

The National Composite Index for Family Planning (NCIFP)

SRI LANKA 2017 Scores and 2014-2017 Trendsⁱ

What is the NCIFP?

A tool that supports FP2020'sⁱⁱ efforts to improve the policy environment for family planning (FP), the NCIFP provides information on FP program activities that are not readily available in national demographic or reproductive health surveys or service statistics systems. The NCIFP measures the existence of FP policies and program implementation based on 35 items that fall under five dimensions: **Strategy**, **Data**, **Quality**, **Equity**, and **Accountability**.

Strategy – whether a national FP strategy/plan exists that includes quantified objectives, targets to reach the poorest and most vulnerable, projected resource requirements, and support for wider stakeholder participation. Also included are two items that affect strategy implementation: high-level leadership and regulations that facilitate contraceptive importation or production.

Data – whether the government collects/uses data on special sub-groups (e.g. the poor) and their access, private sector commodities, and the quality of service statistics. It also includes data-based evaluation and research to improve the program.

Quality – whether the government uses WHO-based standards of practice (SOPs), task-sharing guidelines, and quality of care (QOC) indicators in public and private facilities. Quality of services also considers the adequacy of structures for training, logistics, supervision, IUD and implant removal, and informed choice, including informing clients on the permanence of sterilization.

Accountability – whether mechanisms exist to monitor discrimination and free choice, review violations, report denial of services, enable facility-level feedback, and encourage dialogue between clients and providers.

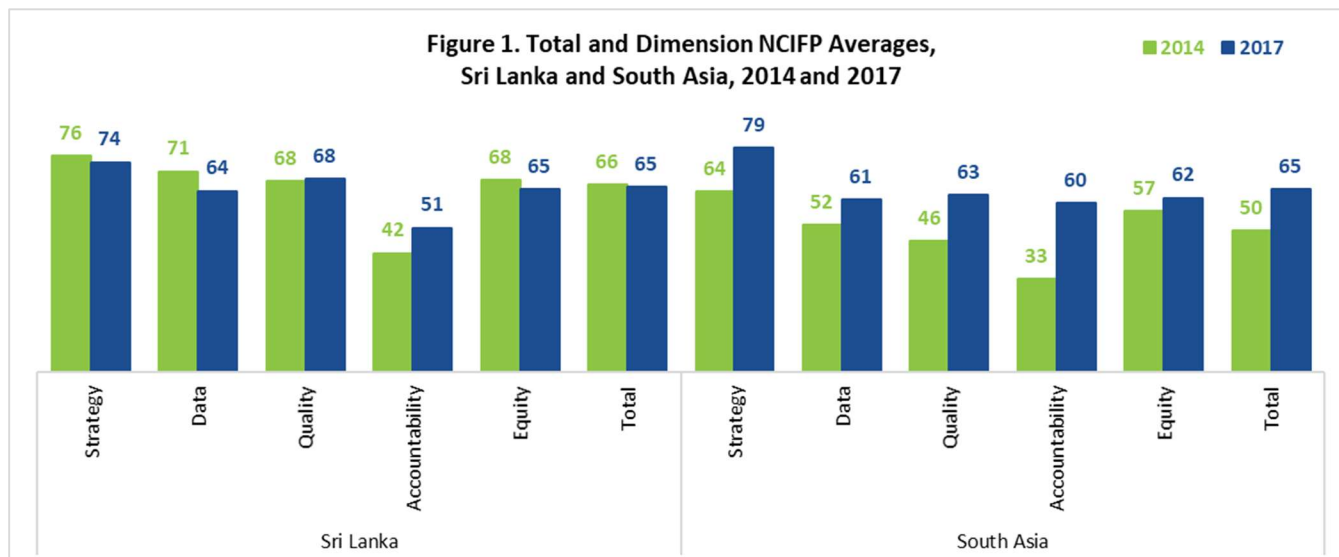
Equity - whether anti-discrimination policies exist, providers discriminate against special groups, the population has easy access to modern contraceptive methods (referring to STMs meaning short-term methods, or LAPMs meaning long-acting and permanent methods), and services are provided to underserved areas through community-based distribution (CBD).

First undertaken in 2014, the NCIFP builds on the long-standing National Family Planning Effort Index (FPE). In 2017 Avenir Health's Track20 project (funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to assist countries participating to the FP2020 Global Initiative) administered a new round of NCIFPs to assess current national FP program status and changes since 2014.

Sri Lanka vs South Asia Results

Figure 1 shows Sri Lanka's total NCIFP score of 66 in 2014 minimally declined to 65 in 2017 compared to South Asia's regional total rating rising significantly from 50 to 65 (+15 pts), resulting in the two areas scoring the same in 2017. The region also improved in all five dimensions by 2017. In Sri Lanka's case, only the mark for Accountability improved, as scores stayed constant for Quality, but declined between 2 to 7 points for Strategy, Data and Equity.

- Accountability averaged the lowest in both areas and years even though Sri Lanka's average improved from 42 to 51.
- Strategy persisted as the highest rated dimension in both areas during the two years studied.

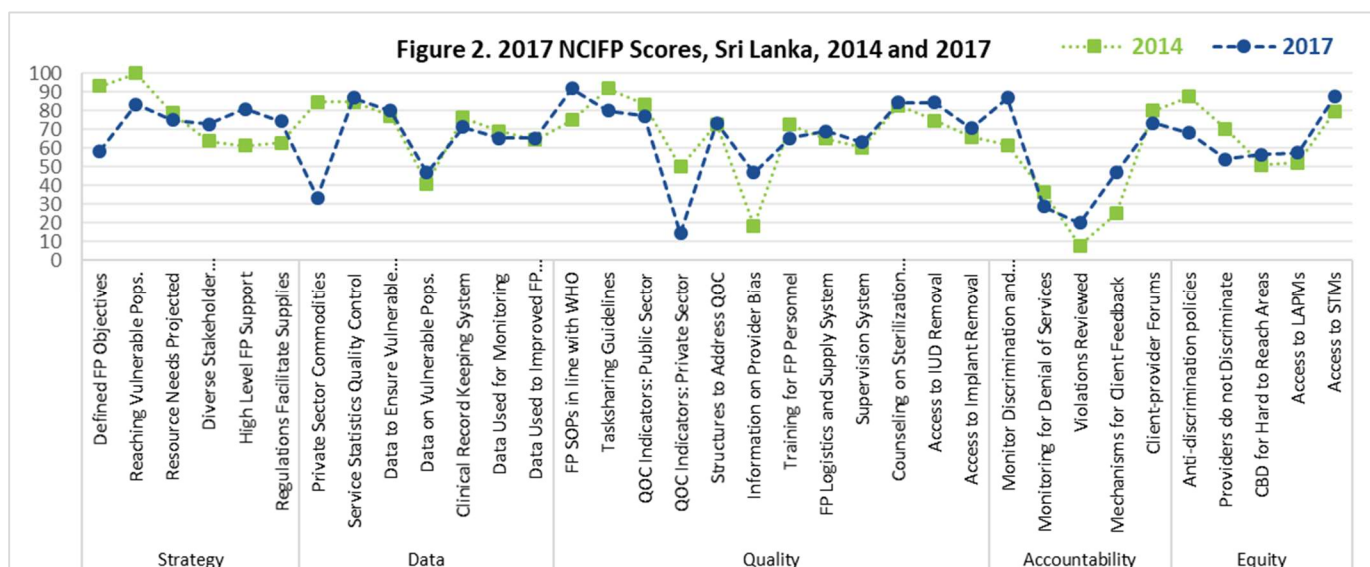


Individual NCIFP Trends, 2014 and 2017

Ratings of individual NCIFP items over time indicate which FP program activities are progressing, stagnating, or deteriorating. Figure 2 shows Sri Lanka's scores minimally changed for about half of all items, 7 items rated at least 10 points higher, and about the same number with scores more than 10 points lower by 2017.

- **Strategy** – Ratings fell significantly regarding the strategy's objectives (from 93 to 58) and focus on vulnerable groups (from 100 to 83) but hardly changed for estimated resource needs (score=75). However, scores rose to 81 for high-level support (a 20 pt. increase) and to 70s for regulations that facilitate contraceptive importation and stakeholder participation (each by 10 pts).

- **Data** – The largest score decline across all NCIFP items involved government collection of data on private sector commodities (from 85 in 2014 to 33 in 2017). Ratings for other Data items minimally changed: scores stayed in the 80s for quality control of service statistics and the use of data to ensure the most vulnerable have access; low 70s for clinic recordkeeping/feedback to clients; 60s for data-based monitoring and program improvement; and mid-40s for collection of data on population sub-groups.
- **Quality** – 2017 scores significantly rose regarding the use of WHO standards (from 75 to 92), access to IUD removal (from 75 to 84), and provider bias monitoring (from 18 to 47) compared to slight gains for access to implant removal (71), and the systems for logistics and supervision (both scored in the 60s). The marks were practically unchanged for sterilization counseling (84) and clinic/ community monitoring structures (73). 2017 scores fell more than 10 points for the use of tasksharing guidelines (80) and QOC indicators in private facilities and about 6 points for public sector QOC indicators (77) and the training system (65).
- **Accountability** – Ratings increased more than 10 points for discrimination and freechoice monitoring (from 62 to 87), mechanisms for facility-level client feedback (from 25 to 47) and violations review (from 8 to 20) compared to 7 points decline for client-provider forums (73) and mechanisms to report denial of services based on non-medical reasons (29).
- **Equity** – The score for STM access improved to 87; those for LAPM access and CBD coverage improved to the 50s. 2017 ratings fell more than 15 points for anti-discrimination policies (68) and provider non-discrimination of certain populations (54).



Implications

Sri Lanka's FP program has been integrated into maternal and child health services since the 1960s. The country committed to the Global FP2020 Partnership in July 2018 and pledged to increase the modern contraceptive prevalence rate (mCPR) from 53.6% to 57.2% by 2025. The country is developing a new FP strategy to improve services and address newly emerging issues and challenges, a multi-year FP Costed Implementation Plan, aiming to include a budget-line for reproductive health, and engaging the education sector to improve access to FP information and services among adolescents and youth. Considering the association between the causes of maternal mortality (particularly high number of induced abortions) and unmet needs for FP, Sri Lanka also commits to promoting rights-based FP, increasing service delivery points, capacity-building of the health workforce, and strengthening postpartum and post abortion care. In addition, the Government will continue its policy of providing free FP services (temporary and permanent methods) in public facilities, ensuring equity by focusing on special groups especially teenagers and low performing areas, encouraging private sector involvement, making updated FP protocols and guidelines widely available, and monitoring QOC.ⁱⁱⁱ

Sri Lanka's NCIFP ratings are mixed. Certain items had very high scores, particularly regarding high-level leadership of the FP program, the service statistics system, quality of care concerns especially the use of WHO standards, sterilization counseling, and improved access to the removal of IUDs and to some extent implants, discrimination and free choice monitoring and STM access. The NCIFP results also show significantly declining or still very low scores, most of which are key components of the country's FP2020 objectives. These challenges include the FP strategy's objectives and efforts to reach vulnerable groups, private sector involvement (two of the lowest scores refer to data on private sector commodities and the use of QOC indicators in private facilities), data on the needs of various population groups, various accountability mechanisms, and efforts to counter discrimination.

ⁱ Suggested citation: Avenir Health Track20. "The National Composite Index for Family Planning (NCIFP): SRI LANKA 2017 Scores and 2014-2017 Trends". 2017 NCIFP Policy Brief Series (2019).

ⁱⁱ Family Planning 2020 is a global initiative through which governments, civil society, multilateral development organizations, donors, the private sector, and the research community work together to enable more women and girls to use contraceptives by 2020. See: <http://www.familyplanning2020.org/>

ⁱⁱⁱ <https://www.familyplanning2020.org/sri-lanka>