

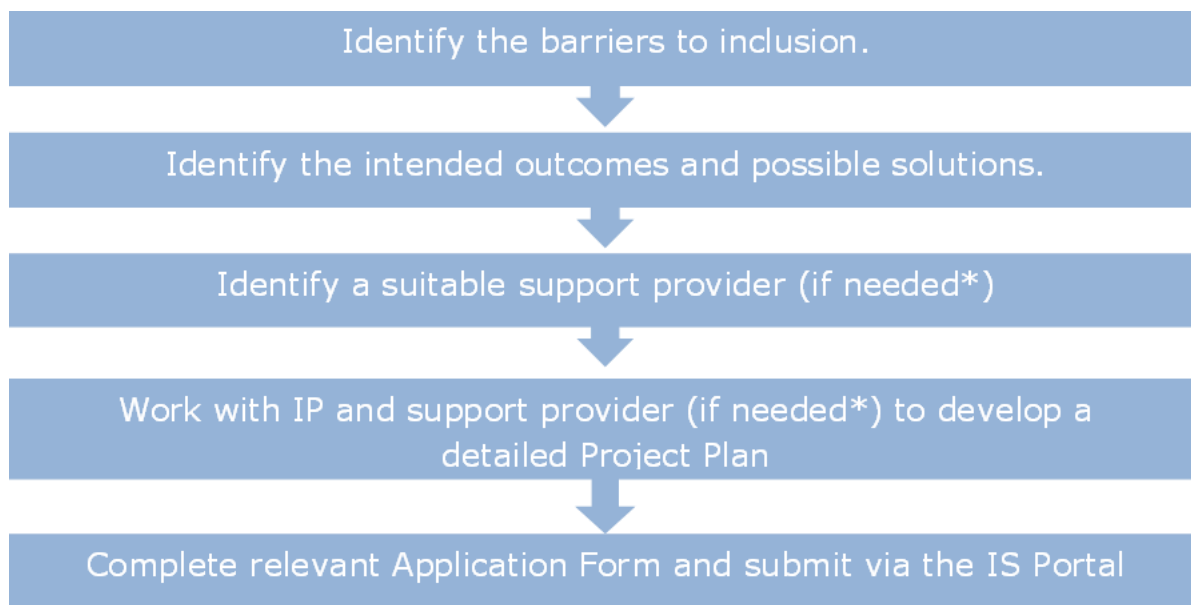
# Innovative Solutions Support

## Developing an Innovative Solutions Support Project

Innovative Solutions Support projects are most effective when the relevant barriers to inclusion are clearly identified and the proposed solutions and outcomes are clearly aligned to, and flow from, these barriers.

When solutions are not clearly aligned to identified barriers, or when outcomes are not clear, projects are less effective.

The following process will support the development of an effective project plan.



\*NB: while most applications will involve a support provider, some (such as those that aim to support networking between services in relation to a particular barrier) may not.

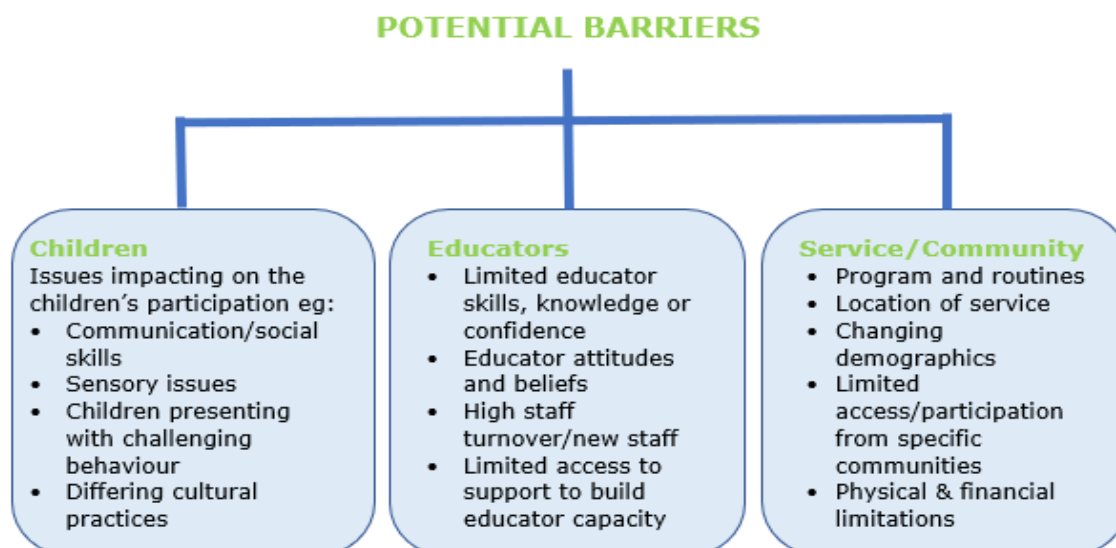
### Identifying Barriers

The first step in developing an Innovative Solutions Support project is therefore the identification of the barriers to inclusion at a service. By identifying barriers and the impact that they are having on children and educators the service is better able to plan appropriate solutions that have a realistic chance of success and will lead to the genuine inclusion of children with additional needs and the development of educator capacity.

The identification of barriers benefits from a reflective and honest assessment of the service's current capacity and circumstances. This can be undertaken by educators at the service, supported by the service's IP. Consider what is occurring that concerns you about children's level of participation in the program and/or their interactions with peers and why you think this is happening.

It is important to remember that there are likely to be multiple barriers to inclusion and these will not only be related to the children at the service.

Barriers can be related to children, educators and/or the service and broader community, as indicated in the following diagram:



## Developing Outcomes and Solutions

Once you have identified the barriers to inclusion for children with additional needs consider what specific changes or improvements you would like to see in order to address them. These changes and improvements are your outcomes.

Be realistic in terms of what can be achieved. Targeted projects that focus on a small number of related barriers tend to be more effective than those that try to achieve everything. If you have identified a number of barriers to inclusion, consider which are most urgent to address and/or which are able to be realistically addressed via an Innovative Solutions project. Your IP will be able to help you to determine which barriers are most amenable to Innovative Solutions Support.

Next think about what actions you can take to achieve your outcomes. These actions will be the solution that will make up your project. Talk to your IP about what strategies would be most effective and what project type (see diagram on pg.5) might be the best way to address the identified barriers. Consider the information in the Project Guides section of this document, to help determine what solutions will be most appropriate for your service.

If you require outside assistance, or expertise, consider who you could use as a support provider for your project. Talk to your IP and use the following questions to help identify an appropriate support provider.

## Finding a Support Provider

Identify the skills and/or expertise you are looking for in a support provider.

Talk to your IP about who might be suitable. Also consider asking for recommendations through your own professional networks or by searching online. You may consider more than one support provider in order to compare what support they can provide and decide who will be the best fit for your project.

- Once you have a support provider/s in mind consider what you know about them:
  - What is their experience with the barriers you have identified?
  - Do they have experience working on similar projects?
  - What are their values, philosophy, or approach?
  - How do these fit with your own?
- Do they come with a recommendation from a trustworthy source and/or can they provide references or testimonials?
- Do they have an ABN? In most cases this is required, although there are a limited number of exceptions. Contact the IDFM for more information about this.
- What is their experience with and/or understanding of Innovative Solutions Support? Sharing this guide with a potential support provider who is new to Innovative Solutions Support will help them to understand their role more clearly.
- Are they able to offer the support that you are looking for? Are they willing to be flexible and tailor their services to ensure that the project achieves its outcomes?
- How much do their services cost and does this provide value for money? To help determine this consider the Price Guide at the end of this document. If there are a number of potential support providers, consider asking for quotes in order to compare costs and the services that each support provider is able to deliver.
- Consider the availability of potential support providers and any associated costs with them working with your service (such as travel and accommodation). Refer to the Price Guide for an overview of reasonable costs in relation to this.

NB: In your application for Innovative Solutions Support you will be asked to explain why you have chosen your support provider.

## Designing the Project

Together with your IP and the identified support provider develop a detailed project plan to show what will happen, who will be doing what, and when and how it will be implemented.

The plan should show each of the project sessions or actions.

It should also show the number of hours of support and the type/s of support that will be included in each project session, and for the project as a whole.

Refer to the example project plan, accessible on the IDFM website, showing how this information could be presented.

Your support provider's quote must match the project plan. For more information about quotes see the Information for Support Providers section of the IDFM website.

You will need to submit the project plan and support provider quote with your application. For short term projects the project plan information can be included on the application form. For longer or more complex projects it should be attached as a separate document.

### **Considering Sustainability**

One of the aims of Innovative Solutions Support is to develop ongoing inclusion capacity. In planning your project think about how the outcomes can be sustained once the project is completed.

Consider:

- How will the project support educators to implement new approaches independently and avoid them becoming dependent on the support provider for long term support and guidance?
- How will new ideas and approaches become embedded in-service practice?
- How will improved inclusion outcomes for children continue once the project is completed?
- How will the knowledge and skills gained from the project be passed onto new educators in the future?

## Project Types

Innovative Solutions Support projects typically fall into 4 broad project types – Bilingual Support, Cultural Mentoring, Specialised Training and Advice and Guided Practice. Other projects that do not fit within one of these categories can be applied for as Unique Projects. These project types are outlined briefly below and in more detail in the next section of this guide. Services, in collaboration with their IP, should determine the most suitable project type to address their identified barriers to inclusion.

The Project and Application Guides will then help to support a service to apply for the relevant support.

<b>Bilingual Support</b>	<b>Cultural Mentoring</b>	<b>Specialised Training and Advice</b>	<b>Guided Practice</b>	<b>Unique Projects</b>
<p>Bilingual Support projects provide access to a bilingual facilitator and /or translating and interpreting services, to support the inclusion of children where language differences present a barrier to inclusion.</p>	<p>Cultural Mentoring projects provide services with cultural advice and mentoring in order to support the inclusion of children and families from specific cultural backgrounds.</p> <p>Cultural Mentoring support can be accessed in relation to all cultures, including Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander cultures.</p>	<p>Specialised Training and Advice projects provide training and/or advice to support educators to meet the specific needs of children with a disability or medical condition.</p>	<p>Guided Practice projects typically engage an external support provider with expertise in relation to the particular barriers being faced by a service. The support provider works with the service over a period of time to provide tailored professional development and coaching and mentoring of educators to enable them to effectively implement new approaches.</p>	<p>Unique Projects include new or unique approaches to inclusion support that do not fit within any of the other existing support categories, or that combine elements from several different project types.</p> <p>Unique Projects are usually highly specific to the context of the service/s involved.</p>