?	The information presented first and last is most likely to be received
Is the information communicated through one medium?	Considering communicating the intervention through multiple medium

INTERVENTION TOOLKIT APPENDIX

TARGET BOTTLENECK : SOCIAL NORMS

Key Strategy : To design interventions that make use of social norms to influence user behaviour.

Considerations :	Actionable Steps :
Is the individual being heavily influenced by the status quo?	Design interventions that frame the status quo as an active choice by the citizen
Are there prevailing social norms regarding the target behaviour?	Inform individuals about the social norm to encourage reciprocal behaviour
Is there a group of people that makes decisions more than others?	Tailor interventions to the different group
Are people making decisions alone or in groups?	Design interventions that operate across the group and individual levels
Is someone able to exert significant influence over the decision making-process?	Consider the messenger of the intervention to facilitate buy-in from the decision maker

INTERVENTION TOOLKIT APPENDIX

TARGET BOTTLENECK : IDENTITY

Key Strategy : To design interventions that highlight the benefi ts of an action whilst detailing the associated costs with inaction. Reframing probabilities in this way nudges people to consider how present actions have long-term benefi ts

Considerations :	Actionable Steps :
Is the individual being unrealistically optimistic?	Design ways to help the individual better visualise the probability of events
Is the individual's self image being challenged?	Frame the intervention to promote th behavioural change while preserving positive self identification
Is honesty being relied on?	Consider commitment devices to honest disclosure at the beginning rather than the end of a process
Is the individual underestimating the likelihood of low probability events?	Consider ways to reframe probabilities and expected outcomes
Is there a prominent short-term gain being advanced?	Design interventions that prime for long term thinking
Is one option more prominent that others?	Draw attention to the desired option, or, reframe exiting options to be less attractive
Can numbers or statistics be made more compelling if presented differently?	Present the benefits of making the choice now accrued over time upfront
Is there a matter of individual property being considered in the decision?	Consider individual aversion to loss and reframe choices as an opportunity

INTERVENTION TOOLKIT APPENDIX

TARGET BOTTLENECK : WILLPOWER

Key Strategy : To design interventions that facilitate long term commitment by using personalisation, reminders and commitment devices. Take into account the fatigue or emotional states of users to ensure that policy interventions are introduced when users are most likely to be receptive.

Considerations :	Actionable Steps :
Does the decision require willpower or self-control?	Consider using planning prompts, reminders or commitment devices
Is the individual fatigued mentally or physically when making the decision?	Consider introducing the decision at other times, or look to help reduce the fatigue
Is the individual in a volatile emotional state when making the decision?	Consider planning the intervention when the individual is less likely to be influenced by unrelated emotions
Does the individual receive feedback on progress?	Consider personalising feedback to individuals to track their milestones
Is the individual primed to reciprocate a given action?	Consider providing an offer, reward or gift to prompt reciprocity
Are there immediate benefits of making the decision, or are they delayed?	Decision interventions that bring forwards the benefit of making a decision into the present

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