

Behaviour Change: A Series of Practical Guides  
for Policy-Makers and Practitioners

Number 6

# Sustainable Shopping and Sustainable Production

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<b>1. Introduction to the series</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. Project summary</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. Key findings</b>	<b>4</b>
General lessons from the study	4
Specific findings from the study relating to sustainable shopping and production	5
<b>4. Policy implications</b>	<b>11</b>
Step 1: Scoping the task	11
Step 2: Developing a more detailed understanding of the behaviours in question	12
Step 3: Developing a package of interventions to achieve change	13
Step 4: Engaging the target audience	15
Step 5: Identifying the tools and approaches available to influence change	15
Step 6: Tailoring approaches to specific circumstances	17
Step 7: Understanding your circle of influence and working with others	18
Step 8: Setting up a process to achieve change	19
Step 9: Putting the task in a wider context	19
<b>5. Supplementary information</b>	<b>21</b>

Defra has commissioned and funded this study, but the views expressed in this guide do not necessarily reflect Defra policy.

# 1. Introduction to the series

Defra's 5 year strategy (*Delivering the Essentials of Life*<sup>1</sup>) coupled with the UK Government sustainable development strategy (*Securing the Future*<sup>2</sup>) set out an ambitious agenda for environmental leadership and sustainable development. Embedding these core principles relies on influencing change and making it easier for producers and consumers to behave more sustainably. This is a sizeable task, since changing behaviours is a complex matter and innovative solutions are required.

In July 2005, Defra initiated a programme of research that aimed to broaden understanding of how Government (and others) can most effectively promote pro-environmental behaviour amongst producers and consumers. Several studies were commissioned as part of this research programme, each with a remit to explore a unique aspect of pro-environmental behaviour change.

This practical guide forms part of a series of papers that aims to summarise the key findings and policy implications from these studies.

A full list of titles in this series is provided below:

- Number 1: Sustainable Resource Use in the Home
- Number 2: Targeting Specific Lifestyle Groups
- Number 3: Sustainable Development as a "Collective Choice" Problem
- Number 4: Triggering Widespread Adoption of Sustainable Practices
- Number 5: Understanding Choice
- Number 6: Sustainable Shopping and Sustainable Production
- Number 7: Enhancing Sustainability at Farm Level
- Number 8: Tackling the Waste Challenge
- Number 9: Encouraging Sustainability Amongst Small Businesses
- Number 10: Sustainable Resource Use in Business and Organisations

<sup>1</sup> Defra (2004) *Delivering the essentials of life: Defra's five year strategy*, London: HMSO.  
See <http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/5year-strategy/index.htm>.

<sup>2</sup> Defra (2005) *Securing the Future: UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy*, London: HMSO.  
See <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/publications/uk-strategy/index.htm>.

## 2. Project summary

This guide is informed by the findings of a recent study, entitled 'Promoting pro-environmental behaviour: existing evidence to inform better policy-making'. The project, undertaken by a consortium led by the Centre for Sustainable Development at the University of Westminster, brought together evidence from theory, policy and practice to identify lessons for how policy-makers can influence pro-environmental behaviour change among different target audiences.

The study involved:

- a review of theory relating to pro-environmental behaviour change at the level of individuals, organisations and whole systems;
- an investigation of practical interventions used to influence pro-environmental behaviour, specifically:
  - a review of the different types of policy interventions available for influencing pro-environmental behaviour, with a detailed analysis of 14 examples of specific policy instruments that have influenced pro-environmental behaviour;
  - detailed analysis and comparison of 14 practical initiatives that have achieved changes in pro-environmental behaviour;
- a synthesis of the theoretical, policy and practical approaches to changing pro-environmental behaviour that aimed to identify any general lessons, lessons about how the three approaches interact and influence each other, and recommendations for future work.

Throughout the study individual behaviour change, organisational change within businesses and other institutions, and change across whole systems of delivery were considered under the seven key areas of activity, namely:

1. Helping businesses produce more sustainably (farmers, food industry and wider industry)
2. Encouraging sustainable consumer behaviour (purchasing)
3. Encouraging sustainable resource use within the home and by businesses (design, energy, water etc.)
4. Tackling the waste challenge (reduce, reuse, recycle by households and businesses)
5. Encouraging sustainable behaviour in different sections of society (e.g. the young)
6. Helping farmers (and fishers) become more sustainable land (marine) managers
7. Sustainable procurement – using Government purchasing to influence markets

The study principally used existing data sources, including reports, theoretical papers, and information available on the Internet. This was supplemented where necessary with primary data collected through telephone interviews and email correspondence (for example, interviews with people involved in the practical case study examples and with policy makers involved in designing specific policy instruments). The theory review was then sent out to peers to identify any inaccuracies or important omissions.

## 3. Key findings

The main report from the study is available on the Defra website<sup>3</sup> and presents detailed results from the study. Some of the overarching lessons about good practice in designing policies and supporting practical initiatives for influencing environmental behaviour are summarised below. This is followed by a summary of evidence from our study that is specifically relevant to sustainable shopping and production.

### General lessons from the study

- **Behaviours are complex and non-linear.** Each behaviour is determined by various (often inter-related) factors, many of which need addressing simultaneously to facilitate change. Thus interventions should combine multiple types of instrument in a 'package' of measures (e.g. infrastructure, fiscal measures, and information). It is suggested that interventions first address external factors (most notably infrastructure and pricing) and then internal factors (e.g. psychological or attitudinal). As well as working on multiple factors, interventions need to work on multiple levels – ultimately addressing society as a whole in order to achieve sustained change.
- **Different audiences behave differently, and require targeted and/or tailored interventions.** To be effective, policy measures usually need to be highly context specific. Devolving responsibility for policy development and delivery to local bodies (Local Authorities, business and industry groups, the voluntary sector and community groups) can help to ensure their suitability and can also help to build their legitimacy. Care should be taken to ensure that the relevant skills and resources are available within these organisations to take on these additional duties.
- **The audience for a change intervention should not be regarded as a passive target.** Policy-makers need to view target audiences and other key stakeholders as 'actors' at the heart of the change process. Ideally, a total partnership working approach should be adopted in which change partners (including members of the public) are involved from the start in defining and redefining the problem through a continuous cycle of action and reflection, from which learning and innovation will result.
- **Feedback is vital to driving and sustaining change. Instead of understanding changing behaviour as a single event, it should be viewed as an ongoing process.** Policy-makers should ensure that interventions incorporate opportunities to learn from policy audiences – learning captured and fed back from the change process should influence subsequent policy. In order to facilitate this important reflective process, more effective and consistent data collection and collation is required. In future, the appropriate formal evaluation structures should be put in place at the stage of policy development.
- **Government policy needs to convey a consistent message and visibly pull in one direction.** The suite of policies emerging from government needs to avoid contradictions and inconsistencies in order to convey clear messages to target audiences and the public in general. This requirement for harmony needs to apply to all Defra policies and to those coming from the EU, and (possibly more importantly) to those being developed by other government departments. There needs to be greater collaboration and interdepartmental working to achieve this.

<sup>3</sup> Visit [http://www2.defra.gov.uk/research/project\\_data/More.asp?l=SD14002&M=KWS&V=behaviour+change&SCOPE=0](http://www2.defra.gov.uk/research/project_data/More.asp?l=SD14002&M=KWS&V=behaviour+change&SCOPE=0)

- **Individuals have the potential to act as ‘change champions’.** Individuals are vital to delivering pro-environmental change, not just for themselves (on the level of individuals) but also within organisations and networks as ‘agents for change’ (both as managers and ‘change champions’). Engaging, and nurturing, key individuals may be more effective in bringing about system-wide change than targeting the behaviour of all individuals.
- **Policy design should incorporate considerations of equity and fairness.** It is clearly important that policy-makers ensure that policies at least avoid disproportionate negative financial and environmental impacts for the most vulnerable in society and if possible reduce inequalities of outcome. Equity concerns are particularly associated with environmental taxes and charges, which can negatively impact on the competitiveness of small businesses, as well as on disadvantaged individuals. Compliance is likely to prove most problematic where policies are perceived as unfair, or poorly targeted, and where alternative options do not appear to be available.
- **Action needs to be taken now to address the pressing environmental problems we face today and in the future.** The appropriateness and relevance of policies to encourage pro-environmental behaviour should be viewed in light of these massive and important global challenges. More far-reaching, targeted and effective policy action is needed than is currently evident. Change takes time, and measures need to be put into place now to influence societal change and respond to environmental pressures.

## Specific findings from the study relating to sustainable shopping and production

Although many behaviour change theories are generic, a number of models and theories specifically relate to sustainable shopping and production.

### a) Looking at the whole system of production and consumption

There is a range of theories and models that help us look at the links between consumption and production.

- The ‘Production Retail Consumption triangle’. Although produced in the context of waste behaviours by the National Resource and Waste Forum (NRWF), this model provides a useful framework for considering the different factors that impact on producers, retailers and consumers to influence change, and the interactions between them (Wilson 2004). It identifies, and links:
  - high level ‘drivers’ for behaviour, such as the Landfill Directive and lifestyle trends;
  - tools for influencing behaviour, such as advertising, economic incentives and education;
  - channels through which the different audiences can be influenced, including trade associations, NGOs, Government and consumer groups.
- The ‘Production Retail Consumption triangle’ model has been further developed by Veronica Sharp to illustrate a ‘balanced’ approach to policy-making for environmental change (Sharp, 2005). This model suggests that **policy interventions should influence producers and consumers at the same time**, informed by a specific behaviour change goal. In practice, policy interventions are currently strongly biased towards the supply / producer side (i.e. with far fewer aiming to influence consumers). It is unclear if this ‘imbalance’ is deliberate,

### 3. Key findings

or justified, and one of the findings of our study calls for a more explicit investigation of this approach. Some evidence suggests that in some circumstances a focus on the supply side may be sensible. For example, it may be preferable to target small and medium sized enterprises directly to change production behaviour, rather than try and build consumer demand for pro-environmental products or services. However, as discussed elsewhere in this guide, a more holistic approach is likely to be more successful in achieving significant pro-environmental behaviour change.

Figure 1: 'The Production Retail Consumption Triangle', reproduced from Wilson (2004)

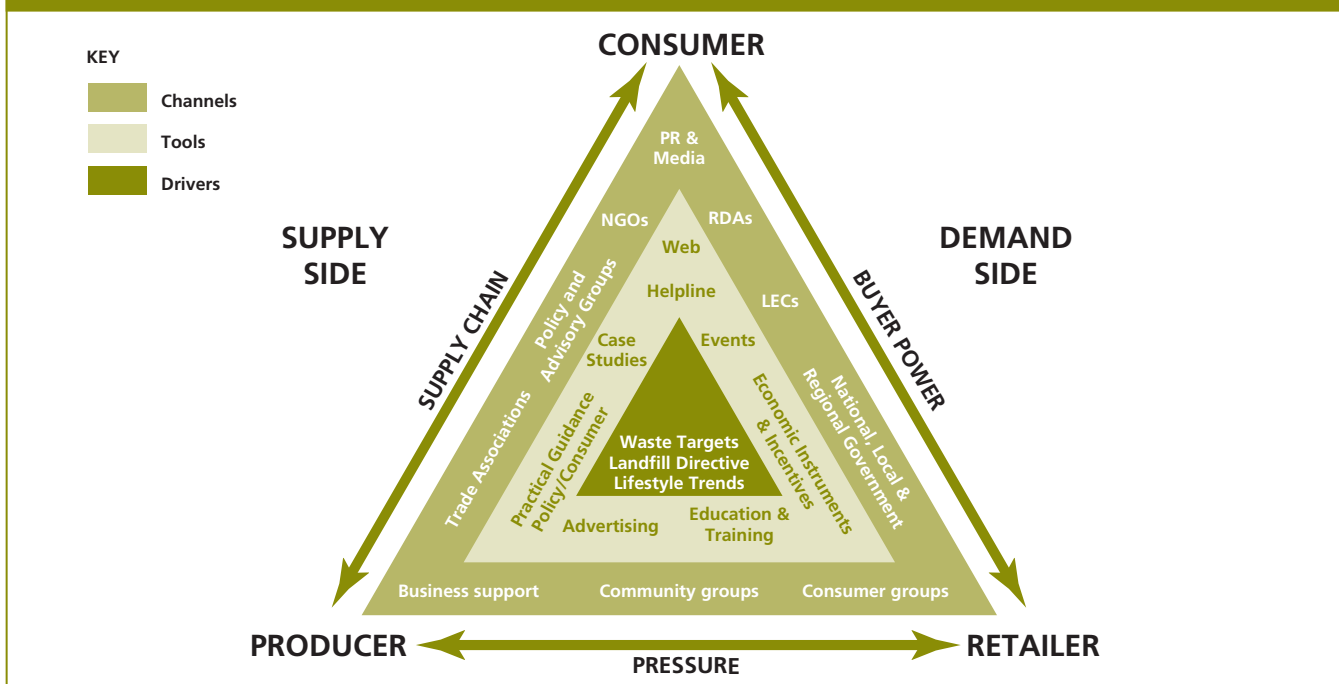
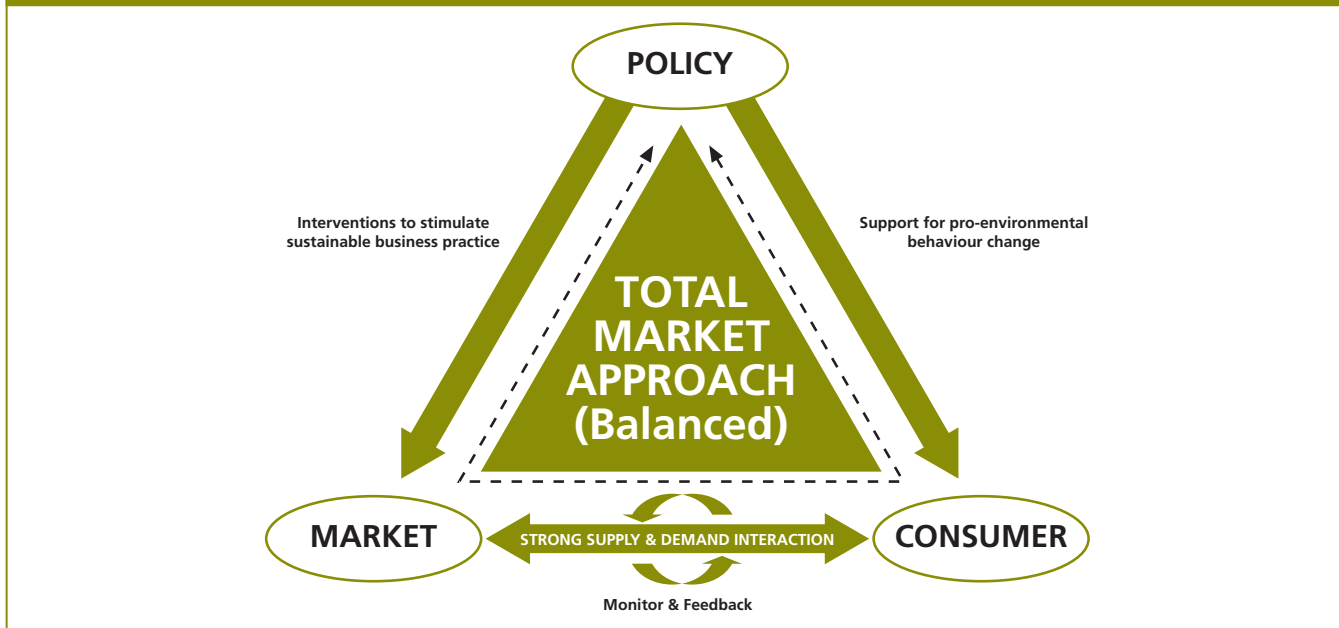


Figure 2: 'Interdependence of policy, market and consumer relationships – Balanced Approach', reproduced from Sharp (2005)

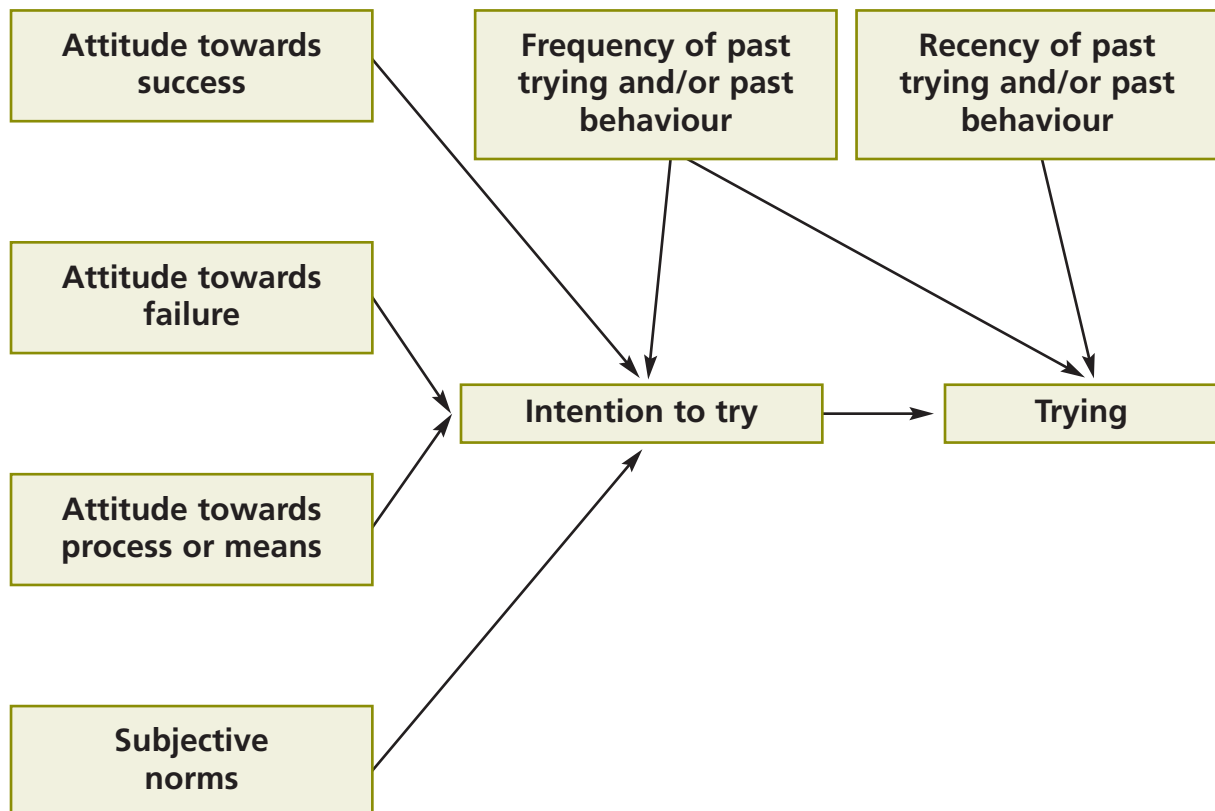


## b) Consumer behaviour

The following models relating specifically to individual consumption behaviour are covered in our study.

- Bagozzi (see Figure 3) has produced models to describe individual consumer behaviour based on the idea that consumption behaviour has a purpose based around 'trying' (to buy something). This theory suggests that **people's underlying attitudes and norms (their subjective view of the world and what is socially desirable) are important in determining their shopping intentions. Habit also has a strong role** in determining actual purchasing actions (Jackson, 2005).
- Bedford (see Figure 4) has produced a map identifying 7 main considerations that are important when making choices about sustainable food purchasing, which include level of processing, packaging and food miles (Bedford, 2002).

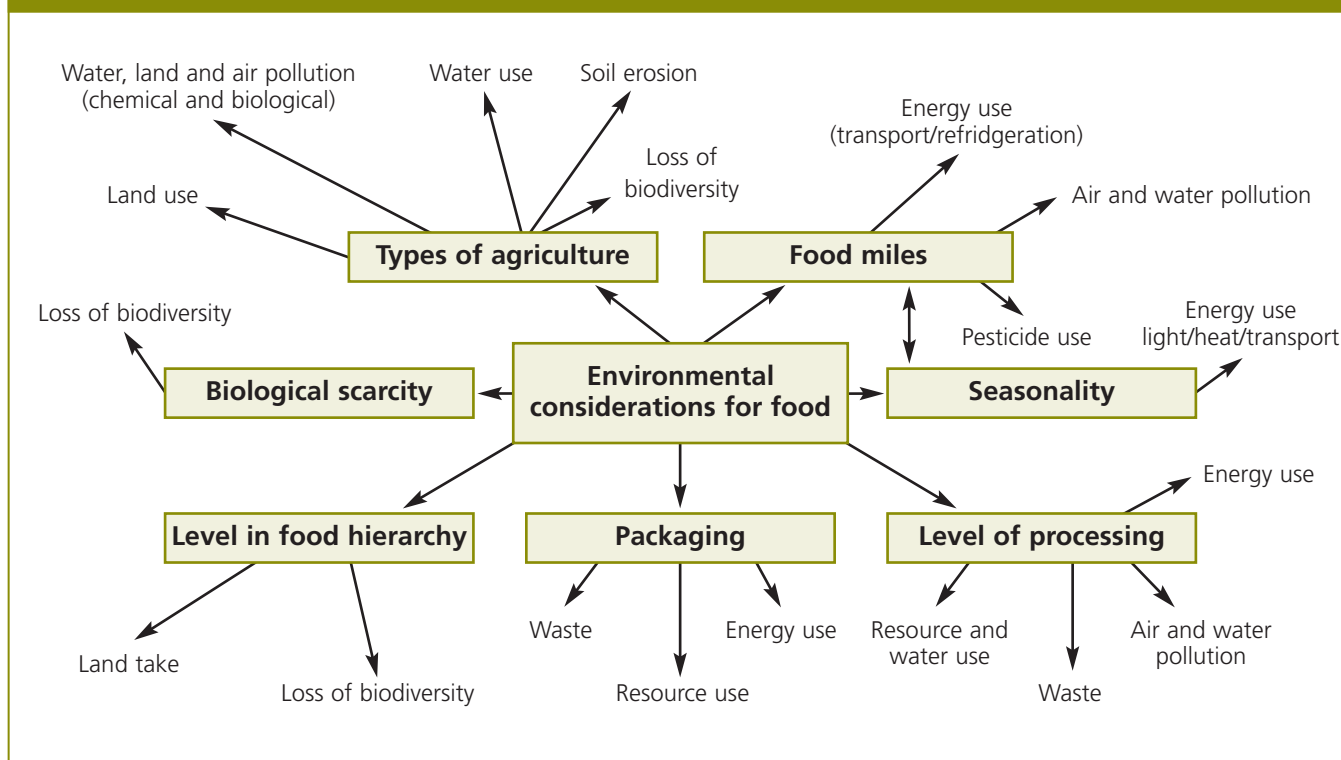
Figure 3: 'Bagozzi and Warshaw's Theory of Trying', reproduced from Jackson (2005)





### 3. Key findings

Figure 4: 'Environment-consumption interactions for food', reproduced from Bedford (2002)



Each of these 7 considerations has a number of related environmental impacts that need to be taken into account, such as energy use and pollution. Even with all of these considerations and impacts mapped out, the choices for maximising sustainable consumption are not straight forward. For example, choosing organic food may seem like a good choice for sustainability, but the benefits may be strongly countered if the organic food is imported by air from another country. This model does not tell us anything about how individual consumers might behave, but does illustrate the complexity of individual sustainable consumption decisions, and helps us understand the factors that will be important if sustainable consumption is to be realised.

Once we have identified specific factors that have been shown to be important for the behaviours we are interested in, we can also draw on more general theories about individual behaviour.

- Habit was identified by Bagozzi as important in shopping behaviours. Habit features significantly in behaviour change theories and models, as one of three key internal barriers to pro-environmental behaviour change (Jackson, 2005 - see also our main report). A key practical observation is that **rational appeals to change habitual behaviours, or the provision of information, are unlikely to work in isolation** – behaviours that we don't really think about are not easily accessed through appeals to our conscious mind. Instead, changing habitual behaviours is likely to require a process of 'unfreezing and re-freezing' – i.e. bringing the behaviours to our conscious attention, then changing them and allowing them to become habits again. This process may be facilitated by one-to-one dialogue, group working, social interactions and long-term engagement.

#### c) Changing production by businesses

Theory about behaviour in organisations and businesses focuses on the generic process of change, and only a minority of it deals specifically with pro-environmental behaviour change. However, the following points could cast light on the challenge of changing production behaviour.

- the literature on change within organisations (including businesses) identifies three main drivers for change (which can work from within or from outside an organisation), namely: learning, leadership and adaptation.
  - **Learning** is closely tied to change. An ideal theoretical approach proposes that organisations should be constantly engaged in cycles of learning and change (for example: Argyris and Schon, 1996). Action networks – facilitated interdisciplinary groups working on a common problem – can be a useful tool to help support learning and change in organisations through an ongoing process of action and reflection.
  - **Leaders** within organisations are often key to driving change and so developing and supporting these people can be a productive way of supporting change (for example: Ballard & Ballard, 2005). Involvement in action learning networks, and experiences outside the organisation, are both key ways of helping develop leadership skills. In this context, pro-environmental leadership can come from formal managers or less formal ‘change champions’.
  - The third key driver of change in organisations is **adaptation** to pressures (usually) from outside. Two key pressures that drive businesses to adapt are changes in markets and regulation. Changing markets can drive change by offering new opportunities or by creating consumer demand for change (see Figure 1). There is debate about the extent to which consumer demand is driving pro-environmental improvements by producers. Ecological modernisation theory suggests that consumer demand does already drive producers to minimise negative environmental impacts. However, research into the reality of the situation has suggested that, at least in the case of small and medium sized enterprises, consumer demand does not yet require pro-environmental behaviour from many businesses (Revell & Blackburn 2004). A survey of a range of small and medium sized businesses, including builders, architects, restaurants and farmers found that demand for pro-environmental behaviour by these businesses was not being expressed by consumers. This led to the conclusion that the most effective intervention to achieve pro-environmental behaviour change in these businesses would be “*legislative compulsion*”. Even financial incentives and charges were deemed inadequate, as the survey indicated that they would either be worked around, or passed directly onto consumers in price rises (Revell & Blackburn 2004).
- Morton, chair of the Sustainable Procurement Task Force, has identified a range of potential trigger factors that could lead to more environmental purchasing by businesses (Morton et al., 2002).
  - External pressures included fiscal measures; regulation and legislation; market pressures (both of supply and demand); indicators and benchmarks; and stakeholder pressure (including from investors).

### 3. Key findings

- Internally, environmental purchasing needs to be justified with a business case. Some key potential benefits for a business that could support such a case include: minimising waste and improving resource efficiency; securing the supply of goods and services; providing cost savings; and enhancing corporate image.

#### A note on using behaviour change theories and models

There are many models and theories that attempt to describe environmental behaviour. Most relate to generic behaviours – for example, all pro-environmental behaviours rather than just, say, recycling glass. They also tend to average out the behaviour of many individuals to describe an average person's behaviour. Theory and practical experience show that policy changes will not affect all individuals equally and so policy-makers using these models will need to refine them in the relevant context prior to implementation.

#### A note on using policy tools

Policy tools can provide a powerful and effective way of influencing pro-environmental behaviour (such as, economic incentives, pricing of resources, and regulation). However, they need to be used with caution and care.

- **Complexity.** The impact of policy tools can often be complex and unpredictable, and may not have the intended effect. For example: businesses may choose to absorb the cost of environmental taxes and charges, reducing their impact on consumer behaviour (e.g. airlines could compensate for carbon tax on aviation fuel through price reductions in tourist packages); species-based quotas on fishing fleets have led to the discarding of catches, contributing to an increase in the proportion of 'at risk' species.
- **Distribution and equality of outcomes.** Policy interventions can have negative impacts on equity, for example increasing the price of a resource can impact disproportionately on people living on a low income. Interventions can also impact negatively on business competitiveness, which can impact particularly on Small and Medium Sized Enterprises.
- **Value for money.** It is important to recognise the full administrative cost of policies, both to the Government and/or third parties when enforcing compliance.
- **Additionality.** Policy-makers should consider whether beneficiaries of subsidies and/or grants would have behaved in a similar way over time without the intervention.
- **Public response.** Be aware that lack of public acceptance of an intervention may serve to undermine the intervention (e.g. the Fuel Tax Escalator).
- **Scope.** Single interventions are likely to have limited impact. For example, regulation alone is unlikely to encourage longer-term change or establish new social norms. Multiple interventions are needed with, for example, regulation supported by information, fiscal and other incentives, supporting infrastructure and incentives for technical innovation.

## 4. Policy implications

It is widely recognised that influencing human and organisational behaviour is difficult whatever the policy arena. Our study has identified some basic principles that appear to underlie much behaviour change theory and practice, and some practical lessons that could help policy makers wishing to encourage pro-environmental behaviours. This section presents a set of practical 'steps' that show how policy makers and practitioners can apply these principles and lessons when trying to influence pro-environmental behaviours.

The 'steps' overlap to some extent and do not follow in strict chronological order, often needing to be applied in parallel. They do not represent a simple 'how to' or 'step by step' guide. The 'steps' are generic, being applicable regardless of the behaviour in question. In this guide we illustrate them in relation to sustainable shopping and production.

### Step 1: Scoping the task

Pro-environmental behaviours are **complex, influenced by multiple factors acting on multiple levels within the context of wider systems**. An early important step is to 'unpick' the specific behaviour you want to change and identify the scope of the task. What different elements make up the behaviour you are interested in? What factors could be involved in influencing it? How does the behaviour relate to its wider context?

#### Policy example: sustainable shopping and production

The following elements will be important for sustainable shopping and production behaviours:

- consumer choice, including decisions by consumers about what they want to buy and any constraints such as income, the availability of products, or the provision of effective product labelling;
- what producers make, which is partly determined by what consumers want, but not entirely as producers can generate demand for a product;
- the wider context including social trends and pressures, legislation that could constrain what producers can make and consumers can buy, economic factors, availability of raw materials;
- shopping and production are obviously inextricably linked – for example, producers make what consumers want (or will buy) and consumers can only buy what producers make.

In turn, these elements will be influenced by factors such as: advertising; individual habits and attitudes; socio-economic group; location (e.g. rural or urban); competition within a market; new technology (affecting production and modes of consumption, for example the internet); political systems and competing social ideas (e.g. green consumerism and more radical forms of environmentalism).

## 4. Policy implications

### Step 2: Developing a more detailed understanding of the behaviours in question

Once we have identified the different factors involved in a behaviour and its wider context, we can turn to theory and lessons from practice to better understand the behaviour and how to influence it, including:

- models that have been developed or applied specifically for the behaviour in question, and any generic models that can help;
- research findings may help identify what factors are seen as significant, and at what levels, for different audience groups; and
- relevant practical case studies may help build up a more detailed understanding of the behaviours and what is likely to influence them.

#### Policy example: sustainable shopping and production

The theories relevant to sustainable shopping and production, reviewed in section 3 above, suggest the following lessons for policy interventions.

- **Interventions need to take into account the whole system of production and consumption and the relationship between its different parts.**
- Models of these interactions suggest that policy interventions should attempt to target different parts of the system at the same time (for example both consumers and producers). The 'Production, Retail, Consumption triangle' (Wilson, 2004) highlights a number of tools available for influencing each part of the system (for example, advertising, economic incentives), and channels through which they can be used (for example, trade associations and consumer groups).
- **Underlying attitudes and perceived social norms are key to determining individual consumers' buying intentions**, which in turn help determining what they actually buy. Habit also has a strong influence on actual shopping choices. We know that habitual behaviours are not easy to change, being fairly impervious to rational appeals or information provision. Changing habits requires techniques such as face-to-face engagement, action learning in groups and long-term engagement.
- Even when individuals want to consume sustainably, the choices they need to make are far from straight forward. For example, sustainable food purchasing involves getting the right balance between different, and sometimes conflicting, considerations including food miles, production methods and packaging. **Mapping out the factors involved in different sustainable consumption choices is important to help understand what constitutes a sustainable choice**, and hence how consumers can be supported to make it.
- Three key drivers can change the behaviour of businesses and hence help us influence sustainable production:

- businesses need to be encouraged to constantly learn and adapt;
- leaders are key to driving change in businesses and so need to be nurtured, won over and supported. **Involvement in action learning groups, and experiences outside the business can both help develop leaders; and**
- changes in markets and regulation can force businesses to adapt and will play a key role in driving pro-environmental change. Evidence suggests that consumer-side pressures may often not yet be enough to force businesses to adopt more pro-environmental behaviours. **Targeted regulation can have unexpected results and so needs to be carefully designed**, and preferably tested, so that it has the intended effect on pro-environmental behaviours overall.

### Step 3: developing a package of interventions to achieve change

It is important to take a whole system, outward-looking, approach to influencing an environmental behaviour. 'Single sphere' interventions are unlikely to be effective, especially in achieving significant lasting change. However, you will be unable to undertake all possible measures, and any policy intervention will be practically limited.

The most effective approach is to **develop a package of focused interventions that influence enough key factors for a behaviour to achieve change**. Fundamental to this is a good understanding of the behaviour, its wider context and the factors that influence it. The other 'steps' discussed below will also be important.

#### Policy example: sustainable shopping and production

In the case of sustainable shopping and production, we have established that we need to look at changing:

- consumption behaviour by individuals;
- production behaviour by businesses; and
- the wider context within which consumption and production take place.

We have also established that consumption, production and their wider context are strongly interlinked. In order to achieve significant change we will therefore need to try and influence all of these different elements of the system together. Influencing any one is also likely to require more than one intervention. Overall, therefore, we are likely to need a programme of interventions targeting, for example, individuals, retailers, producers and wider society (see Box 1). Each one of these audiences is likely to need a package of measures. For example, for producers we may want to: introduce legislation and targets to increase resource efficiency in purchasing and production processes; work with specific producers to develop voluntary codes for improvement; support an intermediate organisation that could help build a strong business case and target leaders and other champions within businesses to help drive and support change.

## 4. Policy implications

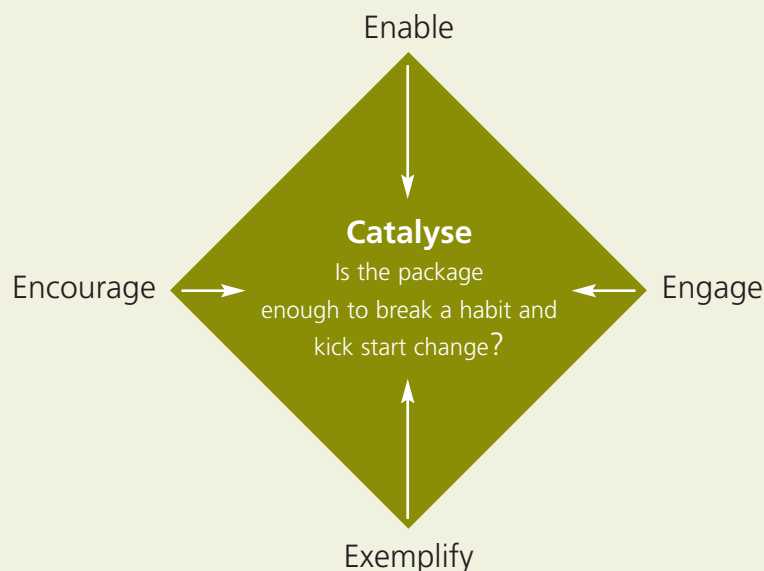
### Box 1 – The UK Government Sustainable Development ‘Diamond Model’: helping you develop a package of measures

The ‘Diamond Model’ (also known as the ‘4 E’s’ model) is a model that provides a framework for thinking about the different approaches policy makers can take to influence a behaviour, and how to balance these to produce an effective package of interventions which “catalyse” change. The model suggests using a mix of interventions to Enable, Engage, Exemplify and Encourage (HM Government, 2005).

Approach evolves as attitude and behaviours change over time

- Remove barriers
- Give information
- Provide facilities
- Provide variable alternatives
- Educate/train/provide/skills
- Provide capacity

- Tax system
- Expenditure – grants
- Reward scheme
- Recognition/social pressure – league tables
- Penalties, fines & enforcement action



- Community action
- Co-production
- Deliberative fora
- Personal contacts /enthusiasts
- Media campaigns /opinion formers
- Use networks

- Leading by example
- Achieving consistency in policies

### Step 4: Engaging the target audience

A key early stage in any attempt to influence environmental behaviour is to **engage the audience that you are trying to influence**. Working with actors and stakeholders in a particular area of change is seen as essential in theory at all levels, and emerged as a strong theme in our review of policy tools and practice case studies. In short, your target audience understands the factors that influence their own behaviour, the constraints they face and the practical context within which they are acting better than anyone. Engaging people or organisations early in the policy development process also helps give them ownership of the challenge and means they are less likely to feel threatened by, or hostile to, change.

#### Policy example: sustainable shopping and production

For example, engaging producers will be essential to help us understand opportunities for change and the constraints they face. A package of measures to increase the sustainability of production in a particular sector is much more likely to be appropriate, accepted and successful if developed in conjunction with businesses from that sector. However, it is also important to retain a realistic distance and overview.

The real life example of labelling for food shows how difficult it can be to agree an effective framework for change that businesses will agree to without compulsion - although the Food Standards Agency worked closely with supermarkets to develop a voluntary 'traffic light' labelling system for food, some supermarkets who were fully engaged in the process decided to opt-out at the last minute.

### Step 5: Identifying the tools and approaches available to influence change

Consideration should be given to the tools and approaches that could be effective for the behaviour(s) and audience you are targeting. You should consider:

- the range of policy tools available and whether any have been applied in similar circumstances. The UK Government Sustainable Development 'Diamond Model' may also help here (see Box 1 above);
- the strengths, weaknesses and pitfalls of policy interventions, as discussed in section 3 above;
- what has worked in similar situations – practical case studies may prove helpful; and
- whether relevant theories can be applied.

#### Policy example: sustainable shopping and production

Our study includes the following examples relevant to influencing the key factors we identified above (see Boxes 2, 3 and 4).



## 4. Policy implications

### Box 2: The West Sussex real nappy initiative - changing individual consumption behaviour

The initiative has successfully increased the use of non-disposable real cotton nappies by new parents, using a combination of complementary interventions:

- an incentive payment of £30 for parents using real cotton nappies for their children over the first 18 months of their lives;
- nappies used in some of the county's maternity hospitals are cotton so that parents' and babies' first experience is with non-disposable nappies – research has shown that parents tend to carry on using the first nappy that their baby wears, and endorsement by trusted professionals also helps; and
- a communications campaign – new mothers are targeted at pre- and post-natal classes, and through Sure Start. Fathers and grandparents are targeted through local press, radio and bus to create a supportive context.

### Box 3: The Market Transformation Programme (MTP) – supporting more sustainable production

The MTP supports the development of policy and programmes by Government in order to increase the sustainability of products available to consumers. The programme works closely with producers and policy makers to:

- provide information about the sustainability of products and future changes;
- advise Government about how different policies could help change markets and increase the sustainability of products, and provide estimates of potential environmental benefits; and
- build consensus with producers about the best ways of encouraging innovation and increasing the sustainability of products in different markets.

### Box 4: The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) – influencing the whole system to increase sustainability of seafood

The MSC is a not-for-profit organisation that has developed an environmental standard for sustainable, well-managed fisheries. The organisation runs an international certification programme that certifies and labels sustainable seafood products. The scheme targets fishermen, fisheries, and consumers of seafood, with the aim of changing fishing methods and consumer choice. The MSC accredits 12 independent certification bodies around the world. These bodies then certify fisheries that can use the MSC label to designate their seafood as sustainable. Suppliers and retailers who want to use the MSC logo have to pay to undergo a supply chain audit to certify that the fish they are selling comes from a certified fishery. The MSC also works to promote, and increase awareness of, the MSC label to consumers.

See our main report for other relevant examples from our study.

### Step 6: Tailoring approaches to specific circumstances

A key finding from the study was that **even seemingly closely related behaviours are likely to work in different ways** – pro-environmental behaviours are extremely context and audience specific. Therefore, for each specific intervention it will be necessary to specify exactly which behaviours, or aspects of a behaviour, you want to target, who an intervention will be aimed at, and the context in which this is to be done. Each intervention will need adapting and refining in practice, if possible with input from the target audience. Even where you are applying models that have been developed for specific behaviours, or interventions that have been successfully used before, the different context and audience need to be taken into account each time (see Box 5).

#### Policy example: sustainable shopping and production

As part of our current example, you may decide that you need to develop a communications campaign to inform consumers about sustainable choices for buying household appliances. In which case, there is a need to specify, for example: exactly what segment of the population you wanted to target (for example, low income or middle class consumers); at what point you wanted to target them (for example, when setting up home, or when replacing a worn out appliance). You would also want to engage with the audience you decided to target to find out more about what might motivate their choices and what information might change them.

Relevant findings from our study include the following.

- **Social marketing principles could provide a useful framework** for targeting specific audiences and behaviours. For example, they offer a staged approach to developing change interventions, and a technique of subdividing target audiences (French and Blair Stevens, 2005).
- A number of our practical case studies illustrate how it is important to **tailor interventions to specific audiences and situations**, with substantial investment often being needed to engage different audiences and develop approaches appropriate to the specific context – a single model cannot be successfully ‘parachuted in’ each time. Box 5 contains a practice example from our study which indicates that a systematic approach at different levels may be required.
- **Some individuals or organisations are more important than others in spreading change.** For instance, on the individual level, formal and informal ‘champions’ encourage other people, and the organisations in which they work, to adopt more environmentally-friendly behaviours. **Engaging, and nurturing, key individuals or organisations** may be more effective in bringing about system-wide change than targeting the behaviour of all individuals or organisations.

## 4. Policy implications

### Box 5 – The Sustainable Hospital Food project: tailoring an approach to different situations

The Sustainable Hospital Food Project demonstrates a tailored approach to delivering a behaviour change intervention in different situations. The project was designed to increase the amount of local, seasonal and organic food used in four London hospitals. The project was delivered by dedicated project staff who carried out intensive hands-on work to develop a suitable, tailored, approach with each hospital, working closely with hospital caterers and procurement managers as well as producers, suppliers, wholesalers, patients and staff. After detailed research into how food was procured in the four hospitals, the main focus for the project workers was to act as 'go-betweens' to identify potential suppliers who could meet the hospitals' needs for produce and then work to get their produce to the hospitals. In addition, the project staff carried out other tailored work in each hospital such as: work with hospital dieticians to redesign the hospital menus; training for hospital caterers and small suppliers; promotional events; and monitoring progress and impact.

## Step 7: Understanding your circle of influence and working with others

As discussed above, it is necessary to recognise that you will be unable to do everything. As part of developing a package of interventions that you feel will deliver change, you need to consider what is within your power (or resources – including time, money and manpower) to influence.

**Key tools for extending your influence are likely to include partnership and devolving responsibility.** Policy makers may be well placed to take an overview role. Even if you are unable to exert an influence at all the points that may be desirable to influence a pro-environmental behaviour, if you understand the full picture, you may be able to work with or support others who can help fill in the gaps.

For example:

- our review of policy tools revealed the value of devolving delivery of behaviour change initiatives to local organisations that may have a better understanding of local audiences and contexts, and represent a more accessible point of engagement than central Government;
- our investigation of practical case studies included a review of the ways in which policy makers can support others to develop behaviour change initiatives; and
- if you have worked collaboratively with the change 'actors' and other interested parties throughout the process of designing the interventions, you will be well placed to identify delivery partners.

### Policy example: sustainable shopping and production

Defra will not be able to directly deliver initiatives to influence consumers, producers, and the context in which they act, all on its own. **A successful package of interventions will inevitably involve influencing practitioners indirectly and devolving delivery.** A clear overview of what is needed, combined with clever use of policy tools available could mobilise change without the need for extensive direct intervention. For example:

- the Market Transformation Programme, that supports policy-making by Government to increase the sustainability of products, is delivered by a consortium of contractors that provide the necessary specialist expertise (for example the Building Research Establishment); and
- WWF has developed a league table of UK power companies based on their commitment to cutting CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, providing information for consumer choice, and influencing the behaviour of the energy producers. The project used current UK energy policy as a reference point.

### Step 8: Setting up a process to achieve change

**Change is better understood as an ongoing looped process rather than a linear one with a clear end-point.** Any changes that are achieved, or naturally changing circumstances, will themselves change the behaviour in question. In a simple example, promoting energy issues could change social attitudes to energy saving. In turn this may lead to legislation or changes in fuel costs which will then further change household energy behaviours.

**Interventions need to take these dynamic aspects of behaviour into account** and should aim to achieve change on an ongoing basis, not at a concrete end point. A flexible approach with monitoring, evaluation and feedback that can influence an initiative is likely to be most successful.

Monitoring, evaluation and feedback should be built in from the start, and involve delivery partners and the target audience who we are trying to influence.

### Step 9: Putting the task in a wider context

Ultimately we are concerned with influencing pro-environmental behaviours in order to address pressing, massive global environmental threats such as global warming. Given this wider picture, it is essential that interventions and policies as a whole work in the same direction - think beyond the specific behaviour and intervention you are working on. Are there any other policy areas where clashes or synergies may occur? Look beyond the UK to include European and global environmental policy.

### Policy example: sustainable shopping and production

What other policies from different areas might impact on consumption and production behaviour, and the wider context that they operate in? For example: policies and programmes to support UK businesses and business competitiveness; economic policies that influence consumption, or taxes on different goods; regulations for products.

## 4. Policy implications

In summary:

- **Unpick and Understand** the behaviour(s) you want to influence: what different elements are involved?, how do the behaviours work?, and what could influence them?;
- **Pick and Mix** interventions that can interact to achieve change (taking care to avoid common pitfalls);
- **Talk and Listen** to the people or organisations you want to change;
- **Tailor** each intervention to the specific audience, behaviour and circumstances;
- **Know your strengths and involve others** – your direct impact will be limited, but you can influence and engage others to help out;
- **Keep it up, and keep learning** – design an ongoing process to change behaviours over time, with constant feedback;
- **Bigger picture** – remember why you are doing it and make sure everything pulls in the same direction.

## 5. Supplementary information

### References:

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## 5. Supplementary information

### Further information:

- The Market Transformation Programme (MTP) – [www.mtprog.com/](http://www.mtprog.com/)
- The Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) – [www.msc.org/](http://www.msc.org/)
- The Sustainable Hospital Food project – [http://www.sustainweb.org/hospital\\_index.asp](http://www.sustainweb.org/hospital_index.asp)
- The West Sussex Real Nappy Initiative – [www.westsussex.gov.uk/ccm/content/environment/rubbish-waste-and-recycling/waste-prevention/real-nappy-initiative.en;jsessionid=aCqHQHZ\\_\\_ZLc](http://www.westsussex.gov.uk/ccm/content/environment/rubbish-waste-and-recycling/waste-prevention/real-nappy-initiative.en;jsessionid=aCqHQHZ__ZLc)
- WWF Ranking Power Initiative – <http://worldwildlife.org/climate/publications/rankingpower.pdf>

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