



Behavioural Insights for more effective ACE policies implementation: A practical training session for ACE Focal Points

Concept Note

Background and rationale

Delivering climate policies that achieve real behavioural change remains one of the central implementation challenges for governments. While many countries have adopted ambitious climate strategies, Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), and national ACE strategies, translating these commitments into sustained behavioural change among citizens, institutions, and economic actors remains difficult.

ACE Focal Points are uniquely positioned at the interface between policy design, coordination, communication, and implementation. Their work often requires influencing behaviours across ministries, education systems, local governments, youth networks, and civil society. However, many policy interventions struggle because they rely mainly on information, education, financial incentives, and regulations. While these ‘hard’ instruments can be effective, in some cases “softer” approaches may be more appropriate, as they are often better accepted by the public, can be lower cost, and may be more effective in triggering lasting behavioural change.

Behavioural science shows that decision-making is influenced by habits, cognitive biases, social norms, institutional incentives, and choice environments. Behavioural Public Policy offers practical tools that can help policymakers design more effective and implementable climate interventions by addressing these real-world decision dynamics.

Increasingly, governments, multilateral organisations, and climate institutions are using Behavioural Insights to increase policy effectiveness, strengthen participation, and reduce implementation costs. For ACE Focal Points, these approaches can help strengthen national ACE implementation, climate education strategies, and citizen engagement efforts while working within real administrative and political constraints.

Objective

The session aims to strengthen the capacity of ACE Focal Points to apply behavioural insights to improve the effectiveness of climate and ACE-related policies.

Specifically, the session will enable participants to:

- ✓ Better understand behavioural barriers affecting climate policy implementation



Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

- ✓ Identify why ACE programmes sometimes fail to achieve expected results
- ✓ Learn practical behavioural tools to improve policy effectiveness
- ✓ Explore how behavioural approaches can strengthen ACE implementation at national level
- ✓ Consider ethical aspects relevant for public sector application.

Target audience

This session is designed specifically for UNFCCC ACE National Focal Points.

It assumes participants already have policy experience and focuses on strengthening implementation effectiveness.

Format

Duration: 2 hours 10 mins

Format: Interactive training session

The session combines practical policy examples, peer exchange, and a structured application exercise focused on real policy challenges faced by ACE Focal Points.

Methodology:

- Interactive experiments
- Facilitated discussions
- Government case examples
- Peer exchange between countries
- Small group policy design exercise

Proposed agenda

Part 1 – Behavioural Insights: Why climate policies sometimes fail to change behaviour (20 min)

Focus: Implementation realities policymakers face

Topics include:

- How we (really) make decisions
- Behavioural barriers to climate action
- The intention-action gap
- Why information campaigns alone often fail

Part 2 – Behavioural tools policymakers can use (30 min)



Focus: Practical policy design tools

Topics include:

- Behavioural Insights as a complement to regulation and incentives
- Choice architecture in public programmes
- Defaults, simplification, and salience in policy design
- Using social norms in public programmes
- Behaviourally informed communication strategies
- Examples from governments and international organisations

Part 3 – Governance, risks, and ethical considerations (10 min)

Topics include:

- Risks and limitations
- Avoiding public resistance ("nudgelash")
- Transparency and ethics in behavioural policy
- Institutionalising behavioural approaches in government

Part 4 – Applying behavioural insights to ACE (30 mins + 30 mins)

Working in small groups, participants will:

- Define a concrete behavioural challenge from their ACE work
- Identify barriers that prevent people or institutions from taking action
- Select practical behavioural approaches to address these barriers
- Design a simple adjustment to an existing ACE policy, programme, or communication activity
- Present your ideas to other participants and receive feedback

Part 5 – FACE-NDC export products (10 mins)

- Present products, tools and materials to be developed under FACE-NDC project
- Explain piloting modalities
- Gauge interest in using these export products (poll)