

# Behavioural insights in policy making for agricultural policy

*From influencing the individual to shaping the system*

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**BEATLES Multi-actor working group workshop**  
**Exploring the notion of fairness in EU Policy**  
**19 May 2025**

*Disclaimer:* The views expressed are purely those of the authors and may not under any circumstances be regarded as stating an official position of the European Commission.



# BI at the European Commission: the state (*of the art*)



# Better Regulation Framework

A set of guidelines and principles, relying on a collection of tools, to support EU decision-making

A process covering the entire policy cycle

Ensuring policy is prepared, implemented and reviewed following:

- **Integrated** approach: economic, social and environmental costs and benefits
- **Transparency**: consultations, publications
- **Best available evidence**
- **Comprehensive involvement of stakeholders**

[Baggio et al. \(2021\)](#)  
[Journal of European Public Policy](#)



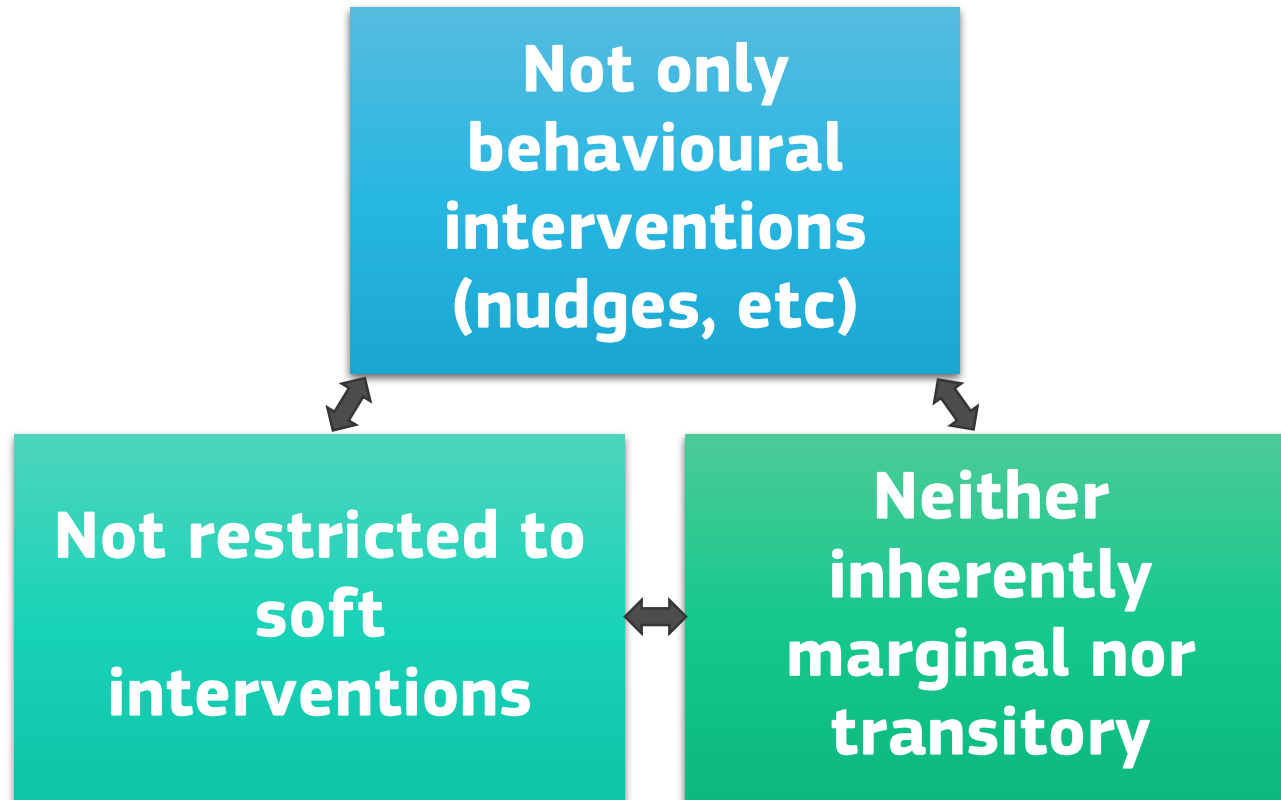
currently  
 BI



**We'd rather want this !**

# Debunking misconceptions about BI

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**Not limited to individual solutions**

**Not only behavioural interventions (nudges, etc)**

**Not restricted to soft interventions**

**Neither inherently marginal nor transitory**



# Debunking misconceptions about BI

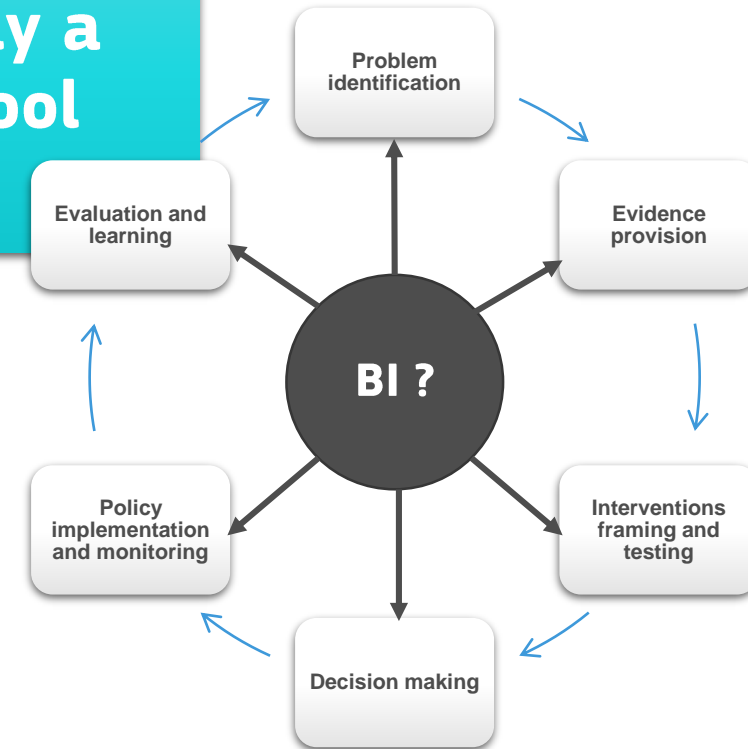
Not limited to individual solutions

Not only behavioural interventions (nudges, etc)

Not merely a plug-in tool

Not restricted to soft interventions

Neither inherently marginal nor transitory



# Harnessing the full potential of BI in policymaking



# BI's roles in policymaking

	Behavioural Intervention	Single Policy	Policy mix	Policy interconnections	System
WHAT	BI targets individual actions	BI informs single (traditional or behavioural) policy interventions in specific areas	BI aligns policies to work together towards a shared goal within a policy area	BI examines how policies across areas interact from a behavioural perspective	BI maps stakeholders, their behaviours, influential factors and key relationships (behavioural systems mapping)
HOW	By using interventions like nudges and boosts	By understanding and analysing behavioural factors relevant to the policy context	By coordinating traditional and behavioural interventions based on relevant behavioural factors	By bringing a human perspective into the policy landscape and identifying behavioural issues leading to policy fragmentation	By pinpointing leverage points where behavioural analysis and targeted interventions can help unlock the system
WHY	<i>To influence individual behaviour and improve communication of existing policies.</i>	<i>To ground policy choice and guide policy design.</i>	<i>To leverage synergies between traditional and behavioural interventions in a policy area.</i>	<i>To enhance coherence across policy areas.</i>	<i>To achieve a better-functioning, more cohesive system.</i>



Behavioural  
Intervention

# BI devising behavioural interventions

## Behavioural interventions contributing to label design

BI used as a follow-up to already existing rules set in regulations

### Eco-Design Regulation for Smartphones (2023)

graded environmental labels (A to E) instead of green stick/red cross  
(Dessart et al. 2021; Thøgersen et al. 2024)

### Energy Labelling Directive (2010)

dealing with information overload in labels



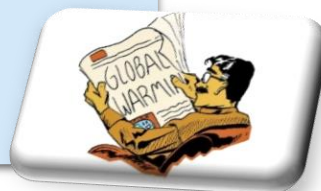
## Behavioural interventions for communication

BI used to support the communication of traditional policies that may be already in place

### Perceptions of the Fit for 55 Package

Study on communication levers for effective climate policy:

- using boosts, thinks and nudges+ to address misconceptions about the distributional effects of climate policies, including those of the Fit for 55 Package.  
([Vandyck et al., 2023](#))





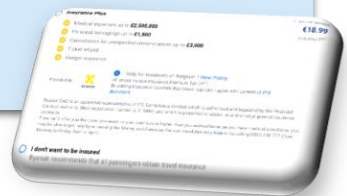
# BI recommending and informing traditional policies

## Leading to

BI can result in the recommendation of traditional instruments or policies

### Ban of online pre-ticked boxes

- In EU Consumer Rights Directive (2011)
- Countering the power of defaults used online
- Recognising the psychological issue behind impulse buying (withdraw from contracts extended from 7 to 14 days)



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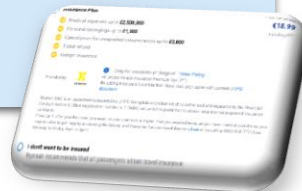
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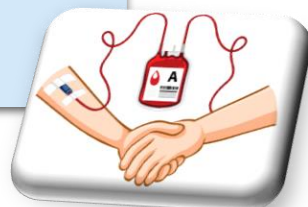


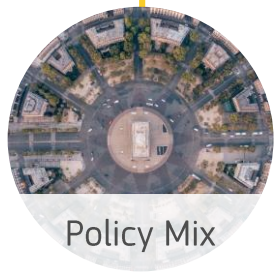
## Informing

BI helps identify behavioural elements in domains affected by traditional policies

### Increasing voluntary blood donation rates

- Revision of [Regulation on standards of quality and safety for substances of human origin intended for human application](#) (July 2024)
- Offering evidence-based strategies to maintain and improve voluntary donation rates without resorting to paid donations, even in times of shortage. ([Vuletić Čugalj et al., 2023](#))





# BI informing and coordinating policy mixes

## Light involvement

BI involvement limited to informing behavioural interventions in the mix

### Smoking cessation programs

- Tobacco Control Directive (2014)
- Tax on cigarettes not informed by BI
- Warning labels with emotionally impactful images informed by BI



## Stronger involvement

BI involvement in all interventions (both traditional and behavioural) in the mix

### Rethinking biodiversity policymaking with BI

- Goal: laying the ground for a behavioural research agenda in line with future biodiversity policymaking
- Workflows: Literature review + media discourse analysis → DELPHI survey with behavioural and natural scientists → Workshop with EU policymakers and researchers

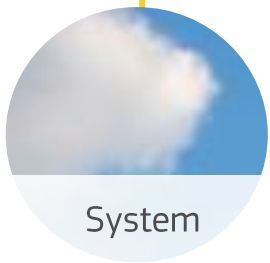


# BI enhancing policy coherence

A human perspective to better understand the system



*Inside-out perspective  
(zooming in)*



# BI contributing to systemic change

## Combining system analysis and BI

## EU Policy Lab's plans and projects

**Our approach:** Iteratively combining "zooming out" (synthesis) to see the broader system and "zooming in" (analysis) to focus on specific behavioural aspects.

★ Combining **Design for Policy, Foresight and BI** to start with

*Outside-in perspective (zooming out)*



Source: [Hale et al. \(2022\) UCL Open Environment](#)

In line with Behavioural Systems: [Del Valle et al. \(2024\) Busara paper](#)

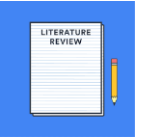
# Concluding remarks and next steps

- **Main objective:** Broaden policymakers' understanding of the potential of BI beyond the plug in use of behavioural interventions
- **Current path:** taking a behavioural systems approach by exploring collaboration between behavioural insights and qualitative systems analysis disciplines
- **Next steps:** developing a behavioural systems methodology applied to public policy and sharing it broadly (*a long-term project*): what works, what doesn't

# Use of behavioral insights for sustainable food systems



A behaviourally informed framework for assessing farmer behaviour with regards to environmentally friendly farming



Increasing environmental performance of farming: willing or complying?



Assessing the power of nudging to enhance enrolment on environmentally friendly measures



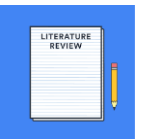
Do consumers care about the dual food quality debate in their purchasing decisions?



How to implement UCPD recommendations for dual food quality in practice



Which nutrition and sustainability labelling to implement

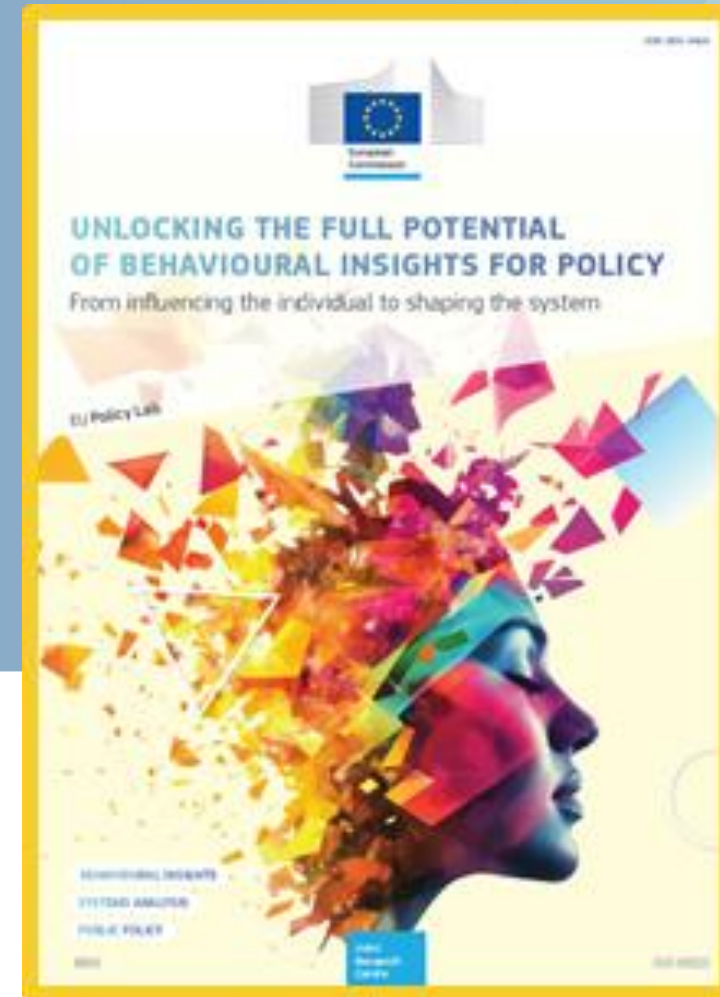


# Thank you

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What to know more?

Dupoux, M., Gaudeul, A., Baggio, M., Bruns, H., Ciriolo, E. et al., *Unlocking the full potential of behavioural insights for policy – From influencing the individual to shaping the system*, Publications Office of the European Union, 2025, <https://data.europa.eu/doi/10.2760/7367599>



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