

# The National Composite Index for Family Planning (NCIFP)

## PHILIPPINES 2017 Scores and 2014-2017 Trends\*

### What is the NCIFP?

A tool that supports FP2020's efforts to improve the policy and program environment for family planning (FP), the NCIFP provides data on FP program efforts – strategy development, monitoring/evaluation, service quality, accountability, and equity -that are not readily available from surveys or service statistics. The NCIFP measures the existence of FP policies and program implementation structures 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 standards of practice (SOP), task-sharing guidelines, and quality of care indicators in public and private facilities. Quality of care (QOC) also considers the adequacy of structures for training, logistics, supervision, IUD and implant removal, and informed choice, including informing clients about 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 communication between clients and providers.

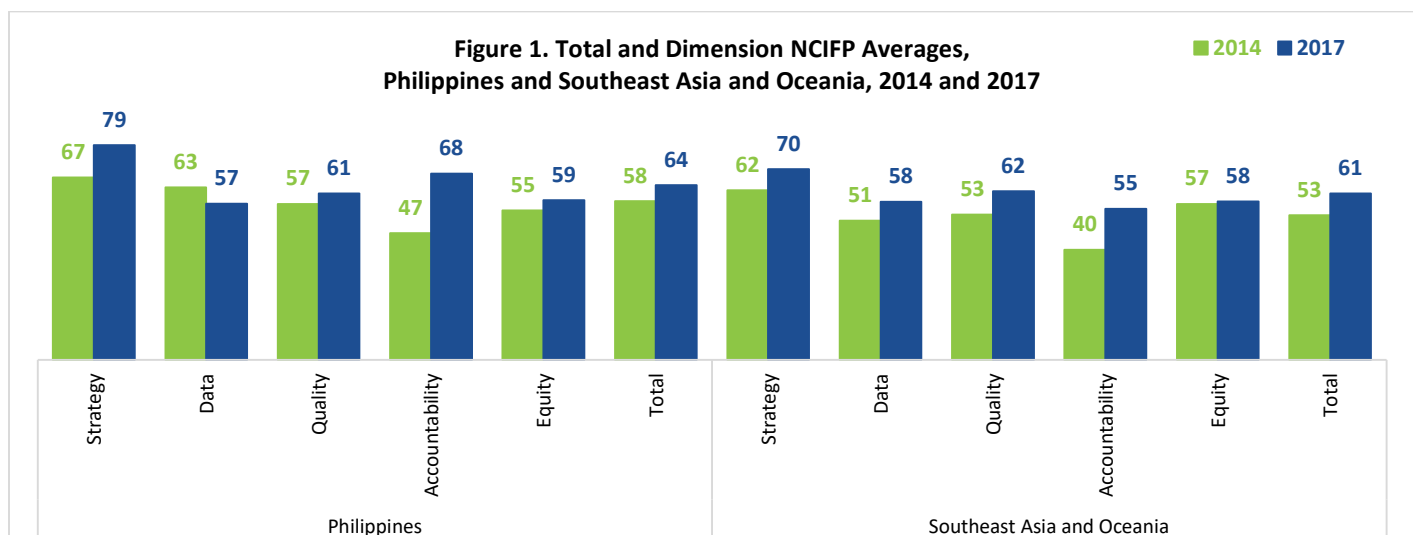
**Equity** - whether anti-discrimination policies exist, providers discriminate against special groups, the population has easy access to modern contraceptive methods (referring to STMs meaning short-term methods, or LAPMs meaning long-acting and permanent methods), and services are provided to underserved 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 in the FP2020 Global Initiative) administered a new round of NCIFPs to assess current national FP program status and changes since 2014. NCIFP data are intended for policy and planning use by each country's FP stakeholders.

### Philippines vs Southeast Asia and Oceania Results

Figure 1 shows improving total NCIFP averages for the Philippines in 2014 and 2017 (58 and 64 respectively) as well as for the Southeast Asia and Oceania region (53 and 61). The Philippines' total scores were slightly higher than those of the region in both years, but dimension ratings reveal varied patterns over the period studied:

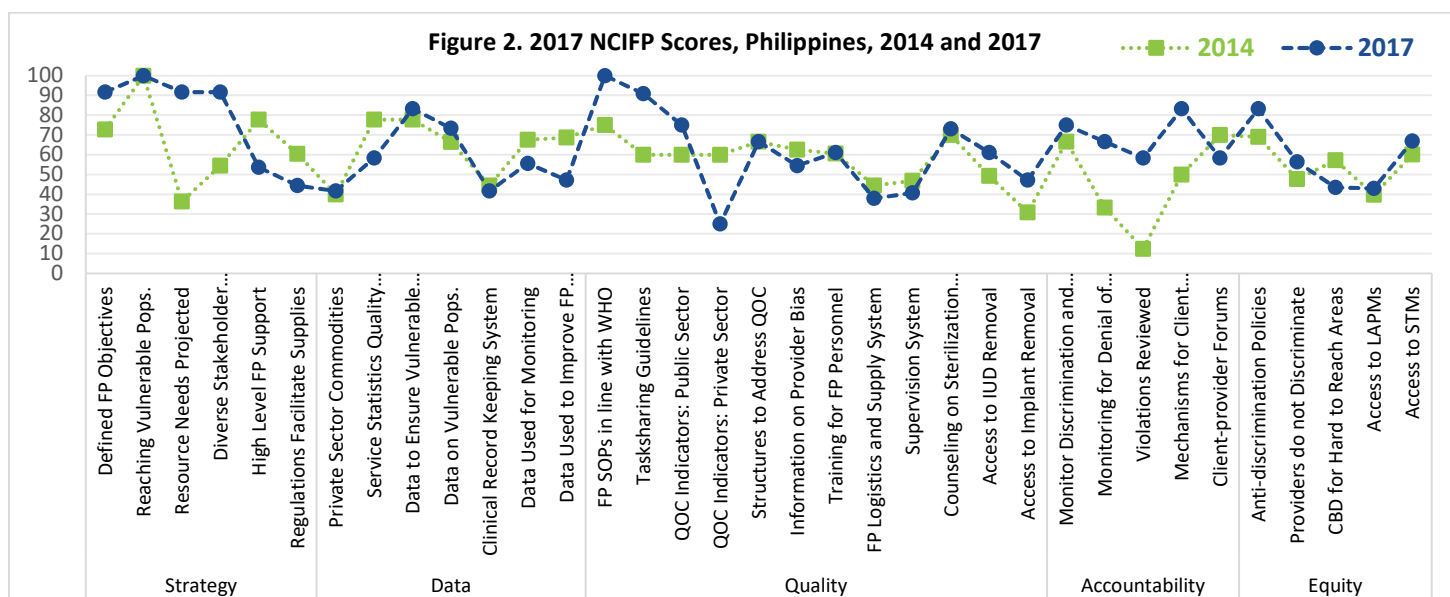
- Strategy persisted as the highest rated dimension in both areas during the two years, with 2017 scores rising.
- The country's average for Data declined (-6) in 2017 and the dimension became the country's lowest ranked for the year.
- The results for Accountability, the lowest rated dimension in both areas in 2014, largely improved in 2017. The Philippines scored much higher than the region in both years, most notably in 2017.



### Philippines NCIFP Trends, 2014 and 2017

Ratings of individual NCIFP items specify which FP program activities are progressing well, unchanged, or deteriorating. Figure 2 shows the Philippines with over half of NCIFP items rated higher in 2017 (gains of at least +5 pts). Score levels, however, varied widely, including 10 items with 2017 scores only in the 40s or even less.

- **Strategy** - Ratings of 90 or higher in 2017 were given to the strategy's objectives, estimated resource requirements, focus on vulnerable groups, and diverse participation (the last item scored only 55 in 2014). However, scores dropped to the low 50s for seniority level of the national program director and to the 40s for regulations facilitating contraceptive products.
- **Data** – 2017 scores were minimally higher regarding data on vulnerable groups (73) and their access (83); stayed in the 40s for data on private sector commodities and clinical recordkeeping; but dropped for service statistics quality control (58), data-based monitoring/evaluation (56) and management use of research findings to improve program performance (47).
- **Quality** - Items rated much higher in 2017 (+12 pts or more) involved the use of WHO standards, tasksharing, quality indicators in public facilities, and access to IUD and implant removal. Training and clinic/community QOC structures including participatory monitoring stayed in the 60s. Lower 2017 scores went to provider bias monitoring (55), and the supervision and logistics systems (each scored around 40), and to private sector quality indicators (25, the lowest of all 35 NCIFP items).
- **Accountability** - Only provider-client dialogue scored lower in 2017 (58 from 70 in 2014). Scores were higher for mechanisms for client feedback (83); discrimination and free choice monitoring (75); reporting denial of services (67); and violations review (58).
- **Equity** – 2017 scores improved for anti-discrimination policies (83), STM access (67); provider non-discrimination against certain groups (56); and LAPM access (43). The score declined for CBD coverage of underserved areas (43 from 57 in 2014).



## Implications

During the FP2020 Summit in 2012, the Government of the Philippines (GOP) defined FP access as a fundamental right that is key to inclusive and sustainable development and pledged to approve and fund the national RH Law. The Law's implementation has been constrained by a Supreme Court temporary restraining order (TRO) affecting contraceptives (especially implants) due to lawsuits by ultra-conservative groups. To mitigate the TRO's effects and support couples to achieve their desired family size, a Presidential Executive Order and Department of Health guidelines issued in 2017 aimed to allocate \$78 M for commodities, contraceptive security, training, demand-generation, policy development, advocacy by partnering with civil society and private sector groups, provision of FP services to poor families without co-payment, upgrading of public health facilities, and increasing the number of health providers to provide RH information<sup>ii</sup>.

National experts responding to the 2017 NCIFP study attest to the Philippines' progress in various FP program activities that the GOP specified as key to achieving its FP objectives for 2020. But NCIFP results also point out FP program activities with scores that significantly declined or remained at low levels: regulations affecting contraceptive products, the program head's seniority level, government collection of data on private sector commodities, quality control of service statistics, data-based evaluation and management use of research findings to improve program performance, provider bias monitoring, the logistics and supervision systems, mechanisms to ensure accountability through client-provider dialogues, CBD coverage of underserved areas, and LAPM access. These challenges are for the country's FP stakeholders to discuss, identify underlying causes, and agree on how best to address these challenges and ensure achievement of national FP objectives.

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

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

<sup>ii</sup> <http://www.familyplanning2020.org/philippines>