

# The National Composite Index for Family Planning (NCIFP)

## NIGER 2017 Scores and 2014-2017 Trends<sup>i</sup>

### What is the NCIFP?

A tool that supports FP2020's<sup>ii</sup> 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 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 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 communication between clients and providers.

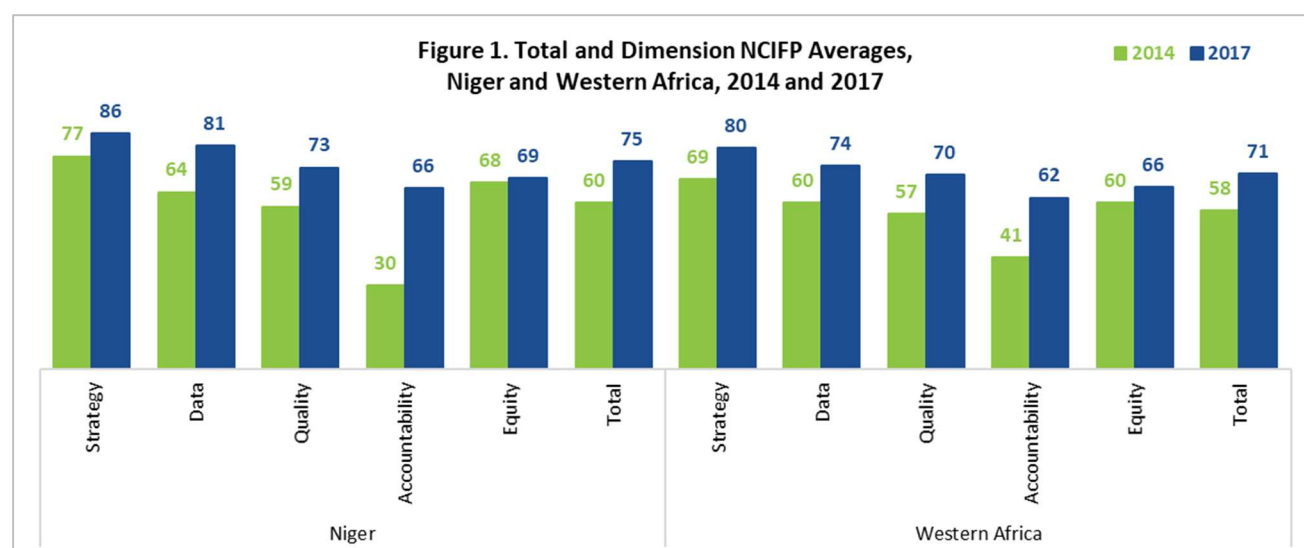
**Equity** – whether anti-discrimination policies exist, providers discriminate against special groups, the population has easy access to modern contraceptive methods (referring to STMs meaning short-term methods, or LAPMs meaning long-acting and permanent methods), and services are provided to underserved 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 results are intended for use by each country's stakeholders in their policy and planning activities.

### Niger vs Western Africa Results

Figure 1 shows improving NCIFP total scores for Niger and Western Africa, with Niger exceeding the region's total scores in both years. Both areas also averaged higher for all five dimensions, but Niger's 2014 and 2017 ratings were better than the region's.

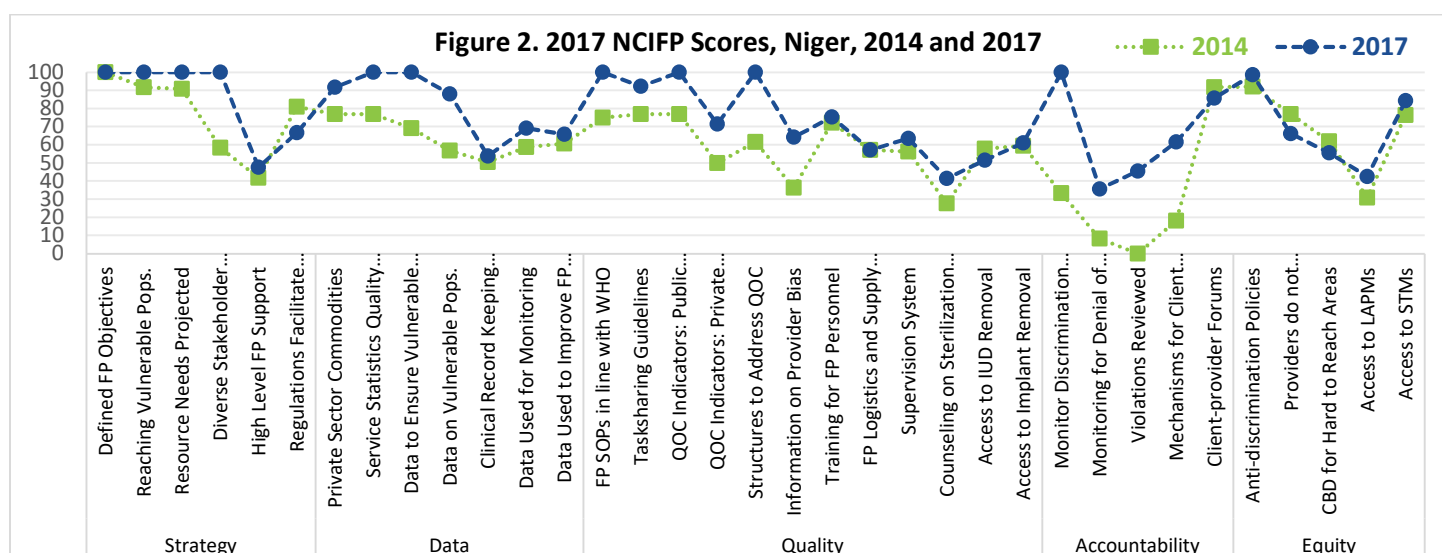
- Strategy was the highest rated dimension in both areas and years.
- Accountability tends to be the lowest rated in many areas studied. This is also the case for Niger and the region in both years, despite improvements in their respective Accountability averages in 2017.



### Individual 2014 and 2017 NCIFP Scores

Ratings of individual NCIFP items over time indicate specific FP program activities that are progressing, stagnating, or deteriorating. Figure 2 shows that Niger's 2017 scores for over 20 items were higher than levels in 2014 while most of the remaining had scores that minimally changed. Less than five items had declining scores in 2017.

- **Strategy** – 2017 marks included 100 for the strategy’s objectives, focus on vulnerable groups, estimated resource needs, and support for diverse participation. Regulations facilitating contraceptive importation scored 67 (from 81 in 2014) while high-level support was rated at only 48.
- **Data** – All items scored higher in 2017: 100 for service statistics quality control and the use of data to ensure the most vulnerable have access; around 90 for data on population sub-groups and private sector supplies; upper 60s for data-based monitoring and using research findings to improve the program; and 54 for clinic recordkeeping and results feedback to clients.
- **Quality** – The highest 2017 scores were 100 for the use of WHO SOPs, QOC indicators in public facilities, and community clinic structures to monitor QOC; and 92 for tasksharing. Ratings were in the 70s for QOC indicators in private facilities and the training system; in the 60s for provider bias monitoring, supervision, and access to implant removal; and in the 50s for the logistics system and also for IUD removal (from near 60 in 2014). Sterilization counseling had the lowest mark (41).
- **Accountability** – 2017 ratings were led by discrimination and free choice monitoring (100) and client-provider dialogue (86). Facility-level feedback scored 62. The lowest ratings went to violations review (45) and structures for reporting denial of services (36).
- **Equity** – Ratings by item hardly changed during the two years studied. Anti-discrimination policies scored near 100 followed by 80s for STM access; mid-60s for non-discrimination by providers; mid 50s for CBD coverage and around 40 for LAPM access.



## Implications

A member of the Ouagadougou Partnership and SWEDD (Sahel Women’s Empowerment and Demographic Dividend project), Niger joined the Global FP2020 Initiative in 2012 and pledged to reach a modern contraceptive prevalence rate (mCPR) of 50% by 2020. Data from the 2012 Demographic and Health Survey showed that a woman in Niger gives birth to around 8 children during her lifetime. The mCPR among married women was only 12%; rates were much lower among the poor, those in rural areas, and the least educated.<sup>iii</sup> Niger’s mCPR among all women was only 16% in 2018, indicating that the original goal was likely unrealistic.<sup>iv</sup> Niger updated its FP2020 commitments in 2017 and emphasized improving financing through a national budget allocation and encouraging private sector involvement; task-shifting; using a community-based approach; broadening method choice; implementing the national health strategy which allocates 15% to youth-specific FP interventions, and recruiting qualified health workers to ensure high quality services. The Government sees FP as key to reducing maternal and child morbidity and mortality and addressing population-development challenges.

Niger’s high marks for many NCIFP items in 2017 attest to the country’s progress in improving FP program activities, including strategy development; data collection and utilization especially regarding vulnerable groups; the use of quality-oriented policies, indicators, and approaches; as well as in its efforts to monitor discrimination and free choice and establish anti-discrimination policies. The NCIFP results also specify FP activities and concerns with declining or persistent low scores: high-level program support; mechanisms for reporting denial of services, logistics, sterilization counseling, structures to review violations and report denial of services, CBD coverage, and access to LAPM services that also include IUD removal. The challenges just mentioned are for the country’s stakeholders to discuss, identify underlying causes, and agree on how best to address these challenges, support the country’s pronounced efforts to strengthen the national program, achieve FP objectives, and contribute to Niger’s socio-economic development.

<sup>i</sup> Suggested citation: Avenir Health Track20. “The National Composite Index for Family Planning (NCIFP): NIGER 2017 Scores and 2014-2017 Trends”. 2017 NCIFP Policy Brief Series (2019)

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

<sup>iii</sup> <https://www.statcompiler.com/en/>

<sup>iv</sup> <http://www.familyplanning2020.org/niger>