

Examples of *Partnership Options* that could be considered under the Early Intervention Program

DoCS information relating to the Early Intervention Program (EIP) suggests that 'integrated service delivery' may be assisted by agencies forming alliances, partnerships or consortia in order to deliver all components of the Program. Many organisations are considering what these options may look like in practice and are weighing up the anticipated benefits, limitations and risks that are inherent in various arrangements. Central considerations for organisations are the respective roles and responsibilities of lead and partner organisations and the funding and accountability arrangements with DoCS and between agencies in a partnership.

This paper aims to describe possible partnership options, present some examples where they are operating in other human service programs and outline some hypothetical examples of how they might operate in the EIP.

The examples are not exhaustive and are not intended to be prescriptive. Community agencies will have ideas for partnership arrangements other than the examples below.

However agencies should be aware that, while DoCS has undertaken not to rule out any partnership options at Stage 1 of the EOI, the option presented: *"must have a very clear approach to integration that minimises the complexity of the formal arrangements between DoCS and the service providers"*. (Director-General email 10/6/05).

Furthermore the Department advises:

DoCS does not have a preferred way in which agencies deal with each other regarding payments etc. However, where there is a lead agency, DoCS will enter into service agreements with lead agencies only and not with individual partners of various arrangements (DoCS website 10/6/05)

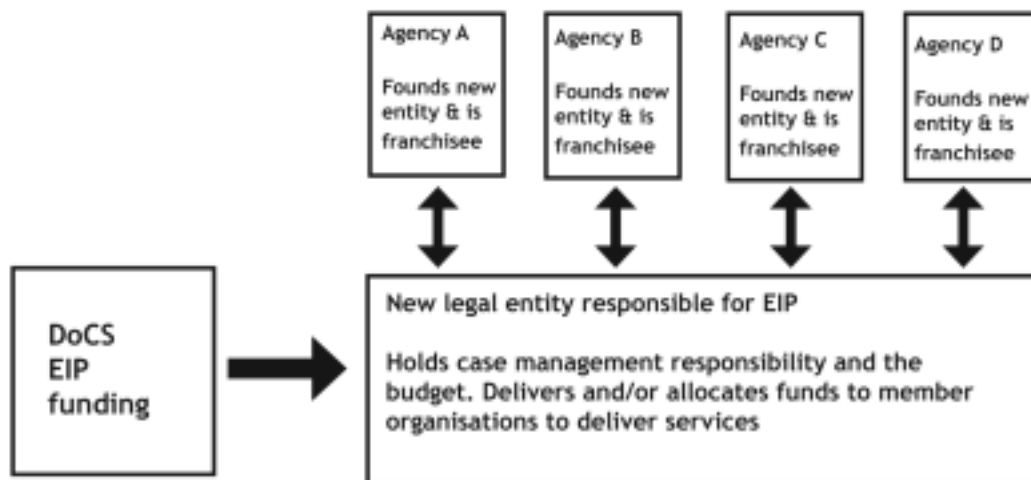
It is clear that whatever partnership model is proposed it must be able to demonstrate how it will deliver integrated service delivery and achieve positive outcomes for families.

DoCS have indicated that agencies do not have to have partnership arrangements formalised at Stage 1 of the EOI. DoCS have also advised that it is possible for agencies to submit EOIs for discreet and specific aspects of service delivery with an option for them to be brought into partnerships at Stage 2.

Agencies that are considering formal partnerships involving contractual arrangements are advised to seek independent legal advice before finalising those arrangements.

The examples below are based on the 'options for partnership' outlined in Appendix 1 of the DoCS *EIP Integrated Service Delivery* paper. Key considerations are summarised in the Table at the end of this paper.

1. Incorporated alliances



Community service organisations combine to establish a new legal entity that is funded by DoCS to provide or arrange all components of the EIP. The new organisation would be the lead agency for case management purposes and the 'budget holder'.

As the budget holder, the lead agency distributes funds to unrelated agencies or to the member organisations of the new entity who deliver EIP service components

Example

Job *futures* was established as a new legal entity in 1997 by not-for-profit community employment and training organisations. It now has member organisations in all states and territories. The Job *futures* network is a large provider of employment, training and support services across Australia. Job *futures* receives funding from the Commonwealth Government and distributes funds under contract to locally based member organisations, who effectively are franchisees of Job *futures*. Member organisations provide employment, training and support services. Member organisations retain their own local identity. Job *futures* is responsible for contract performance and member organisations have reporting and accountability obligations. (www.jobfutures.com.au)

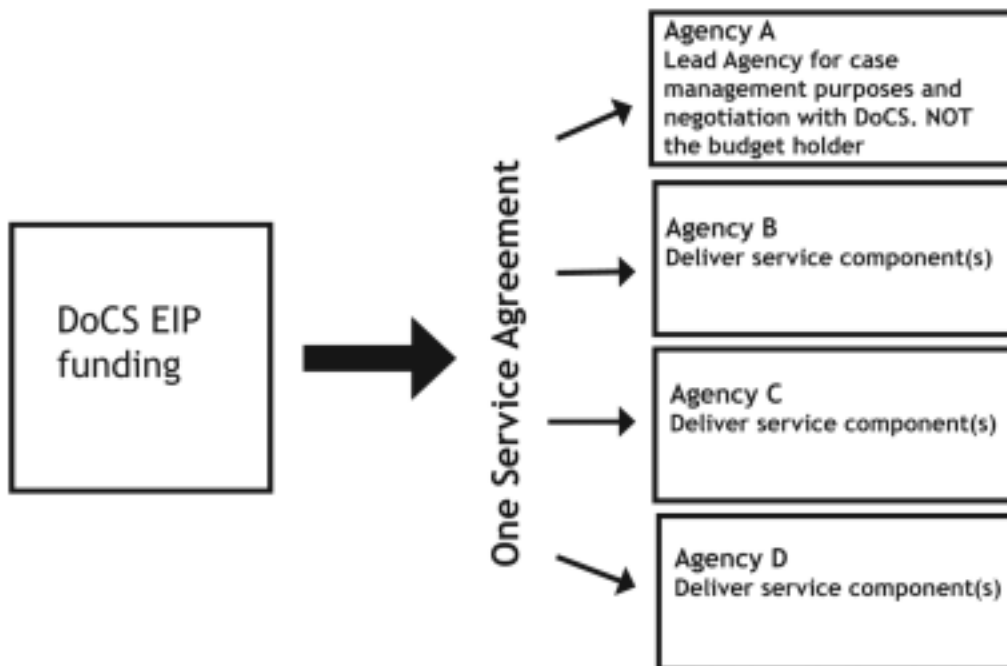
Hypothetical EIP example

Agencies with shared interests establish a new legal entity to deliver the EIP in designated area(s). The new EIP entity acts as the budget holder and case manager and signs the Service Agreement with DoCS. The new EIP organisation allocates funds to member organisations (or sub-contracts) to deliver components of the EIP.

Comment

Whether or not it is desirable to have new incorporated alliances established there may not be sufficient lead-time to develop such an arrangement for the EIP.

2. Un-incorporated alliances



Community organisations group together to form an alliance. There is one Service Agreement with DoCS that specifies the services to be delivered by each organisation. Each of the members of the alliance sign the common Service Agreement. One of the member organisations is designated as the lead agency for case management purposes although it is also possible that DoCS could be the case manager under this model. Funding is directly allocated by DoCS to each of the member organisations*. The lead organisation is nominated to undertake all dealings with DoCS. Each agency is accountable to DoCS for performance of their part of the Service Agreement.

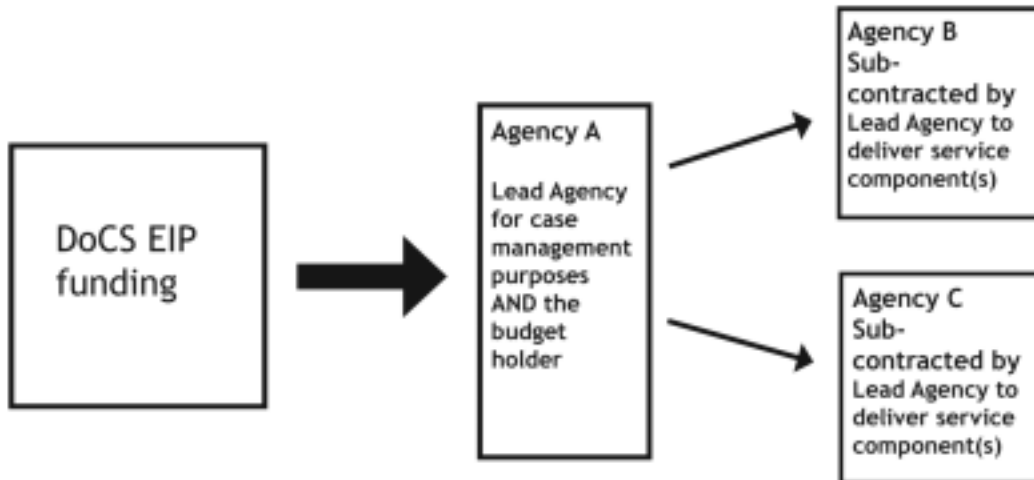
Hypothetical EIP example

A family support service, a child care provider, counselling agency and an Aboriginal family & community service that have an established 'natural' affiliation form an alliance in a regional area. The Service Agreement with DoCS specifies that: (i) the Family Support service will be responsible for case management and provision of home visiting services for non-Indigenous clients; (ii) the children's services centre is responsible for provision of quality child care; (iii) the counselling agency will provide parenting groups for non-Indigenous clients, and (iv) the Aboriginal service will provide home visiting and parenting groups for Aboriginal families in the EIP.

Each agency is funded separately by DoCS for their service component* and each agency is accountable to DoCS for the service they provide. The family support service is the lead agency that has the primary role for administration and coordination of the EIP in the area and for troubleshooting issues with DoCS.

**Comment:* there is doubt as to whether this model is supported by DoCS for the EIP. DoCS have indicated that where there is a lead agency they prefer to enter into a funding agreement with the lead agency only.

3. Sub-contracting



One organisation is funded by DoCS and is responsible for ensuring delivery of all of the EIP service components. The organisation then sub-contracts aspects of service delivery to other providers.

The organisation would be required to directly exercise case management responsibility. Other service components could be sub-contracted. The funded organisation is the lead agency and budget holder. The funded organisation is responsible for managing the performance of contractors and is accountable to DoCS for delivering the specifications as set out in the Service Agreement.

Example

The Commonwealth Dept of Families and Communities through the Strengthening Families and Communities Strategy funds lead agencies to establish “Communities for Children” in designated areas around Australia. The lead agency is the budget holder and distributes funds or purchases services from contracted agencies in order to deliver required services, activities and supports. The lead agency is accountable to the Commonwealth Gov’t for delivering outcomes as specified in the funding agreement. (www.facs.gov.au/internet/facsinternet.nsf/aboutfacs/programs/sfsc-communities_for_children.htm)

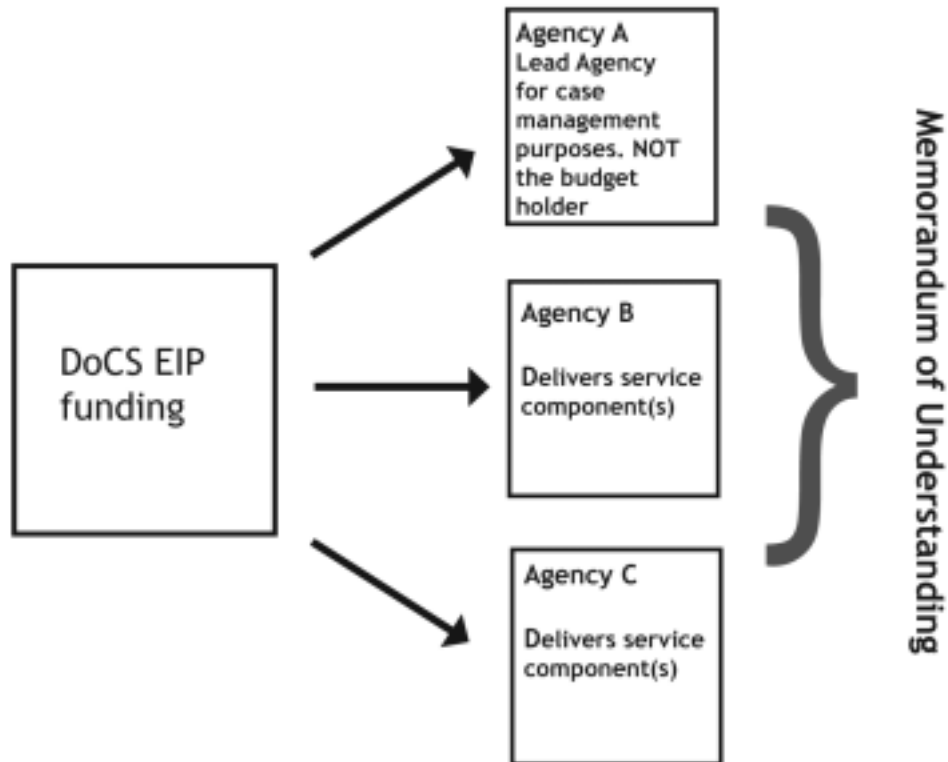
Hypothetical EIP Example

An established multi-service child and family agency is funded by DoCS to deliver the EIP in a designated area. The agency provides case management and home visiting services, but chooses to sub-contract the delivery of parenting groups and the provision of ‘quality child care’ to other providers. Brokerage funds are also used to purchase incidental goods and services for clients, (eg, drug and alcohol rehabilitation service, transport, breastfeeding education, other)

Comment

Under a sub-contracting arrangement the lead agency is responsible for managing contracts and is accountable to DoCS for delivering on all aspects of the Service Agreement. Sub-contracted agencies are accountable to the lead agency for the service provided.

4. Service partnership through MOU



Community organisations group together to form an alliance. Each agency in the alliance has particular aspect(s) of service to deliver. Each agency has its own Service Agreement with, and is directly funded by, DoCS. One agency is designated as the lead agency for case management purposes but is not the budget holder. It is also possible that DoCS is the case manager under this model.

The agencies have a signed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that they have formulated and agreed to. The MOU specifies how the organisations will work together to deliver an integrated service. Any problems with the MOU are negotiated by agreement between the agencies.

Example

This model is not uncommon in the community services sector. There are many examples including the BenSoc – Good Beginnings partnership (See 2004 ACWA conference paper, session 13, www.acwa.asn.au/conf2004/) Also Wynnun and Redland Integrated Care and Support Initiative (WRISCI) that outlines a partnership involving five agencies and the Qld Department for the delivery of wraparound care, accommodation and support services for young people. (*developing practice*, No. 7, Winter 2003)

Hypothetical EIP Example

DoCS funds two alliances in different parts of a large regional area. Lead agency in Alliance 1 is a women's refuge with an established outreach service. Other members of the alliance include the Aboriginal children's service, the neighbourhood centre and a health funded drug & alcohol counselling service..

Alliance 2 has, as the lead agency, an established church-aided family support service. Other members of the alliance include a mobile playgroup/children's service and a resource centre that specialises in working with parents with a mental illness.

In both alliances the agencies have an established track record of working together to provide interventions for vulnerable families and have formulated a detailed Memorandum of Understanding for delivering the EIP. The lead agency is responsible for case management while each agency in the alliances is funded directly by DoCS and is accountable to DoCS for service performance.

5. Other options

Other 'options for partnership' listed in Appendix 1 of the DoCS paper *Integrated Service Delivery: Guidelines for Non Government Agencies* include **Joint ventures** where two or more 'parent' companies agree to invest in a new entity to explore a new enterprise. And **Mentoring** arrangements where services work collaboratively and one agency provides an advisory role to another agency. Informal mentoring is common in the community services sector where one agency advises and assists another. Formal mentoring is less common, although there are examples such as the Burnside – Ryde Family Support Service arrangement.

Joint ventures are unlikely to be commenced at this stage for the EIP. Mentoring arrangements have many potential benefits but are likely to supplement rather than replace other partnership options.

Partnership Options for the Early Intervention Program

Option	Description	Lead agency powers	Accountability to DoCS	Accountability to lead agency
Incorporated alliances	Community service organisations combine to establish a new legal entity that is funded by DoCS to provide all or part of the EIP.	The new organisation is the lead agency for case management purposes and is the 'budget holder'. As the budget holder the lead agency distributes funds to unrelated agencies or to the member organisations of the new entity (franchisees).	Lead agency is accountable to DoCS for proper use of funds and for performance of the overall service. This means that the lead agency takes on responsibility for what the franchisees do.	Franchisees are accountable to the lead agency for proper use of funds and for performance of service
Un-incorporated alliances	Community organisations group together to form an alliance. There is one Service Agreement with DoCS that specifies the services to be delivered by each organisation. Each of the members of the alliance sign the common Service Agreement.	One of the member organisations is designated as the lead agency for case management purposes. Funding is directly allocated by DoCS to each of the member organisations.	The lead organisation is nominated to undertake all dealings with DoCS. All parties are legally accountable to DoCS for performance but in the first instance there would be liaison with the lead agency.	All signatories would agree that the lead agency can undertake liaison with DoCS on their behalf but there is not legal accountability to the lead agency

Sub-contracting	One organisation is funded by DoCS and is responsible for ensuring delivery of all of the EIP service components. The organisation then sub-contracts aspects of service delivery to other providers.	The signatory organisation would be required to directly exercise case management responsibility. Other service components could be sub-contracted. The funded organisation is the lead agency and budget holder.	The funded organisation is responsible for managing the performance of contractors and is accountable to DoCS for delivering the specifications as set out in the Service Agreement.	The sub-contractors are accountable to the funded organisation for delivering the service component as prescribed in the contract.
Service partnership through MOU	Community organisations group together to form an alliance. Each agency in the alliance has particular aspect(s) of service to deliver. Each agency has its own Service Agreement with, and is directly funded by, DoCS.	One agency is designated as the lead agency for case management purposes but is not the budget holder. Alternatively DoCS could be the case manager under this model.	The agencies sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that they have formulated and agreed to. This will specify roles and components of service to be delivered by each agency. Each agency is separately funded and each is accountable to DoCS.	The MOU specifies how the organisations will work together to deliver an integrated service. Any problems with the MOU are negotiated by agreement. The lead (case management) agency may take a lead role in this as per the MOU but there is no legal accountability by partner organisations to the lead agency. Alternatively DoCS could be the case manager.