



PRIME MINISTER'S  
OFFICE

# Behavioural governance in Finland



**Behavioural governance takes a multidisciplinary approach to changes in human behaviour and decision-making. The behavioural sciences utilise current research in the fields of psychology, social psychology, neuroscience, and other social sciences. At best, applying the principles of behavioural science to everyday policy preparation and decision-making leads to more effective regulation and better policy.**

The starting point for people-oriented administration that takes behaviour into account is recognising how people process information and how this affects our everyday behaviour. We can also gain insight into the assumptions and expectations administrators and decision-makers have about people's actions and how they affect governmental

policies. Behavioural science investigates how people really think, act and experience things.

Behavioural innovations have influenced the development of administration in many different policy areas. Policy is integrally linked to human behaviour. By recognising this, we can broaden our understanding of how behavioural science can be used to solve challenging social problems through good administration.

**FINBEPOL supports the work of the Government**

The objective of the Finnish Behavioural Policy Team (FINBEPOL) at the Prime Minister's Office is to promote and support people-oriented, knowledge-based policy and administration that takes into account human behaviour.

Work in behavioural governance began as part of the Behavioural Advisory project, which was set up in October 2020 in response to needs brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, it soon became apparent that a deeper understanding of behaviour and changes in behaviour was also needed in other administrative and policy areas.

The FINBEPOL team cooperates with actors in public administration, strengthens the administration's expertise and conducts experimental research. Pilot studies and experiments can be used to predict what kinds of operating methods will lead to better outcomes in different policy areas.

FINBEPOL-team also serves as a link to research organisations and the scientific community. The members of the Research and Innovation working group are experienced behavioural science researchers and experts who contribute to FINBEPOL activities. The Strategy Department of the Prime Minister's Office is responsible for overseeing the work.

The FINBEPOL team also disseminates the latest research findings to the central government, organises morning coffee meetings open to the public and maintains a network of behavioural science experts. In addition, the group produces a quarterly behavioural science review, which is available in Finnish on the website of the Prime Minister's Office at [vnk.fi/kayttaytymistieteellinen\\_toiminta](https://vnk.fi/kayttaytymistieteellinen_toiminta).

## **Citizens' Pulse monitors the latest developments**

Research in the behavioural sciences often starts from the need to better understand a problem emerging in a certain policy area. The topic can be approached using methods such as questionnaires and interviews with citizens. The Citizens' Pulse survey examines citizens' views on current topics, the actions of the authorities, the respondents' overall mood and their expectations for the future. Statistics Finland is responsible for collecting the survey data as commissioned by the Government. The first Citizens' Pulse survey was conducted in April 2020, and the survey is repeated approximately once a month. The group of respondents changes for each round. The invitation to the online survey is sent to the respondents via text message, and the respondents can complete it in Finnish, Swedish or English.



## Examples of FINBEPOL activities

### Youth vote

In connection with the 2022 county elections, Finland conducted its first experiment to examine the impact of text message reminders on the voting turnout of young people. In the experiment, young people (aged 18 to 29) received two text messages informing them about the schedule of the county elections and their right to vote. The aim of the study was to find out whether text message reminders increase voter turnout. The experiment was carried out by the FINBEPOL working group in cooperation with the Ministry of Justice and the University of Turku.

### Report on preparedness for crises and incidents

In April 2022, the FINBEPOL working group published a report assessing how community spirit, preparedness for crises and incidents, and taking an active role support citizens' psychological resilience to crisis. The report was based on the Citizens' Pulse survey commissioned by the Prime Minister's Office and on interviews conducted with citizens. The report states that preparedness is a civic skill that is necessary for everyone and that everyone should be actively and consistently encouraged to maintain. The importance of community spirit and sense of inclusion is emphasised during crises and incidents. In these situations, citizens need support from other people, but they also want to help others as best they can.

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(Finnish, Swedish and English)