

Behavioral Science for Sustainability: Lessons for Cyprus

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Abstract

Cyprus is not immune to poor policy-making. The lack in understanding human behavior is at the heart of the sustainability challenge. This study aims to showcase the importance of incorporating behavioral insights to help policy-makers increase the efficiency of their directives and speed up progress on sustainability goals. It provides an overview of why and how the behavioral element (from sticky habits to cognitive biases), when ignored, hinders traditional policy-making efforts (information provision, incentives, regulation). Drawing from our recent work for Cypriot authorities, we discuss the behavioral array of forces capable of driving change when applied judiciously. Our findings highlight three directions in which policy-making in Cyprus can be enhanced: improved understanding of the drivers behind local behaviors before designing policies, targeted communications design for changing habits, and overcoming problems with existing policies with behavioral science methods.

Keywords: Behavioral Science, Behavioral Economics, Climate Change, Environment, Policy, Sustainability

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