

Annex E to the Statement of Requirements

Early Childhood Early Intervention Services

Note to Applicants: This annex applies to Partners delivering Early Childhood Early Intervention Services (ECEI Services). Where the successful Partner is not delivering such services, this annex will be replaced by the words 'Not Used'.

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1 Overview

1.1 Purpose

- 1.1.1 The purpose of this Annex to the Statement of Requirements (SOR) is to communicate to the Partner the NDIA's requirements and standards for the delivery of Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) Services, as part of the NDIS Partners in the Community Program.

1.2 Background to Early Childhood Early Intervention

- 1.2.1 The NDIA has worked with a range of leading Australian early childhood intervention practitioners and researchers to design a nationally consistent Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) approach. This approach will help identify and deliver the type and level of early intervention support each child needs to achieve their best outcomes.

Note to Applicants: The ECEI approach will be implemented as part of the roll out of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (the Scheme) in the Service Areas of each jurisdiction with children transitioning into the Scheme in 2017 according to the relevant Bilateral Agreements. The NDIA is seeking to engage ECEI Partners to deliver this approach from 1 February 2017 to be applied to all children aged 0-6 years with a disability or developmental delay as they seek assistance with the impact of their disability or developmental delay.

- 1.2.2 Evidence based research reveals that timely access to best-practice early intervention can improve the functional capacity and well-being for a child with a developmental delay or disability and their family. Early intervention can also benefit the wider society in a variety of ways, including reduced incidents of exclusion from school, longer term increased levels of employment and significantly reduced impacts of social isolation.
- 1.2.3 In line with evidence based best practice, the ECEI approach provides a soft entry into support. It focuses on family centred practices delivered in a child's natural settings, such as in the family context, preschools and playgroups. This approach will lead to greater inclusion for children by building on family strengths and growing the capacity of mainstream and community services to support children with developmental delay or disability.
- 1.2.4 The ECEI approach is designed to deliver better long term outcomes for children and their families and will contribute to greater Scheme sustainability, reducing lifetime costs and building the capacity of the mainstream system. It emphasises the importance of accurate and timely information from a wide range of sources to enable families to make appropriate decisions and to gain more control over their lives. It is designed to give parents the guidance and assistance they require to give their child an opportunity to gain and use the functional skills they need to participate meaningfully in key environments in their life.

1.3 Role of Early Childhood Early Intervention

- 1.3.1 The objective of ECEI Services is to support early childhood early intervention activities that will improve the independence and social participation of children with disability or developmental delay aged 0-6 years.

- 1.3.2 The Partner must work with the NDIA to ensure children aged 0-6 years are supported by a professional and flexible application of Early Childhood Intervention practice and approaches that deliver:
- a) Outcomes appropriate to the individual child as evidenced by research that underpins Early Childhood Intervention;
 - b) Family centric outcomes that support and strengthen parents and carers in their daily roles and provide them with the skills to assist positive development in the child's developmental progress;
 - c) Strong, flexible and purposeful partnerships with community and mainstream services to positively engage with non-Scheme participants;
 - d) Opportunities for and confidence by families to build and achieve inclusion in different aspects of the child's life;
 - e) The data required by the Scheme as it evolves and matures based on collaborative and shared ongoing data analysis and evidence of effectiveness; and
 - f) Evidence based, high quality and consistent access recommendations and reasonable and necessary recommendations where required.
- 1.3.3 The ECEI approach is designed to:
- a) assist children with developmental delay or disability, their families and carers to build and pursue their goals, exercise choice and control and engage with the Scheme; and
 - b) ensure that children with developmental delay or disability can be supported in their local communities and mainstream services enabling greater awareness and social inclusion for children with a developmental delay or disability.
- 1.3.4 ECEI Services will see the Partner engaging with children in a range of mainstream settings, such as preschools, play groups and other early childhood settings, enabling increased opportunities to learn and develop positive social relationships.
- 1.3.5 ECEI Services must be delivered through a family-centred approach that builds on the strengths of carers and families in order to improve the child's developmental trajectory and overall quality of life. This will include actively working with mainstream providers to enhance their understanding of strategies to build inclusion and to ensure that appropriate adjustments are made to address the needs of children with developmental delay and disability.
- 1.3.6 The Partner will support children with developmental delay and disability and their families in a variety of ways. They will be the first contact point for the ECEI approach within the NDIS and must bring to the role experience in shaping the most effective supports a child and family require based on detailed consideration of the evidence and practice of early intervention for children. This will include:

- a) Timely information and referral to other mainstream supports and services where this is appropriate for the child's needs;
- b) Activities and supports that are linked to the evidence and science of early childhood;
- c) Confidence that recommendations and support provided to families are well informed and evidenced by appropriate qualified and experienced staff;
- d) Provision of a respectful and supporting experience for the child and their family that is strengths focused; and
- e) A clear focus on the intention of the NDIS Act in the context of early intervention. At the point of contact with a family, the Partner must assess the nature of the supports that will be most appropriate and effective for that child including where required, assisting the family of a child who requires intensive early intervention supports to make an Access Request to the NDIA. If the NDIA grants a child access to the Scheme the Partner must assist the family to prepare a detailed Plan outlining the child and family's goals and identifying the reasonable and necessary supports required to assist in achieving them. For those children accessing the Scheme under Entry Category Three, it will be important to recommend a Plan of supports immediately to ensure timely access to specialised early childhood intervention supports.

Note to Applicants: The decision on whether or not to approve a proposed Plan is made by the NDIA.

- 1.3.7 To manage any perception of, or actual conflict of interest, families must be able to choose a provider/s of the funded supports that best meets their child and family's needs. The Partner is only permitted to provide these funded supports in exceptional circumstances.

1.4 Overview of ECEI Services

- 1.4.1 The Partner will, through their experience and understanding of the research and evidence of the ECEI approach determine the mix and extent of effort to be applied with each child. The Service is designed on the assumption that children require a range of different supports and interventions dependent on their individual needs. The Partner is expected to determine the type and level of early intervention support each child needs to achieve their best outcomes. It is expected that the Functions detailed below are delivered in a manner that provides children and families with timely, comprehensive and well-integrated early intervention supports that build towards better longer-term outcomes for children, fostering inclusion and participation in their environment.
- 1.4.2 Partners must be able to bring an understanding of the principles of an insurance scheme to their consistent and disciplined approach to data collection and flexible, innovative and truly individualised approach to supports that best meet the needs of the child and the family.

1.4.3 In delivering on these requirements, it is expected that the Partner may deliver a mix of supports across the following seven Functions tailored in such a way to ensure that the individual child and family circumstances and needs are responded to in a flexible and responsive manner:

- a) Function 1: Information Gathering and Profile Development in accordance with clause 3;
- b) Function 2: Community Connections in accordance with clause 4;
- c) Function 3: Initial Supports in accordance with clause 5;
- d) Function 4: Access Recommendation in accordance with clause 6;
- e) Function 5: Plan Development in accordance with clause 7;
- f) Function 6: Plan Handover in accordance with clause 8; and
- g) Function 7: Plan Review in accordance with clause 9.

1.4.4 The Partner must for all Functions:

- a) meet the timeframes for Participant engagement and phasing as set out in Annex A (Service Areas, Volumes and Remote) to the SOR;
- b) meet the Performance Indicators set out in Annex C (Performance Indicators Schedule) to the SOR;

Note to Applicants: The relevant Bilateral Agreement requires a certain number of Participants to phase into the Scheme on a quarterly basis and this is reflected in Annex A to the SOR.

- c) adopt a capability building approach as a fundamental tenet of the ECEI Services to guide Participants and Clients through their interactions with the Scheme and to build their confidence for increased independence, choice and control;
- d) build on the Partner's existing capabilities and resources to build family capacity to engage with social and economic activities and thereby reduce Scheme liabilities over the long term; and
- e) adopt a degree of flexibility in the delivery of ECEI Services to support the individual needs of Participants and Clients using evidence-based, best practice approaches.

1.5 Exclusions

1.5.1 ECEI Services excludes service delivery for all people:

- a) aged over 6 years; and
- b) living in Remote or Very Remote areas of a Service Area (as identified in Annex A (Service Areas, Volumes and Remote)).

1.6 Service Delivery Operating Model

1.6.1 The Service Delivery Operating Model (SDOM) is designed to allow for Participants to be grouped to five different streams that offer different levels and types of support to engage with the Scheme.

1.6.2 The five Participant streams are:

- a) Stream 1 Participants: are those who wish to self-plan;
- b) Stream 2 Participants: are those who will receive assistance in developing a Plan and implementing that Plan after it has been approved by the NDIA;
- c) Stream 3 Participants: are those requiring higher level of support to engage effectively and confidently with the Scheme;
- d) Stream 4 Participants: who have more intensive and/or complex support requirements that will be delivered directly by the NDIA; and
- e) Stream 5 Participants: children between the age of 0-6 years who are identified as exhibiting some degree of developmental delay or disability and who are likely to benefit from early intervention supports, and who may or may not need to become a Participant in the Scheme.

1.6.3 The Partner must provide support to Stream 5 Participants.

1.7 Timetables

1.7.1 The Service Areas, monthly volume of Participants and area considered to be Remote or Very Remote (and therefore out of scope for ECEI Services) are detailed in Annex A (Service Areas, Volumes and Remote) to the SOR.

2 ECEI Services

2.1 Overview

2.1.1 Early Childhood Early Intervention (ECEI) is the process of providing specialised support and services for children aged 0-6 years with a disability or developmental delay, and their families, in order to promote development, well-being and community participation.

2.1.2 The ECEI approach will be rolled out across Australia in line with relevant Bilateral Agreements.

2.2 Access Information

2.2.1 In addition to those children who are already participants in the Scheme from the Trial Sites, there are three entry categories of children likely to be eligible for the Scheme.

2.2.2 The three entry categories are:

- a) Entry Category One - Defined Programs: This category applies to children in State, Territory and Commonwealth funded programs with access requirements substantially the same as those of the NDIS Act. Most children currently receiving supports under these programs, subject to Commonwealth age and residency requirements being met, will be recognised as satisfying the NDIS Act access requirements. The NDIA will grant access to the Scheme and then assign the relevant children to the Partner between 2-4 weeks before their Phasing Date for:
 - i. the assessment of the adequacy and appropriateness of any existing supports and recommendations for the nature of and changes to future funded supports (Function 5); and/or
 - ii. the establishment of an immediate program of Initial Supports and development of agreement with the family to implement these Initial Supports (Function 3);
- b) Entry Category Two – State Non-Defined Programs: This category applies to children in State and Territory programs that do not have access requirements substantially the same as those of the NDIS Act. The Partner will be expected to engage with these children to gather information to understand need and circumstances (Function 1) and using the ECEI principles, determine appropriate next steps. These children will be assigned to the Partner 3-6 months before their Phasing Date into the Scheme. The Partner must then complete relevant elements of Functions 1-3 before determining whether access to the Scheme is recommended prior to the Phasing Date; and
- c) Entry Category Three – New: This category applies to children who have not previously accessed State or Territory programs, including those with newly diagnosed disability or children who present with developmental delay. The Partner will be the first point of contact for these children from the wider community including mainstream referrals. Using the ECEI principles the Partner will need to determine the appropriate next steps. The Partner must monitor the number of children in this entry category and provide this data to the NDIA in its Strategic Analysis Reports.

2.2.3 Where children entering the Scheme under a Defined Program (Entry Category One) are found to not comply with the residency requirements of the NDIS Act, the Partner must:

- a) inform the family that their support needs may need to be discussed with the State or Territory government under continuity of support arrangements; and
- b) offer that family appropriate Initial Supports (Function 3).

2.2.4 The Partner must engage with children and families in a flexible manner, responding to their needs and priorities while remaining mindful of the Bilateral obligations relating to access for those children in Defined Programs.

2.3 Eligibility for Existing Trial Site Participants

- 2.3.1 For children aged 0-6 years who are currently Participants in the Scheme in the Trial Sites in Barwon, South Australia and the Australian Capital Territory, the Partner must complete the Plan Review consistent with Function 7 and through this work to develop an ongoing relationship with that family to explore opportunities for early intervention supports and practice to further address their needs.

3 Function 1 – Information Gathering and Profile Development – ‘Getting to know you’

3.1 Overview

- 3.1.1 As the primary point of the contact through which children with developmental delay or disability between the ages of 0-6 years will be referred and can be supported by the Scheme, the Partner plays a critical role in working in partnership with the family, building the strengths of the family and recognising the importance of family centred practice.
- 3.1.2 Function 1 represents the first contact the Partner will have with families with children with developmental delay or disability and is designed to provide the Partner with an opportunity to develop an in-depth understanding of the needs of the family and child with disability or developmental delay. This includes gathering information to determine whether a child and their family could have their supports met through mainstream support services as outlined in the [‘NDIS Principles to Determine the Responsibilities of the NDIA and Other Service Systems’](#).
- 3.1.3 Delivery of Function 1 includes:
- a) acceptance and action of appropriate Early Childhood Early Intervention referrals
 - b) information gathering and referral to appropriate supports and services where NDIS supports are not required; and
 - c) development of a profile for each Client.
- 3.1.4 The Partner must apply the ECIA Best Practice Guidelines in the assessment and collection of information during Function 1.

Note to Applicants: Please refer to Annex C to the SOR for Function 1 Performance Indicators.

3.2 Acceptance and Action of Early Childhood Early Intervention referrals

- 3.2.1 The Partner must accept Early Childhood Early Intervention referrals from the NDIA in the form of a ‘work assignment’ in the NDIA IT System and from other referral sources in a child’s life as outlined below.
- 3.2.2 The NDIA and/or the Partner may receive referrals from a range of sources, which may include:
- a) early education settings;
 - b) General Practitioners or other health professionals; and/or

c) family self-referrals.

3.2.3 Where a child is part of an Entry Category One - Defined Program and access to the Scheme has been approved by the NDIA, the referral will be via a work assignment in the NDIA IT System.

3.2.4 On receipt of a referral the Partner must:

- a) schedule an appointment with the referred family within two Business Days;
- b) meet with the referred family within two weeks; and
- c) gather relevant information in accordance with clause 3.3 to contribute to the development of a draft profile for each Client at the scheduled appointment time.

Note to Applicants: Please refer to Information Gathering Requirement at clause 3.3.

The timeframes for meeting with referred families in clause 3.2.4 are consistent with monthly NDIA Bilateral targets.

3.2.5 The Partner must be able to be mobile and flexible to respond to the family's preference as to where the initial meeting described in clause 3.2.4 occurs.

3.2.6 The Partner must also have an office location available in the Service Area for meeting with families, if this is the family preference.

3.2.7 The Partner may conduct the initial meeting described in clause 3.2.4 over multiple visits, if this is the family preference or as required.

3.3 Information Gathering Requirements

3.3.1 The Partner must collect:

- a) a record of referrals to appropriate supports and services where NDIS supports are not required (as appropriate); or
- b) required information using the [PED-I-CAT Assessment](#);
- c) required information using the NDIA's Short-form Outcomes Framework (SFOF) for children, families and carers (this is a short series of questions embedded in the NDIA IT System);
- d) information to complete the profile for each Client, including:
 - i. the assessment of the needs of the child with disability or developmental delay, and the needs of the family;
 - ii. understanding of the family circumstances;
 - iii. mapping of current support services and activities;
 - iv. families preferred outcomes;
 - v. assessment of adequacy of current supports; and

- vi. identification of need for further assessment,
- 3.3.2 if such information has not already been collected by the NDIA and included in the NDIA IT System.
- 3.3.3 The Partner must enter the Client Profile in the NDIA IT System using the information gathered under clause 3.3.1.
- 3.3.4 The Partner must enter all information collected under clause 3.3 using the tools provided by the NDIA, into the NDIA's IT System.

4 Function 2 – Community Connections

4.1 Overview

- 4.1.1 The Partner must have strong community connections and understanding of ECEI services and approaches, and in the fundamental role that mainstream services and supports must play to ensure the health, education and social interaction of the child is optimised.
- 4.1.2 The delivery of Function 2 includes:
- a) building community inclusion;
 - b) engaging in capacity building in the community; and
 - c) providing information and referral to mainstream services.
- 4.1.3 Function 2 activities must be delivered throughout the Activity Period in accordance with the Community Capacity Building Plan approved by the NDIA.

Note to Applicants: Detailed requirements for the development and implementation of the Community Capacity Building Plan is in clause 3.12 of the SOR.

- 4.1.4 The Partner must work with community groups, services, organisations and other social structures to build their capacity to include and support children aged 0-6 years with developmental delay or disability.
- 4.1.5 Combined with a focus on natural networks and community services, the Partner must work at the community level to:
- a) effectively refer children to supports and/or provide once-off or short term intervention to children that aim to achieve increased functional development and/or individual capacity building, including allied health support and strategies;
 - b) work in partnership with the family to build on the strengths of the family with increased knowledge and capacity to support their child's development;
 - c) increase the capacity of community and mainstream organisations to provide services and supports that ensure children with developmental delay and/or disability can fully participate in a way that is meaningful and increases the child's learning, development or capacity; and

- d) ensure capacity building activities are delivered in a culturally respectful way.

4.2 Build Community Inclusion

- 4.2.1 The Partner must work with children, their families, carers, community and other parties to encourage change in societal beliefs and structures so that children with a disability or developmental delay and their families feel empowered and valued.
- 4.2.2 The Partner must develop and implement its Community Capacity Building Plan in a way which is complementary to those activities delivered by the Partner delivering Local Area Coordination Services in the same Service Area.
- 4.2.3 The Partner must undertake a range of activities to support families and build community inclusion including:
 - a) awareness raising: educating the general community about disability issues, inequalities, the impact this has on a child's life choices and the benefits of change;
 - b) peer support: bringing families and carers together to learn from each other through sharing information and support which will then enable them to meet their own needs within the context of their communities;
 - c) resource provision: identify where there are gaps in the appropriate allocation of attention from mainstream service providers to address the needs of children with disability or developmental delay; and
 - d) information collection: gathering information on community needs, attitudes and responses and providing accurate and timely information to individuals, families and carers to ensure informed choice.

4.3 Capacity Building in the Community

- 4.3.1 Partners must work in a collaborative manner with community based organisations to build and expand opportunities for greater social participation for all children they work with, regardless of whether they are Participants in the Scheme.
- 4.3.2 To build capacity in the community the Partner must:
 - a) inform the community about the Scheme, the ECEI approach, its goals, activities, processes and functions;
 - b) identify and work closely with key stakeholders in the community to explain the needs of individual children with developmental delay or disability and generally build on existing activities to increase accessibility, expand their embrace of and build inclusion of all children;
 - c) develop understanding of systemic and individual issues for children with disabilities in the Service Area to inform policy development and ongoing Scheme design and contribute these insights to the NDIA; in particular in the context of shaping local and regional markets and community development priorities that the NDIA may pursue; and

- d) help maintain and grow social capital and philanthropic efforts to strengthen community inclusion of children with disability and developmental delay.

4.3.3 The Partner must work to build local community partnerships and capabilities and identify and prioritise community development needs to address the needs of children with disability and developmental delay.

4.3.4 The Partner must record and maintain in the NDIA IT System its assessments of the accessibility, availability and attitudes of organisations within the community to inclusion requests.

4.4 Information to ECEI Providers and Mainstream Services

4.4.1 The Partner must, in collaboration with the NDIA, provide information to mainstream service providers to ensure understanding of the COAG Interface Principles.

4.4.2 The Partner must identify in its Strategic Analysis Reports where families and Participants have been unable to access mainstream services that are appropriate to address their needs.

4.4.3 The Partner must work with ECEI Providers to:

- a) facilitate access by families to services;
- b) explain expected outcomes, and the importance of measurement of these changes in funded supports within a child's Plan;
- c) explain expectations for the integration of the funded supports to mainstream and community based activities with which the family will be engaged; and
- d) promote evidence-based best practice in early childhood.

Note to Applicants: Partners provide a crucial link in the building of service capacity and expanding the knowledge of the principles of early intervention.

5 Function 3 – Initial Supports

5.1 Overview

Some children and their families will not require intensive early intervention supports to assist them to meet their goals. The Partner is expected to provide timely short to medium early childhood early intervention supports that will assist these children with developmental delay or disability and their families to increase their learning and development enabling them to actively participate in everyday natural settings consistent with ECIA Best Practice Guidelines.

- 5.1.1 Such support may include, but are not limited to, access to information, and direct provision of strategies, family-based education, therapy, parenting support, service planning and access to the community.
- 5.1.2 The Partner will (where appropriate) assist families to link to other government and mainstream services.
- 5.1.3 The delivery of Function 3 includes:
 - a) Providing a range of suitable supports for children and their families who do not require specialist or intensive support with the goal of;
 - i. increasing social inclusion;
 - ii. working with families to increase their capacity and skills;
 - iii. understanding the child’s developmental delay or disability; and
 - iv. managing the impact of that delay or disability on their family life;
 - b) identifying and connecting the family to mainstream supports appropriate for wider family circumstances that would benefit the child.
- 5.1.4 Function 3 is delivered through the following activities:
 - a) organise and deliver initial supports;
 - b) review and record; and
 - c) develop a summary report.

Note to Applicants: Please refer to Annex C to the SOR for Function 3 Performance Indicators.

5.2 Organise and Deliver Initial Supports

- 5.2.1 The Partner must in accordance with ECIA Best Practice Guidelines:
 - a) for those children where appropriate, implement the Initial Supports identified as suitable through the information gathering in Function 1;
 - b) organise and deliver appropriate Initial Supports for the individual either in family based settings or in group environments;
 - c) through these Initial Supports, work with the family to increase the child’s functional capacity and progress towards developmental milestones; and
 - d) work closely with the family to assist the family to understand the importance of and have confidence in practicing the recommended strategies that have been commenced in the Initial Support phase. Families should be given clear expectations of change they can expect to see and the skills to question and understand outcomes against the child’s developmental goals they should expect from other service providers.

5.3 Review and Record

5.3.1 Essential to the ECEI approach is ongoing data observation and recording of change and progress over time aligned to the interventions that were chosen.

5.3.2 The Partner must:

- a) record all Initial Supports and interaction with the child and family in the NDIA IT System;
- b) complete a second PED-I-CAT Assessment at the conclusion of the Initial Supports which is likely to be within 3-6 months of the commencement of these supports, but should not be longer than 12 months and include this in the NDIA IT System; and
- c) record in the NDIA IT System outcomes against the family's identified goals that were expected from the Function 3 - Initial Supports.

5.4 Develop a Summary Report

5.4.1 The Partner must develop a Summary Report for every child at the conclusion of Function 3 - Initial Supports, or whenever the Partner has determined that an Access Request should be made.

5.4.2 The Summary Report must capture:

- a) outcomes achieved as a result of the Initial Supports, including gains achieved through support from mainstream services;
- b) change in performance as measured against the second PED-I-CAT Assessment;
- c) the success and nature of family strategies established; and
- d) recommendations, if any, for the nature of future engagement with the Scheme for reasonable and necessary individualised supports.

5.4.3 The Partner must use NDIA developed tools and processes to complete the Summary Report.

5.4.4 The purpose of the Summary Report is to:

- a) Capture outcomes achieved from the Initial Supports provided, in particular where, the child and family are appropriately supported through existing supports and mainstream services; or
- b) whether the progress against milestones is such that they should make an Access Request to the Scheme.

5.4.5 The Partner must make the determination described in clause 5.4.4 in accordance with the NDIS Act and the ECIA Best Practice Guidelines (with the NDIS Act prevailing to the extent of any inconsistency).

6 Function 4 – Access Request

6.1 Overview

6.1.1 Where support requirements are identified that the Partner considers require a Funded Plan from the NDIS, the Partner must assess the nature of the functional impact of the child’s developmental delay or disability and assess whether the child is likely to meet the access criteria for the Scheme, including either:

- a) the disability requirements (section 24 of the NDIS Act); or
- b) the early intervention requirements (section 25 of the NDIS Act).

6.1.2 If the Partner assesses, in accordance with clause 6.1.1, that the child is likely to meet the access criteria for the Scheme, the Partner must provide assistance to complete an Access Request, including collating supporting evidence.

6.1.3 If the Partner assesses under clause 6.1.1 that the child is not likely to meet the access criteria for the Scheme, the Partner must recommend strategies for on-referral to support the ongoing needs of the child and his/her family.

Note to Applicants: Please refer to Annex C to the SOR for Function 4 Performance Indicators.

6.2 Assistance to Complete Access Request Form

6.2.1 If the Partner has the evidence and documents to make an Access Request as required by the NDIA in accordance with the NDIS Act, the Partner must:

- a) assist the family to:
 - i. complete an Access Request with sufficient information and evidence to make an access determination; and
 - ii. navigate their submission to the NDIA; and
- b) provide the NDIA with all information required by the NDIA Delegate to make a decision on the Access Request, including, but not limited to:
 - i. consideration of whether the child is likely to meet access criteria in accordance with either sections 24 or 25 of the NDIS Act; and
 - ii. ensuring all information captured about the child is recorded in the NDIA IT System, including:
 - A. the Client Profile, Family Service and Support Information gathering tool outlining the Initial Supports, and Summary Report;
 - B. all reports and documentation in relation to the interaction with the family; and

C. all community connections and family links with mainstream services.

- 6.2.2 The NDIA Delegate will determine whether a child meets the access criteria for the Scheme. Children who meet the access criteria to become a Participant in the Scheme will be notified by the NDIA.
- 6.2.3 The Partner will receive notification that the child has been determined eligible for the Scheme via a workflow advice through the NDIA IT System. This is known as a 'work assignment'.
- 6.2.4 Where an Access Request is declined the NDIA will notify the family and the Partner of the determination.
- 6.2.5 The Partner must have processes in place to manage a declined Access Request, including sensitively explaining why the Access Request was declined and offering referral/s to suitable mainstream supports as appropriate.

7 Function 5 – Plan Development

7.1 Overview

- 7.1.1 The development of a Plan under the Scheme is specified in the NDIS Act and is required to enable a Participant to receive reasonable and necessary supports funded by the Scheme. The Bilateral Agreements are modelled on an estimate of a certain number of Participants expected to phase into the Scheme on a quarterly basis for each Service Area as detailed in Annex A (Service Areas, Volumes and Remote) to the SOR.
- 7.1.2 The Partner must perform Function 5 at a rate that ensures Participants progress to Plan approval according to the rate set out in Annex A (Service Areas, Volumes and Remote) to the SOR.
- 7.1.3 The delivery of Function 5 includes:
- a) assisting the Participant and their family in the planning process;
 - b) developing a Plan;
 - c) confirming the Participant's/family's preference to self-manage the Plan; and
 - d) assigning the Plan to the Delegate.

Note to Applicants: Please refer to Annex C to the SOR for Function 5 Performance Indicators.

7.2 Assist Participants in the Planning Process

- 7.2.1 The Partner must contact the family within two Business Days of receiving a work assignment under clause 6.2.3 to organise an appointment with the Participant and his or her family.

- 7.2.2 The Partner must, subject to the family's availability, conduct an initial appointment within two weeks of receiving a work assignment in the NDIA IT System in accordance with clause 6.2.3.
- 7.2.3 Planning activities are to be undertaken, so far as possible, at a location and in a manner of the Participant's family's choice.
- 7.2.4 The planning conversation may be completed over several sessions if required.
- 7.2.5 Where the Partner has worked with the Participant prior to this point the Partner must, wherever possible, ensure that the original ECEI Coordinator is retained as the Participant's contact.
- 7.2.6 Upon commencement of a face-to-face conversation with the Participant, the ECEI Coordinator must sight proof of identification for the Participant, or the child representative or guardian, unless it is clear to the ECEI Coordinator that identity has already been verified by the NDIA.
- 7.2.7 Wherever ECEI Coordinators have verified a Participant's identity in accordance with clause 7.2.6, they must update the Participant record in the NDIA IT System to confirm that identity has been verified.
- 7.2.8 The Partner must:
 - a) assist the Participant and his or her family to complete a Plan;
 - b) submit the Plan to the NDIA for approval; and
 - c) record the details required in the NDIA IT System.
- 7.2.9 The Partner must use the information gathering tool/s provided by the NDIA to guide its planning conversation with the Participant and his or her family.
- 7.2.10 The NDIA will update the Family Service and Support Information gathering tool from time to time, including as a result of feedback from Partners, and the Partner must always use the latest version of the tool available in the NDIA IT System.

7.3 Development of a Plan

- 7.3.1 The Partner must record a summary of the outcomes of the planning conversation and assist the Participant to develop an appropriate Plan to submit to the NDIA for approval.
- 7.3.2 The Plan must include:
 - a) an explanation of the Participant's and family's current situation including goals, strengths, needs and wishes;
 - b) options for community and mainstream support;
 - c) a detailed record of informal support;
 - d) a detailed record of the current supports being accessed;

- e) any reasonable and necessary supports recommended to be funded;
- f) a narrative on the functional development areas for the child; and
- g) other information required by the NDIS Act and Rules as provided for in the NDIA IT system.

7.3.3 The Partner must consider a number of factors, within the context of the Scheme Objectives and the ECIA Best Practice Guidelines when developing the Plan, including:

- a) information gathered throughout the planning conversation, that helps the Partner describe the Participant's and family's goals, strengths and needs etc.;
- b) aspirations, wishes and preferences of the Participant and family;
- c) existing services the Participant and family is receiving and whether these are still reasonable and necessary;
- d) possible solutions which may not involve service provision for the Participant and family (e.g. assistive technology); and
- e) supports and activities that will promote functional independence and strengthen capacity to continue undertaking the Participant's daily activities, and maintain social and community connections.

7.3.4 The Plan must be consistent with the concept of Participant and family directed choice and control, and reflect the Participant's and family's needs and wishes.

7.3.5 The Partner must ensure the Participant's family understand all aspects of the Plan and are informed about what good early childhood early intervention is, to enable families to make informed decisions about what types of supports and services will assist them to meet their child's goals and outcomes.

7.4 Confirm Plan Management Preferences and Assign to Delegate

7.4.1 Prior to assignment of the Participant's Plan in the NDIA IT System, the Partner must confirm the Participant's and the family's preferences for management of the Plan.

7.4.2 The Partner must confirm with the Participant's family or guardian his or her choice for approach to Plan implementation and facilitate this choice.

7.4.3 Where a Participant's family or guardian prefers to self-manage the Plan, the Partner will conduct a risk assessment of this approach, using the Risk Assessment questions available on the NDIA IT System.

7.4.4 If the Partner completes a Risk Assessment under clause 7.4.3 and considers the Participant's family is unable to self-manage, the Partner must:

- a) make such a recommendation to the NDIA; and

- b) record evidence in the NDIA IT System, drawn from the Risk Assessment under clause 7.4.3, supporting its recommendation.

7.4.5 The NDIA Delegate will consider the recommendation as part of his or her approval of the Plan.

7.4.6 The NDIA will review a Participant's proposed plan after the Partner has documented it in the NDIA IT System and assigned it to the NDIA for decision.

7.4.7 Assignment of the Plan must include certification from the Partner that confirms:

- a) that the factors as set out in this section 'Plan Management Preferences' have been considered;
- b) that all recommended funded supports meet "reasonable and necessary" criteria (according to section 34 of the NDIS Act);
- c) that the recommended funded supports will facilitate an increase in independence and growth in capabilities;
- d) that the Participant's family is satisfied that the proposed Plan is consistent with the goals for the child; and
- e) that there is a recommended review date for the Plan, and an explanation wherever that review date occurs within less than 12 months.

7.4.8 The Partner will receive notification that the assigned Plan has been approved or rejected via a workflow advice through the NDIA IT System. This is known as a 'work assignment'.

8 Function 6 – Plan Handover

8.1 Overview

8.1.1 Upon Plan approval, the Partner must meet with the Participant and his or her family to ensure that the Participant's family understands the supports available and how to implement these.

Note to Applicants: Please refer to Annex C to the SOR for Function 5 Performance Indicators.

8.2 Plan Handover

8.2.1 The Partner must contact the family within two Business Days of receiving a work assignment under clause 7.4.8 to organise an appointment with the Participant and family to handover the Plan.

8.2.2 The Partner must, subject to the family's availability, conduct a Plan handover discussion within two weeks of receiving a work assignment in the NDIA IT System in accordance with clause 7.4.87.

- 8.2.3 Where the Partner has worked with the Participant and family prior to this point, the Partner must, wherever possible, retain the original ECEI Coordinator as the Participant's contact.
- 8.2.4 The Partner must ensure that the Participant's family understands the:
- a) reasonable and necessary supports that have been funded in the Plan;
 - b) importance of maintaining a focus on the strategies established during the provision of Initial Supports and community based activities; and
 - c) options available to assist implementation of the Plan.
- 8.2.5 The Partner must provide information to the family that will assist them to source appropriate service provider/s, including Registered Providers of Supports, to implement the approved Plan. This may include providing written referrals to service providers chosen by the family.
- 8.2.6 Without limiting clause 25 of the Grant Agreement, if the Partner or the Subcontractor providing ECEI Services is a Registered Provider of Supports in relation to supports that are approved in the Plan, the Partner or Subcontractor is only permitted to provide those funded supports to a child, where:
- a) any of the following exceptional circumstances exist:
 - i. there is no alternative early childhood early intervention provider available (eg in a rural or remote area); or
 - ii. the family has additional needs and would be unable or unlikely to engage with a new provider as significant effort has been undertaken by the Partner or Subcontractor to develop rapport and trust with the family;
 - b) the Partner or Subcontractor has complied with the Conflict of Interest management strategies agreed with the NDIA;
 - c) the Partner or Subcontractor has provided the family with sufficient information to make an informed choice; and
 - d) the family has made an informed decision to select the Partner or Subcontractor as the Registered Provider of Supports of those funded supports.
- 8.2.7 The Partner must maintain and provide to the NDIA on request:
- a) documentation of the families to whom it or its Subcontractor is providing the funded supports approved in a Plan, including the types of supports and the amount of funding for those supports; and
 - b) sufficient documentation to demonstrate that the family was able to make and did make an informed decision to seek the Partner or Subcontractor to implement their funded supports.

8.2.8 The NDIA will regularly review the information maintained by the Partner in accordance with clause 8.2.7 to ensure the Partner and its Subcontractors are complying with clauses 8.2.6 and 8.2.7.

9 Function 7 – Plan Review

9.1 Overview

9.1.1 The Partner must review all Plans for those children aged between 0-6 years, who have entered the Scheme through the ECEI approach, and those from original Trial Site locations, as these Plans become due for Review.

9.1.2 The Partner should note that the Registered Providers of Supports selected by the family to implement their child’s funded supports must report on the outcomes that have been achieved for the child in relation to the Plan goals and the recommended next steps to inform further funding. The role of the Partner is to receive this information, or request it if it is not forthcoming, along with family reports on functional change and consolidate the review recommendations in light of the ECEI approach. This should be done with a strong view to the role of informal, mainstream and community supports in regards to the goals set out in the Plan.

9.1.3 The delivery of Function 7 – Plan Review includes:

- a) information gathering for Plan review;
- b) determining whether the child continues to meet the disability requirements or early intervention requirements in sections 24 and 25 of the NDIS Act; and
- c) review of outcomes and supports.

9.2 Information Gathering for Plan Review

9.2.1 The Partner will receive a work assignment in the NDIA IT System for the Plans for Participants in existing Trial Sites, which are due for review, wherever possible more than four weeks before the current funded supports are due to expire.

9.2.2 The Partner must contact the family within two Business Days of receiving the work assignment under clause 9.2.1 and organise a suitable time and place to:

- a) explain the ECEI approach to the family if they have not previously been exposed to this approach;
- b) undertake an assessment of need based on the information that is available about the child in the NDIA IT System and current family circumstances;
- c) using the professional judgement of the Partner, assess the potential for improved outcomes from a range of non-disability specific funded supports;
- d) assess progress against originally defined goals; and
- e) collect and document key family service and support information, which encompasses a statement of any changes in and views of the family on effectiveness and relevance of supports across informal, mainstream and

community and any funded support recommendations (including using any relevant information gathering tool/s supplied by the NDIA from time to time).

9.3 Review of Outcomes and Supports

9.3.1 Based on the Partner's assessment under clause 9.2, and/or any relevant reports available from any service provider/s, the Partner must work with the family to complete any relevant information gathering tool/s supplied by the NDIA from time to time.

9.3.2 This will include using the approach in the ECIA Best Practice Guidelines to:

- a) work with the family to understand functional outcomes in relation to the child's individual Plan goals based on carer report, outcomes framework and reports from Registered Providers of Supports selected by the family to implement the funded supports in the Plan;
- b) set clear goals for progress to support functional outcomes;
- c) work with the family to understand opportunities to access mainstream and other community supports to address these goals; and
- d) prepare a summary of outcomes and recommendations, which includes progress against milestones from the previous funded supports and identifies opportunities for:
 - i. the child to transition out of the Scheme due to the success of supports to-date in addressing the impact of the child's developmental delay; or
 - ii. where there is a need to confirm a permanent and significant disability; or
 - iii. where there is a requirement for the funded supports to continue.

9.3.3 The summary of outcomes and recommendations prepared in accordance with clause 9.3.2d) must also identify supports recommended to address developmental requirements from other service systems and the ongoing family based strategies that have been developed with the family during earlier engagement.

9.3.4 The Partner must assign the summary prepared in accordance with clauses 9.3.2d) and 9.3.3 to the NDIA for a decision on future reasonable and necessary supports which will become part of the child's new Plan.