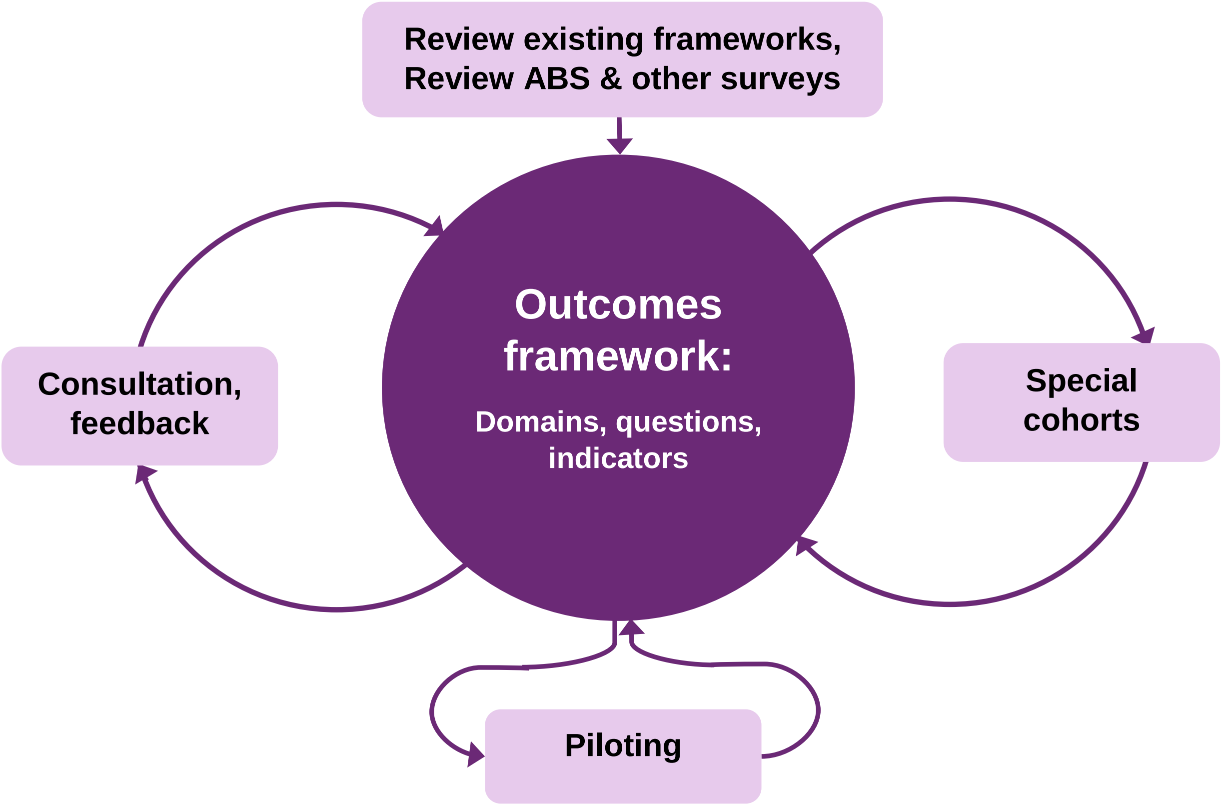
2. Outcomes framework – development and implementation

2.1 Development

The NDIS Outcomes Framework collects information on how participants and their families and carers are progressing in different areas (domains) of their lives. It is used to monitor individual and Scheme progress over time, to help uncover the types of supports that lead to good outcomes, and to benchmark against the experience of other populations (such as people without disability and other OECD countries).

Development of the framework involved a review of existing national and international frameworks, a review of available population data against which to benchmark performance, consultation with a wide range of stakeholders, including the NDIA Independent Advisory Council (IAC), and a pilot of the questionnaires. The process is illustrated in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 Outcomes framework development



Results of the pilot study are publicly available at https://ndis.gov.au/document/outcomes-framework-pilot

Leveraging research conducted by the IAC, the outcomes framework takes a lifespan approach to the measurement of outcomes, recognising that different milestones are important for different age groups. Hence different versions of the questionnaires are used, for both participants and families/carers, depending on the age of the participant. The current versions and domains are summarised in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Outcomes framework versions and domains for participants and families/carers

Domain	Participant version				Family version, for participant aged		
	Children from 0 to before starting school	Children starting school to age 14	Young adults 15 to 24	Adults 25 and over	0 to 14	15 to 24	25 and over
1	Daily living	Daily living	Choice and control	Choice and control	Families know their rights and advocate effectively for their child with disability	Families know their rights and advocate effectively for their family member with disability	Families know their rights and advocate effectively for their family member with disability
2	Choice and control	Choice and control	Daily living	Daily living	Families feel supported	Families have the support they need to care	Families have the support they need to care
3	Relationships	Lifelong learning	Relationships	Relationship	Families are able to gain access to desired services, programs, and activities in their community	Families are able to gain access to desired services, programs, and activities in their community	Families are able to gain access to desired services, programs, and activities in their community
4	Social, community and civic participation	Relationships	Home	Home	Families enjoy health and wellbeing	Families enjoy health and wellbeing	Families enjoy health and wellbeing
5		Social, community and civic participation	Health and wellbeing	Health and wellbeing			
6			Lifelong learning	Lifelong learning			
7			Work	Work			
8			Social, community and civic participation	Social, community and civic participation			

The pilot was used to refine the questionnaires, including removing redundant questions and revising wording for clarity. It also led to the development of two versions of the questionnaires, a long form (LF), similar to the versions piloted, and a short form (SF). The SF is completed by all participants and a family member or carer where possible, and contains questions useful for planning as well as key indicators to monitor and benchmark over time. The LF is completed for a subset of participants, and includes all of the SF questions plus some additional questions allowing more detailed investigation of participant and family/carer experience, and additional benchmarking.

For both the SF and the LF, the intention is to reinterview participants approximately annually, so that within-individual changes in outcomes can be tracked over time. Ultimately this will result in a rich longitudinal history of outcomes. These longitudinal data will be used to assess how changes in outcomes impact funded supports and overall Scheme costs.

2.2 Implementation

2.2.1 SF – transition

Since the start of transition (1 July 2016), SF data have been collected during the pre-planning stage of the participant pathway and recorded in the CRM. Key indicators for transition participants newly entering the Scheme ("baseline" indicators) have been included in the quarterly reports to the Council of Australian Governments Disability Reform Council (COAG DRC). These reports are publicly available from the NDIS website: https://www.ndis.gov.au/about-us/information-publications-and-reports/quarterly-reports.

From 1 July 2017, some transition participants started to accumulate one or more years of experience with the Scheme. For these participants and their families and carers, longitudinal analysis of the change in outcomes is included in this report. Some brief longitudinal analysis was publicly reported for the first time in the COAG DRC report for Q1 2018-19.

For participants who have been in the Scheme for approximately one year or more, the outcomes framework elicits participant and family/carer views on whether the NDIS has helped in areas related to each domain. These results are also included in the COAG DRC reports, for the same cohort of participants as included in the longitudinal analysis, except that participants who say it's their first plan are excluded.

2.2.2 SF – trial

Some SF data were also collected for trial participants, as part of a back-capture exercise conducted over the period November 2015 to July 2016. Interviews with existing participants and their families and carers were conducted by the NDIA National Access Team (NAT) and planning staff, and two external collectors. These participants had been in the Scheme for varying lengths of time at interview, so the indicators do not represent a genuine baseline, and analysis needs to control for length of time in Scheme. Two reports summarising results for trial participants have been prepared and presented to the NDIA Board, but have not yet been publicly released.

2.2.3 LF

The LF baseline is completed for subsets of participants newly entering the Scheme during an annual collection window. Repeat interviews are also conducted for participants recruited in previous years. To date, collection of the LF has occurred in mid-2016, mid-2017, and mid-2018. The design of the LF collection (showing the first three years of data collection) is illustrated in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 LF collection

Cohort	Data collection year 1. 2016	 2. 2017	 3. 2018
2016 cohort	First interview	Second interview	Third interview
2017 cohort		First interview	Second interview
2018 cohort			First interview

In Table 2.2, the 2016 cohort is the group of participants newly entering the Scheme during the 2016 collection window (approximately July-August 2016) for whom first interviews were conducted. Second interviews were conducted with these participants during the 2017 collection window (approximately July-August 2017) and third interviews in mid-2018. Similarly, the 2017 cohort is the group of participants newly entering the Scheme during the 2017 collection window. These participants were interviewed a second time during the 2018 collection window, which also saw third interviews collected for the 2016 cohort, and first interviews for the 2018 cohort. It is expected that this strategy will be followed during transition to full Scheme, while the number of new participants is growing appreciably.

LF interviews were conducted by external collectors. Results from analysing the LF data are presented for the first time in this report, including the first two rounds of data collection.

2.3 Numbers of questionnaires

2.3.1 SF transition participants

Numbers of baseline SF questionnaires for transition participants and their families and carers are shown in Appendix A.1, Table A.1, by version, for 2016-17 and 2017-18. These are the questionnaires included for the Q4 2017-18 COAG DRC report, representing active participants with an initial plan approved during the period 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2018.

Table 2.3 summarises numbers of baseline questionnaires collected.

Table 2.3 Baseline SF questionnaires

For the period 1 July 2016 to 30 June 2018:	
Number of participant questionnaires	141,638
Number of family/carer questionnaires	77,746
Total number of questionnaires	219,384
Number of participants contributing at least one participant or family/carer questionnaire	142,061
Number of participants receiving an initial plan	143,959
% of participants receiving an initial plan who contributed at least one participant or family/carer questionnaire	99%

From 1 July 2017, some transition participants started to accumulate one or more years of experience with the Scheme. For this report, active participants who entered the Scheme in 2016-17 and had their plan reviewed in 2017-18, and their families and carers, contribute to the longitudinal analysis. Numbers of questionnaires for this cohort are shown in Appendix A.1, Table A.2. The same cohort contributes to the analysis of questions asking whether the NDIS has helped, except that participants who say it’s their first plan are excluded.

Table 2.4 summarises numbers of questionnaires contributing to the longitudinal analysis.

Table 2.4 SF questionnaires contributing to the longitudinal analysis

Questionnaire	Number	% of 2016-17 baseline
Participant	40,154	70%
Family/carer	17,119	70%
Total	57,273	70%

2.3.2 LF

Baseline

Table 2.5 summarises numbers of participants invited to take part in a baseline LF interview, and the numbers who agreed to take part.

Table 2.5 LF year 1 and 2 collections

LF years 1 and 2	2016 cohort	2017 cohort	Combined
Number invited	2,177	3,608	5,785
Number taking part	1,114	2,330	3,444
% taking part	51%	65%	60%
Number providing a family/ carer questionnaire	892	1,832	2,724
% providing a family/ carer questionnaire	80%	79%	79%

2016 cohort second interview

Some of the 2016 cohort participants who were interviewed in 2016 were not able to be re-interviewed in 2017. Reasons for the dropout included refusal, non-contactability, death, or ceasing to be an active participant.

Table 2.6 shows the number of participants agreeing to be re-interviewed, and the number also providing a family/carer questionnaire.

Table 2.6 LF re-interviews of 2016 cohort in 2017

LF re-interviews	2016 cohort
Number taking part at baseline	1,114
Number taking part at review	792
% taking part at review	71%
Number providing family/ carer questionnaire	712
% providing family/ carer questionnaire	90%

Further detail on baseline and longitudinal LF collection is provided in Appendix A.