



Technical Brief: Consensus-Building Workshops

What is a consensus-building workshop?

Consensus-building workshops are annual meetings, led by the Ministry of Health, where governments and partners come together to do an annual review of family planning data. This includes review of available data; discussions on the quality of that data; utilization of statistical models and other methodologies to produce annual estimates of key family planning indicators; and assessment of progress towards a country's national family planning strategy. Sitting within government structures that collect, analyze and use family planning data, the Track20 M&E Officer is often a driver of this process and plays a key role by supporting the use of new methodologies and tools to support analysis and provide detailed information about the available data.

Overall, the workshop serves as a platform for those who generate, analyze, and use data for decision-making to come together to review and discuss available family planning data and how it can be used to inform decisions that can improve program implementation and quality of services. Once consensus is reached among the workshop participants that the data presented and the annual estimates calculated for key indicators are the best possible estimates with existing data, the data are shared with FP2020 for inclusion in the FP2020 Annual Progress Report.

Who attends consensus-building workshops?

Decisions on the agenda and invited participants for consensus workshops are led by the Ministry of Health - usually the reproductive health unit, so workshops may differ based on country context and presence of in-country partners. The workshops bring together public and private-sector technical experts representing bilateral donors, NGO partners, and other relevant ministries. In some countries, the Family Planning Technical Working Group plays a leadership role in this meeting.

Why are these workshops important?

The consensus-building workshops are of paramount importance in ensuring that annual monitoring is a country-driven process. While data review and monitoring processes ideally happen throughout the year, the consensus-building workshop ensures that key decision-makers and other stakeholders dedicate focused time to jointly review and understand timely data, take stock of progress and, if necessary, adjust their strategies to accelerate progress. Consensus-building workshops also make transparent the data and methodologies that influence decision-making in-country and internationally. The workshops provide an opportunity for those involved in FP program planning and implementation to reach consensus on the FP data they will all use for planning and monitoring.

When are these workshops held?

The workshops are typically scheduled in the spring, so that country data is ready for inclusion in the global FP2020 Annual Progress Report.