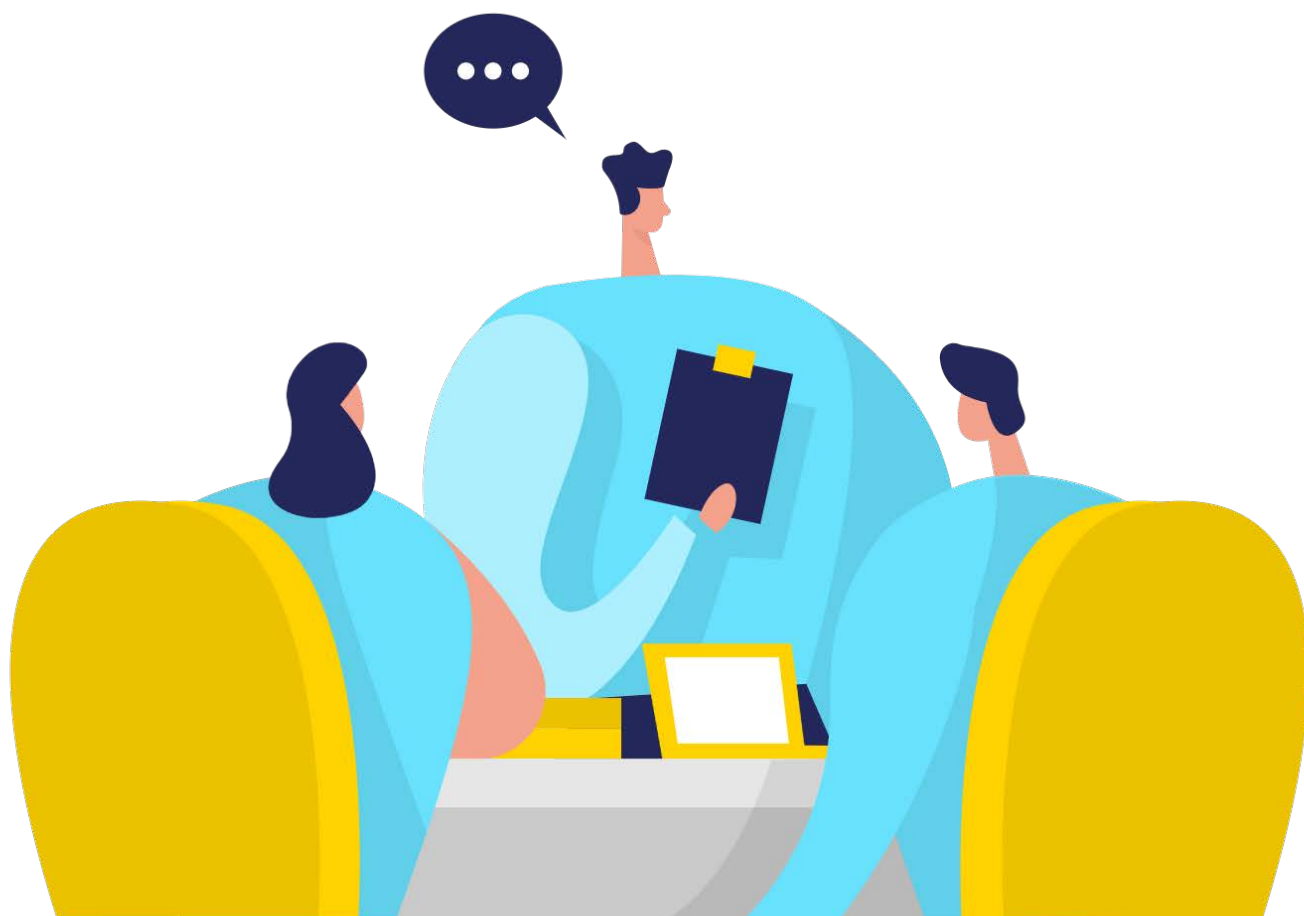




Staff Guide for professionals based on project results

# Introduction to the **I-DECIDE** Methodology for Supported Decision-Making



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of the European Union



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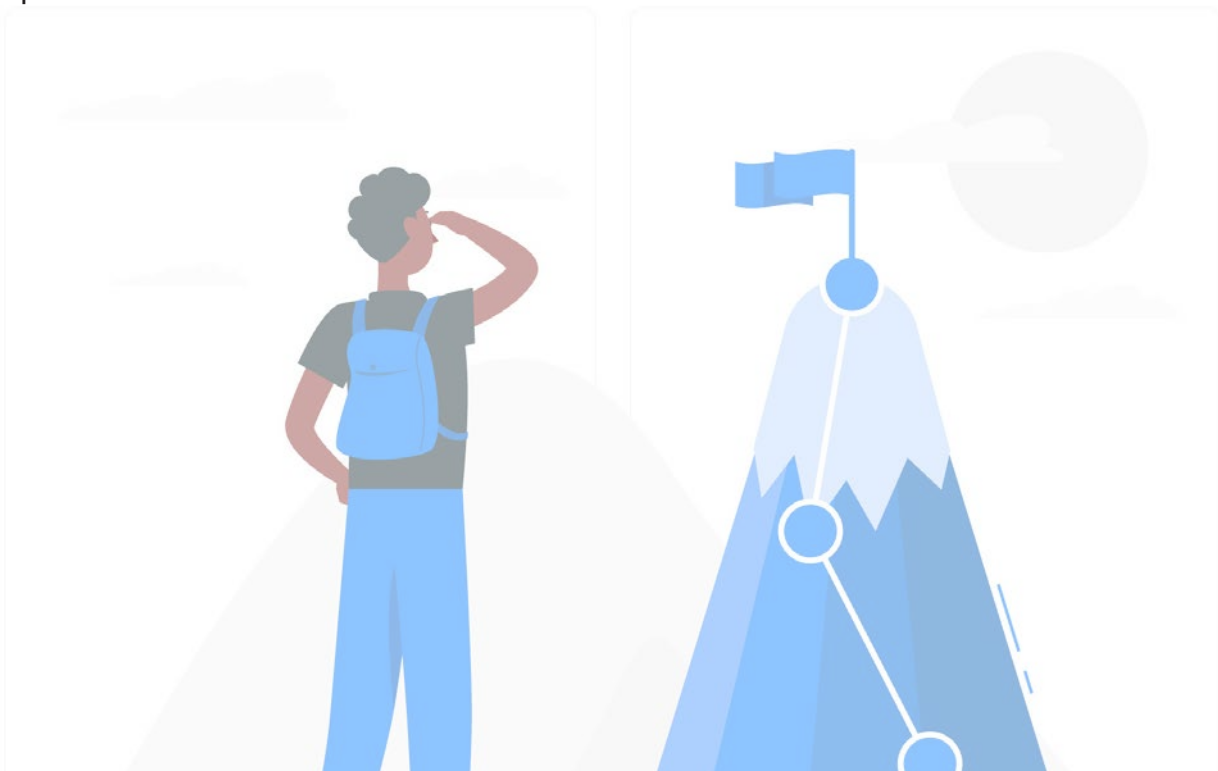
# 1 // Introduction to the I-DECIDE methodology and objectives

I-DECIDE is a European project funded under the Erasmus + framework that offers an innovative approach to the way in which professionals in the social sector (or working in services aimed at people with disabilities) offer support to this group so that they can make their own decisions, with a particular emphasis on the support needs of people with intellectual disabilities or who experience other types of disability with similar support needs.

I-DECIDE starts from the premise that supported decision making can help all people to exercise as much control as possible over their lives regardless of the legal framework or legal context and the restrictions these may place on individuals. Supported decision making is a general principle or approach that can be applied at different levels or spheres of a person's life, from high-level decisions such as getting married, having a child or living independently, to lower-level decisions such as choosing what to spend their money on or whether to change their doctor.

The ability to decide on matters affecting our lives is a right that should be enjoyed by all, including people with disabilities, as recognized by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Throughout history and even now, people with disabilities have been deprived of deciding on everything from the most basic aspects of their daily lives to more or less complex aspects of their money, their health or even their own bodies.

I-DECIDE provides the professional with tools to facilitate the person's expression of interests, wishes or preferences and, at the same time, defines its own methodology in which the person designs his/her own support plan together with a support professional and a professional who acts as a facilitator.



## 2 // Results from the I-DECIDE Project



Supported Decision Making



I-DECIDE has produced the following tools:

- A report on existing good practices in decision support
- A reference document defining the theoretical basis and the role of the support professional and the role of the facilitator
- A model support agreement in accessible format
- A Health Support Needs Assessment Template
- A personal finance support needs assessment template
- Support manuals for professionals in three specific areas: consumer rights, personal finance and health
- A training course aimed at professionals who offer support to people with disabilities to increase their practical skills and deepen their knowledge of the I-DECIDE methodology.

This guide is the result of a collaborative work process carried out and tested by the project partners:



Belgium – European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities, **EASPD** ([www.easpd.eu](http://www.easpd.eu))



Finland – **KVPS** ([www.kvps.fi](http://www.kvps.fi))



Greece - **EEA Margarita** ([www.eeamargarita.gr](http://www.eeamargarita.gr))



Spain:

**Support-Girona** ([www.supportgirona.cat](http://www.supportgirona.cat))



**Fundació Campus Arnau d'Escala** ([www.campusarnau.org](http://www.campusarnau.org))



UK – **Social Care Training** ([www.sctltd.uk](http://www.sctltd.uk))

## Challenges of the I-DECIDE Project

Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities includes the right of persons with disabilities to enjoy full legal capacity on an equal basis with others in society. This article is a fundamental pillar of the Convention, a treaty that expands on the rights set forth in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Convention has been ratified by 181 countries worldwide since it was signed at the United Nations General Assembly in New York on 13 December 2006 and came into force as a binding instrument in European law on 22 January 2011. Almost all EU states have made the Convention binding in law at a regional and/or national level at some time since 2006.

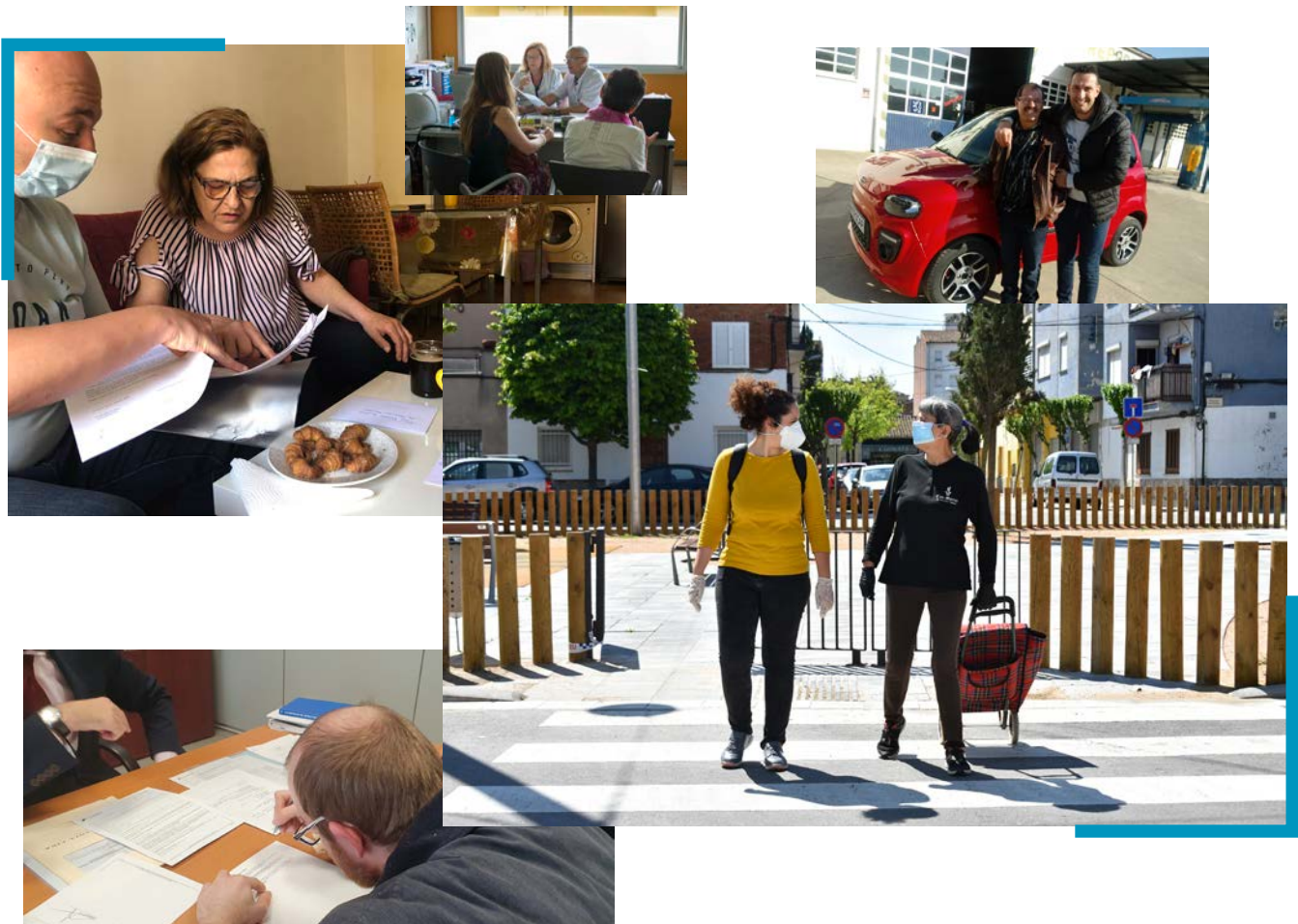
Specifically, article 12 of the Convention defines Legal Capacity in such a way that all persons with disabilities can exercise the right to decide on matters affecting their own lives, including matters in which they have not traditionally been able to do so, such as those relating to their own health, the supervision and management of their personal finances or matters relating to their property. In addition, the Convention urges Europe and the Member States that have acceded to it to take the necessary steps and make the necessary changes to implement it, as stated in the Convention itself.

### ARTICLE 12 OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

“5. Subject to the provisions of this article, States Parties shall take all appropriate and effective measures to ensure the equal right of persons with disabilities to own or inherit property, to control their own financial affairs and to have equal access to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit, and shall ensure that persons with disabilities are not arbitrarily deprived of their property.”

I-DECIDE offers an innovative approach that is aligned with respect for the rights set out in the Convention by providing professionals with practical methodology, tools and instruments. Helping to define the relationship between the person with a disability and the different support professionals aims to lay the foundations for a supported decision making decision-making support service and to contribute to making the provisions of the Convention a reality in the European Union and the Member States as a whole.

In the Spanish and Catalan context, we have a legal framework that is not in line with the provisions and interpretation of Article 12 of the Convention in the strict sense. In the case of Spain, the Civil Code still provides for measures in which the representation of the person or the substitution of a decision is carried out by a third party, without giving rise to any decision support mechanism. In the case of the Catalan Civil Code, the figure that is most in line with the change brought about by the Convention is 'assistance', a voluntary mechanism that does not involve any loss or modification of the person's capacity and which is becoming increasingly widespread in legal and social practice as a whole.



## 3 // What is supported decision-making or SDM?

SDM is the acronym for Supported Decision-Making. This concept implies a change of legal, social, organizational and practical paradigm in the way of providing services that address or works with people with disabilities. We pointed out above that in Catalonia the instrument of 'assistance' included in the Catalan Civil Code is the legal instrument that is best aligned with the Convention with respect to article 12, but it is also the one that offers more guarantees to the person in relation to the respect of their rights. On a practical and organisational level, any model of social intervention based on supported decision making requires a rethink of the role of professionals in order to overcome paternalistic approaches in which the latter are the ones who decide for the person with disabilities. In the case of 'assistance', the role of the professional is determined by the person who has voluntarily chosen or appointed him/her as an assistant, since it is this person who assumes a leading role in the way he/she wants the professional to act and in which spheres and to what extent she can act. This change of roles and the way in which the person being supported becomes the central axis that leads and directs every intervention according to his/her will and preferences is one of the ways in which we can understand supported decision making.

### Supported Decision-Making as the basis of the I-DECIDE Project

The definition of decision support is a matter of legal or theoretical precision that admits many nuances. Translating this concept into practice by articulating a system and a methodology that fits in with existing services increases the degree of complexity.

To articulate this paradigm shift in which service provision and, by extension, the relationship between the professional and the person with support needs must shift towards individualization and personalization to increase the person's autonomy and decision-making capacity, we must consider several factors.

We can identify, in the first place, how the creation of bonds of trust and a sustained bond over time between the person and the professional contributes to generating a space of confidence in which the person is capable of expressing to the professional those desires, wishes or preferences in relation to his or her own person.

Secondly, it is necessary to equip the professional with practical tools that help to channel the wishes and preferences expressed by the person into concrete, adequate and achievable actions, taking into account the context of the person and the resources available by and for the person.

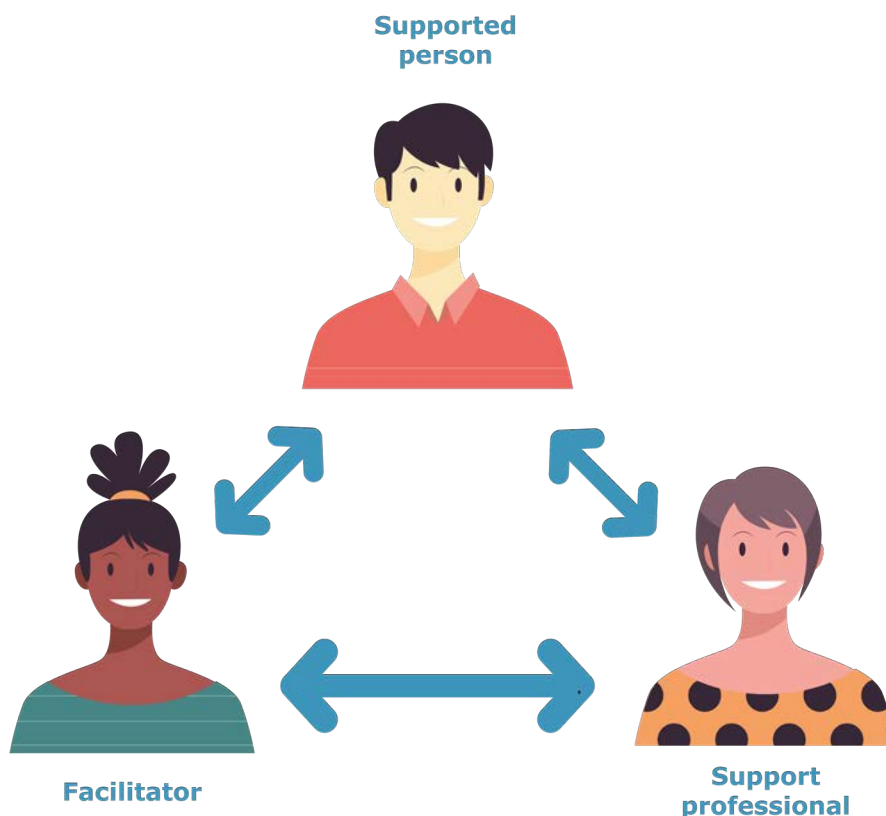


Thirdly, safeguards must be put in place to ensure that the relationship between the individual and the professional is free from any undue influence or situation of risk or abuse by the professional or by the services themselves.

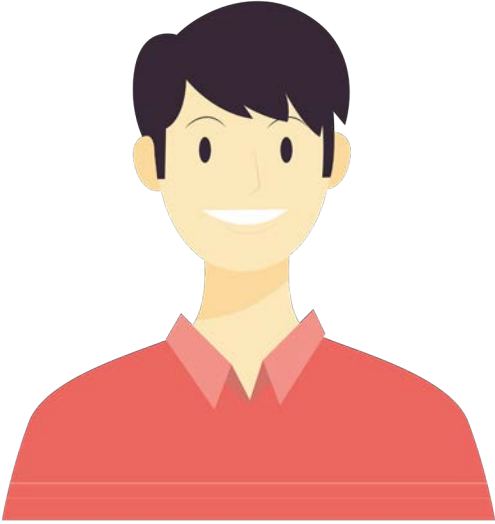
I-DECIDE has developed a methodology that can be transferred to existing service provision models and that takes into account the three factors mentioned above, using the support agreement between the person, the professional and the facilitator, complemented by assessment tools that make it possible to identify the person's evolution in different areas. I-DECIDE extensively develops this triangular structure in different phases. Each of these phases and the characteristics that define it as a model are explored in detail in the complete materials produced by the project. Below is a brief description of both the model and the tools developed to implement it.

## I-DECIDE Model

In order to develop an effective support relationship with safeguards for both the person who requires this support and the professional who offers it, I-DECIDE distinguishes three essential roles in the process: the supported person, the support professional and the facilitator. The three parties work in a cooperative manner and communication and contact between them is frequent and constant. The relationship between them must be fluid, dynamic and based on trust in order to connect the wishes and preferences of the person with support needs with the support professional. They structure their work as follows:



## I-DECIDE Model



**Supported person:** a person who requires support in making decisions and decides to contact a professional who offers support in making his or her own decisions. The supported person should be clear about his/her rights in relation to his/her ability to decide and should be able to choose which professional he/she wants to be supported by. In this way a relationship of trust can be established in which the person communicates their wishes, preferences or interests about aspects of their life.



**Facilitator:** a person who works on the support relationship externally. He or she will ensure that the relationship works at all times and will be responsible for advising and guiding the process of establishing each decision-support agreement. His/her work can be understood as a specialized manager of the relationship between the person and the support professional: he/she helps to create it, helps to monitor it and helps in the resolution of any doubts that may arise on both sides. Conceptually, the facilitator acts as a double safeguard, since he or she ensures the quality of the relationship between the support professional and the person and avoids situations in which the person's rights are not respected.

## I-DECIDE Model



**Support professional:** this can be anyone in the user's care environment, family or social network. Preferably it will be a professional from the field of work or social education and will guide the supported person throughout the decision making support process. The support professional must be able to respect the decisions of the supported person, must have empathy and assertive communication skills and, at all times, must be clear that their role is merely to support the decision making process, never to decide for the other person. He or she will focus on seeking and organizing information, clarifying the person's doubts, proposing alternatives and communicating the relevant information for each specific situation through a support plan that will help the person to materialize his or her decision.

## Tools of reference in a supported decision-making framework

To structure the support relationship, I-DECIDE provides professionals and organizations with various tools. Let's see them:

- **Support agreement:** a document in which the person accompanied asks for support and where there is a formal record of who he/she wants to be the person providing this support. This document, which must be signed by all the parties involved, also includes the areas, aspects or fields on which the person requires support.
- **Support plan:** the I-DECIDE support plan model is a simple document that is formalized by the professional together with the person where the actions to be carried out by different parties are detailed in order to materialize or work towards the achievement of a decision, interest or will previously expressed in the support agreement.
- **Assessment tools and satisfaction surveys:** I-DECIDE provides professionals with simple assessment scales with which the professional, together with the person, identifies specific aspects in which the person may need support. These tools are complementary and can be used flexibly, both before and after the support agreement or plan has been developed. I-DECIDE has satisfaction surveys to collect the person's opinion about the process and the development of the support plan designed to improve the intervention of all professionals involved.

## 4// I-DECIDE Manuals: Consumer Rights, Personal Finances and Health

The manuals developed in the I-DECIDE project are not definitive tools where professionals can find the answer to the whole amalgamation of situations that can occur in relation to each of the areas they contemplate. Indeed they could not be, because each of the partner countries has different laws and ways of working. Instead they should be seen as but rather a reference guide, based on real cases, where strategies can be found to develop support for decision-making in a personalized manner. In this sense, the professional must adapt his/her professional task in the context of the person and be able to elaborate a joint work plan. This plan has to be articulated whilst maintaining an optimal balance between the needs, will and preferences of the person and the resources available through the network of social services or other parts of the Welfare State system (health services, work, education).

### Consumer Rights Manual

The manual that deals with aspects of supported decision making support for decision-making in the area of rights as a consumer refers to how people with disabilities and the people or professionals that offer them support can help the person in three basic aspects as a consumer of products or services in accordance with the legislation, guarantees, regulations or services offered by the European, national and regional consumer protection framework.

The manual seeks to enable people with disabilities with full capacity to exercise their rights in different settings in relation to the purchase of products or services:

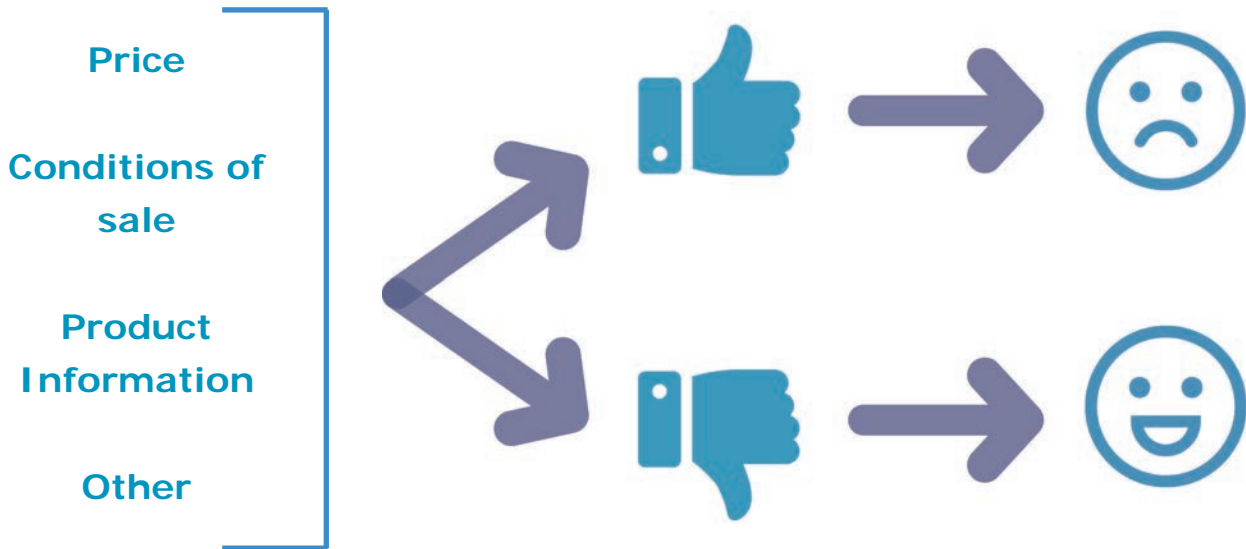
1. Pre-purchase planning scenario for a product or service
2. Scenario of making the purchase of a product or service
3. Post-purchase scenario for a product or service.

For each of these scenarios the manual has tools that help the person make an informed decision in each of the above scenarios or situations in relation to the process before or after the purchase of a product.



Let's look at some examples:

- **Tool for evaluating products or services** before making a purchase.



- **Satisfaction rating card with a product or service** during or immediately after making a purchase.



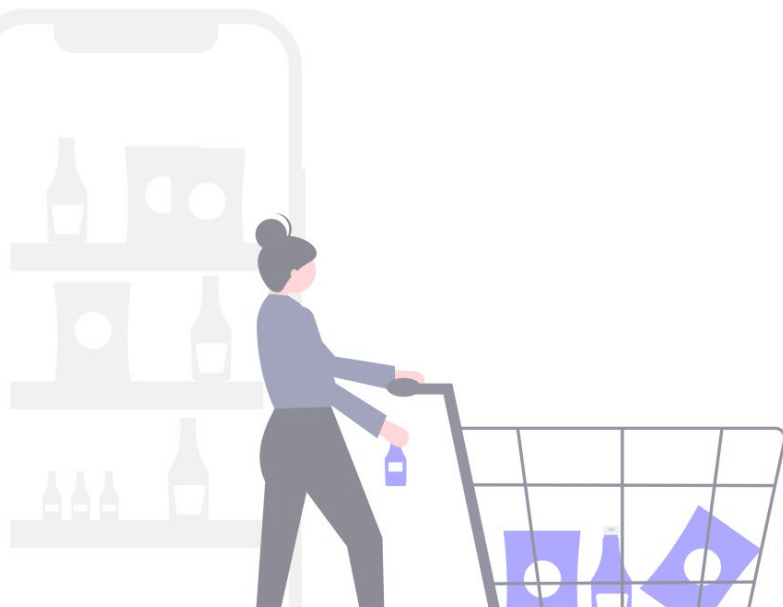
**Dissatisfied**



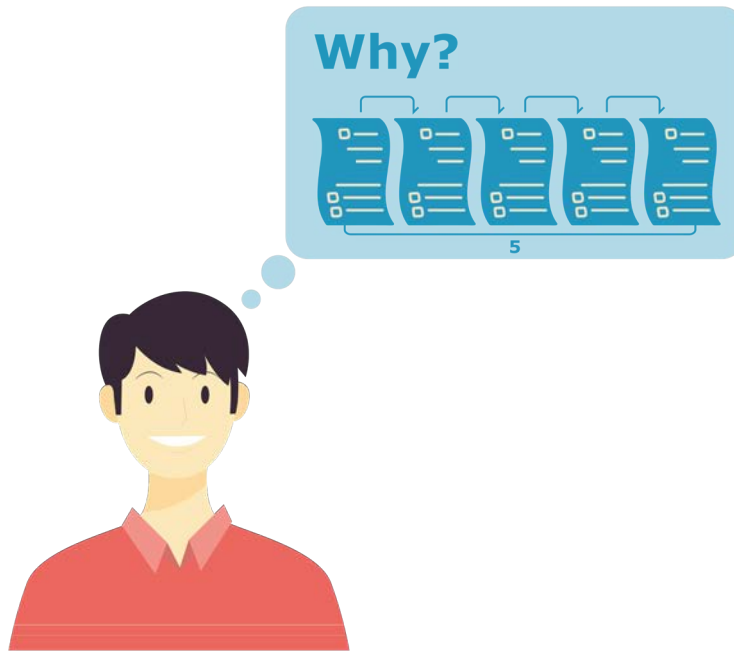
**Satisfied**



**Very Satisfied**



- **The technique of the five why's** can be used in case the person is dissatisfied with a product or service and asks for support from the professional to be able to process a return or complaint. It helps the professional to structure a formal complaint according to the person's own vision.



Within the Consumer Rights manual, there is a practical approach through common examples in which the I-DECIDE methodology is put into practice as well as specific instruments or tools.

## Personal Finances Manual

Personal finances and aspects related to the management of the economy of the person needing support are configured as central elements that can be both a barrier and a facilitating element for the person needing support to enjoy personal, social and financial autonomy. For practical purposes, the manual on personal finances incorporates cards on different concepts related to different economic aspects on an operational and practical level that help the professional in the task of increasing the knowledge of the person with a disability on these. Thus, we can find cards related to banking aspects or other topics related to money so that people can dominate this environment, learn the nature and value of money or go deeper into concepts such as saving, income or different types of expenses.



I-DECIDE believes that this knowledge is basic for the personal rights related to finances that the Convention recognizes and guarantees in a direct way, since it helps the person to:

- Understand basic financial concepts
- Understanding the concept of financial risk
- Calculate your income and expenses
- Knowing the difference between saving, spending and knowing how to do both independently
- Know what a bank is and the different instruments it offers (cards, loans, etc.)
- Prioritize basic needs over desires
- Increase their autonomy in managing economic aspects.

Within the personal finances manual, there is a practical approach through common examples in which the I-DECIDE methodology is put into practice as well as specific instruments or tools.



## Health Manual

The aspects related to the person's own health are another area where people require more support in their daily lives, either for simple tasks or even around quite complex decisions they have to make. The concept of 'health' is no longer articulated exclusively through a medical paradigm, nor is it defined as the absence of illness but, instead uses the WHO definition, "health is a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity".

The health manual defines those areas or fields of health that the professional should consider when offering support to persons with disabilities, offering an approach to strategies and good practices used both at the national and international level to ensure that health for persons with disabilities is an effective right.

Within the specific manual in health, there is a guide oriented to practical action with common examples where concrete actions are carried out to support decision making in some of the following areas according to the I-DECIDE methodology.





## 5// How to integrate I-DECIDE into your organization or service

**“How do I make it work in my organization?” “Can I act alone or do I need approval from my superiors?”**

I-DECIDE comprises an amalgam of processes aimed at changing the way organizations and professionals develop care and support for people with disabilities. Carrying out I-DECIDE within organizations implies a joint effort by both professionals with managerial responsibilities and the rest of the professionals who make up the organization in which it is to be applied, regardless of the degree of responsibility or role they play.

For the methodology to work well, it must be understood by professionals from other sectors, people close to the person and in a transversal way by all the members of the organization that puts it into practice. Therefore, it is necessary to provide the necessary training of the professionals of the organizations and coordinate the changes in the internal processes to apply it effectively.

**You can consult all “I-DECIDE” project materials on the following websites:**

### **Fundació Support-Girona**

<http://www.supportgirona.cat/projectes/i-decide/>

### **Fundació Campus Arnau d’Escala**

<http://www.campusarnau.org/projectes/i-decide-supported-decision-making-using-digital-literacy-and-numeracy-skills/>

### **EASPD - European Association of Service Providers for Persons with Disabilities**

<https://www.easpd.eu/en/content/i-decide-supported-decision-making-using-digital-literacy-numeracy-skills-0>



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Inclusió social i suport en la presa de decisions  
Social inclusion and supported decision making



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