



Influences on Consumer Behaviour

Policy Implications Beyond Nudging

Publication

[Policy Brief](#)

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A policy brief written by Katharina Umpfenbach and colleagues for DG Environment summarises the most relevant scientific insights and analyses the implications for policy making. It highlights novel policy ideas for triggering changes in consumer behaviour.

It is a truism that when individuals do not have information (e.g., about environmental effects), that information cannot influence their decision. This has led to many policy interventions which supply information (e.g., energy labelling). Yet, the common premise that 'informed people make the right choices' is not supported by the evidence. The body of scientific work on influences on behaviours refutes the simplistic economic, rational view of decision making which is often relied upon. Instead most decisions are fundamentally complex.

The policy brief discusses findings on the influence of biases and framing on decision-making, the role of values and social norms, but also the importance of physical infrastructures in shaping behavioural outcomes.

The authors argues that, to be effective, policy-makers have to think more broadly about the set of interrelated influences which keeps people from adopting more sustainable practices. Policies need to address the multiple drivers of behaviour at the same time and in a coherent way. Also, instead of focusing exclusively on individuals, policies may be more effective when they target groups or whole segments of society with tailored approaches. The brief closes with a set of potential future policy options.

The website article [Promoting green behaviour: don't mention the environment!](#) summarizes the results. The [policy brief](#) [pdf, 687 KB, English] is available for download.

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Table of contents

1. Introduction
2. Research into behaviours and its insights for environmental policy making
 - 2.1 Reconsidering information provision
 - 2.2 Biases in decision making processes
 - 2.2.1 Implications for Policy
 - 2.3 The influence of motivations, norms and world-views
 - 2.3.1 Research
 - 2.3.2 Implications for Policy
 - 2.4 The influence of situations
 - 2.4.1 Research
 - 2.4.2 Implications for Policy
3. Using behaviour research for each step in the policy-making process
 - 3.1 Reviewing the range of behaviours to influence
 - 3.2 Framing the policy question
 - 3.3 Factors affecting how successful a policy intervention may be
 - 3.4 Considering the drivers acting against pro-environment behaviours
 - 3.5 Prioritising Interventions

3.6 Strengthening the Rationale for Policy Interventions

3.7 Winning political support

4. Illustrative Potential Policies

4.1 Display Life Cycle Costs at decision point

4.2 Use Defaults

4.3 Roll out comparison of utility use

4.4 Change infrastructures

4.5 Promotion of change in the Workplace

4.6 Better Targetting of information campaigns for SMEs

4.7 Using marketing to promote environmental behaviours

4.8 Promoting leisure time

Annex

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