



*Eurasian Coalition
on Male Health*



INFOGRAPHICS

«Assessment of Existing Strategic Information on HIV among MSM and Trans People in Armenia, Belarus, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, and Macedonia»

Strategic Information

Strategic information (SI) is interpreted and used for planning and decision-making to improve the direction and focus of a program. Relevant data may be derived from a wide variety of sources (for example, monitoring systems, evaluations, program reviews, surveys, and case studies) and should be analyzed holistically and strategically to improve the direction of the program.

SI is collected to inform policy and program decisions. The axiom “Know your epidemic, know your response” characterizes the SI necessary for the response to HIV. It recognizes that epidemics and their contexts differ from place to place. Thus, knowing who is affected, how they became infected and where they are, is crucial.

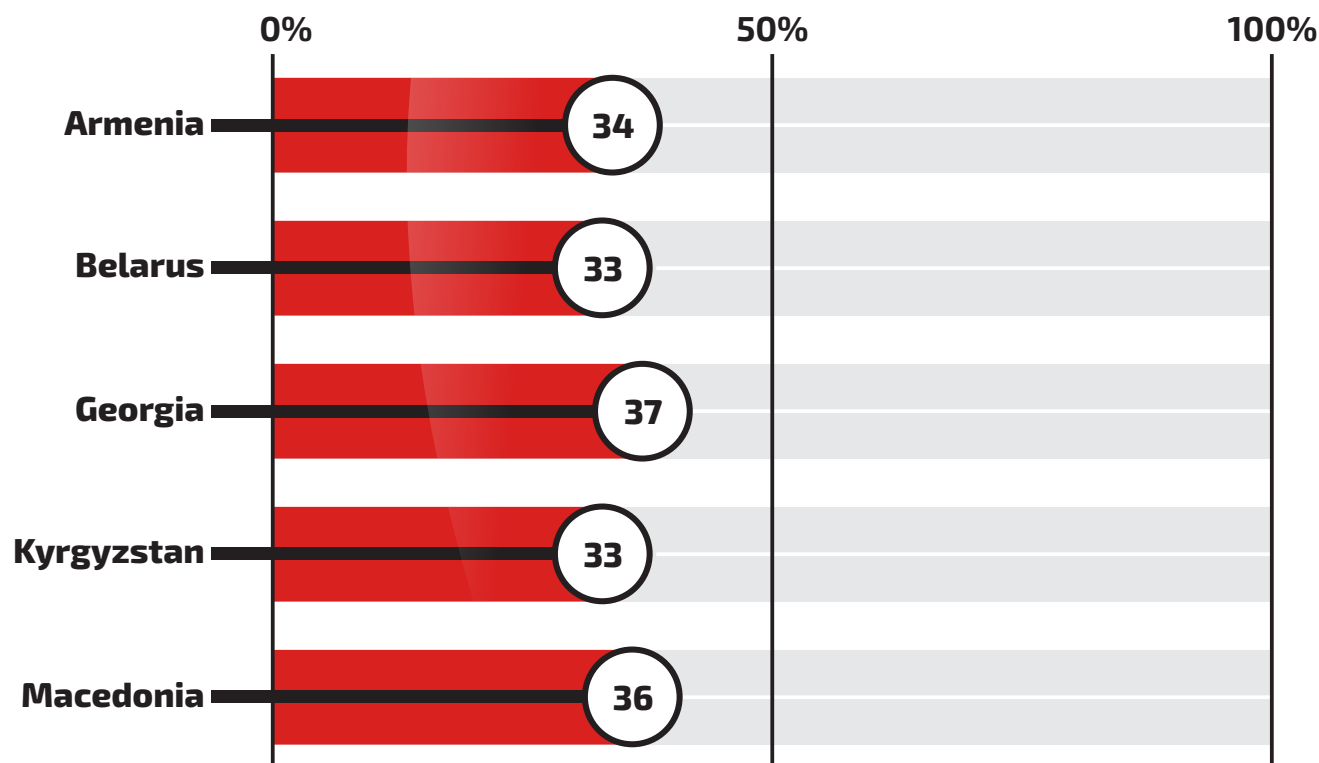
An effective response to HIV at the country level requires SI that has been systematically collected and consolidated, analyzed and applied. SI must go beyond basic epidemiological data to address service access, coverage, quality, and acceptability. It needs to support quality services along the health sector cascade.

SI should also lead to a deeper understanding of the context of the epidemic, such as the vulnerability of certain communities, the risks to which certain individuals and populations are exposed, and the options for actions to alleviate the burden of HIV and mitigate its impacts.

Public health efforts are only as sound as the evidence on which they are based. Proven prevention and treatment initiatives must be strategically focused on the populations and settings in greatest need, and these programs need to be tailored to address the specific needs and circumstances of each target population. For groups with heightened risk of HIV infection, countries need timely, robust and reliable data on the size of each population, the burden of HIV (including prevalence and incidence), the prevalence and nature of behaviors that increase HIV risk and vulnerability, coverage of key HIV prevention and treatment services, and on social and structural factors that affect HIV risk and utilization of key services. National surveys have long provided critical SI on HIV prevalence, sexual risk behaviors, and on HIV testing and data among the general populations in the CEECA region, but these national surveys have not provided any meaningful information regarding MSM and trans populations.

As MSM populations have long been recognized as an important factor in national epidemics in the region, some form of SI on MSM is provided by some countries. However, other countries have failed to provide the necessary information on MSM or have not provided any information at all. Understanding the population size of and HIV prevalence among each KP is critical for service planning and estimating service coverage. A number of countries have used integrated bio-behavioral surveys (IBBS) to generate useful SI on HIV risk behaviors, HIV burden, service utilization, and on the existence of HIV-related stigma or discrimination faced by MSM. However, this tool has not yet been used to gather data on trans* people in the region.

General situation of strategic information in countries

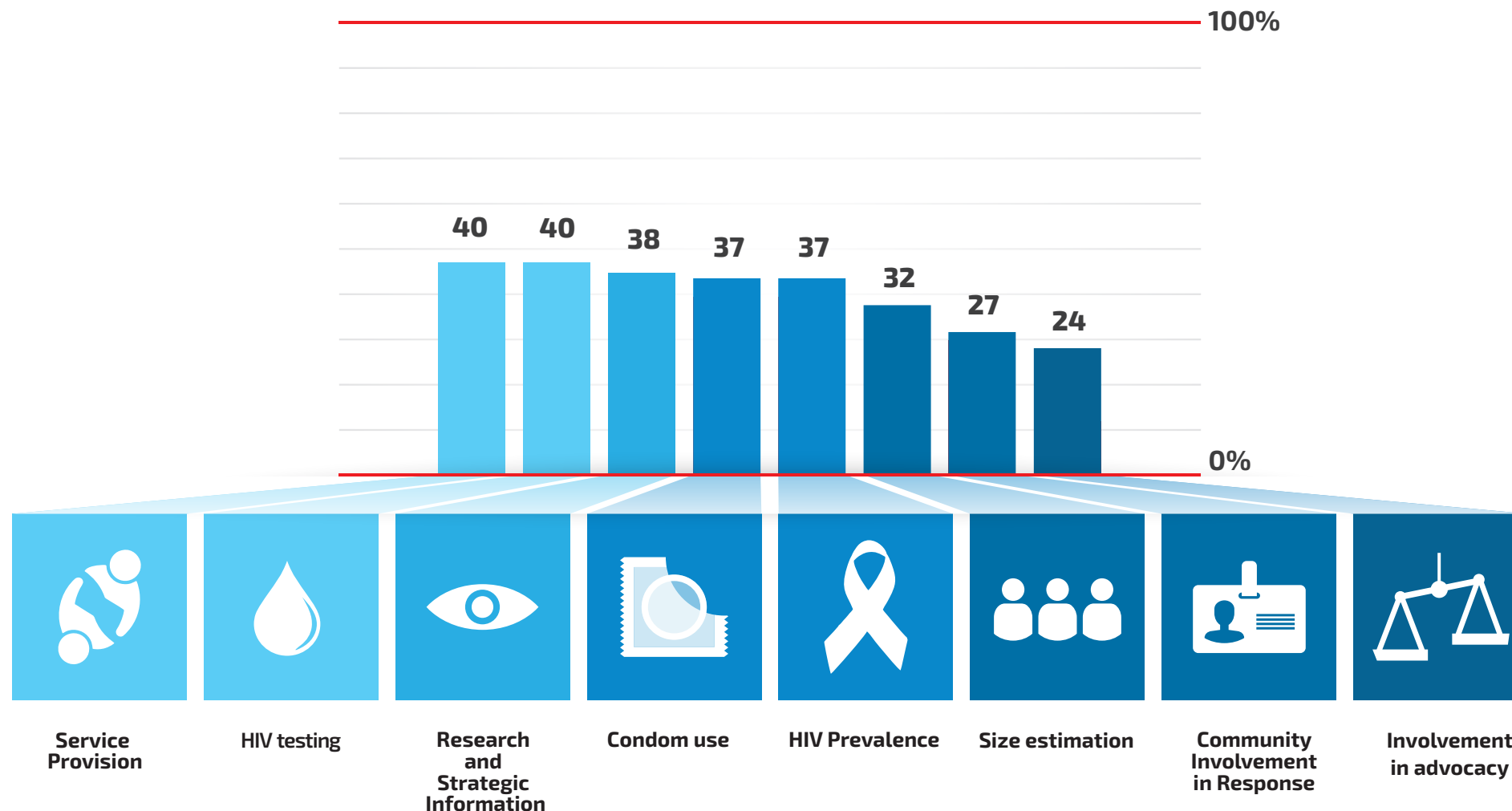


Quality and need for SI only reach 33-37% of the maximum possible score and vary by country. The absence or low quality of SI in countries is mainly due to the following factors:

- Around half of the gap regarding SI is due to a lack of information and research on trans populations;
- Limitations in studies on MSM size estimation in the five target countries;
- Weak advocacy activities in countries;
- Miscommunication between NGOs, including community-based organizations, and the government sector

100% is: data exists at national level; data is reliable, i. e. the data comes from a survey with statistical credibility; data is updated regularly once every 2-3 years; relevant data is shown and/or used in national plans and/or state funded programs; data is used by NGOs and communities for fundraising, project planning and/or advocacy purposes; segregated data exists at city level/region level within the country

The situation of strategic information by each component



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General recommendations

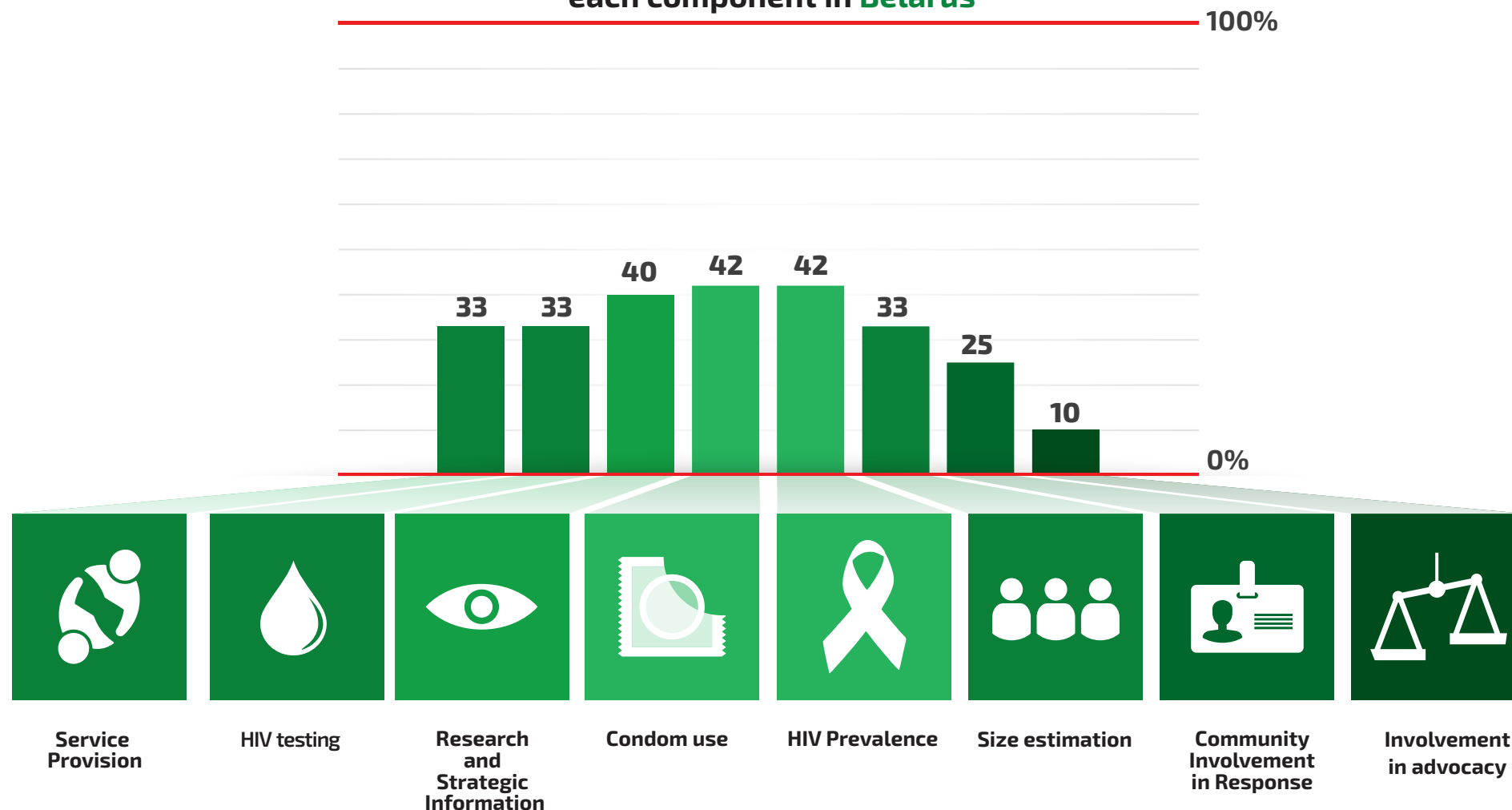
All countries face similar issues regarding the quality and availability of SI obtained through surveys

- It is recommended to conduct a SE study of MSM based on best practices in the region and with the involvement of international experts, ministry of health, MSM NGOs and other stakeholders
- The results should be widely distributed and promoted to stakeholders and international organizations
- The analytical and survey skills and capacity of community organizations should be developed so that they are fully involved in the planning, implementation, and analysis of SE and other surveys
- Community representatives with relevant experience should be involved in the monitoring and evaluation of programs
- Collaboration and coordination between governments and the NGO sector, including community-based organizations, should be strengthened to improve data availability and survey methods, as well as to strengthen the capacity of communities
- Surveys should ensure data is available for different cities/regions
- An analysis and capacity assessment of should be conducted in the target countries

General recommendations

- Qualitative surveys on the unmet SRHR needs of MSM and trans people should be carried out
- The advocacy skills of community organizations, activists, and service provider organizations should be developed
- Active advocacy campaigns should be carried out to secure state funding for the implementation of SE, IBBS, etc. among MSM and trans people
- Documentation and accountability of advocacy processes should be improved
- Round tables, seminars, trainings, and discussions should be organized with the involvement of community organizations, activists, NGOs, experts, and government representatives from the target countries to facilitate an exchange of knowledge and best practices on data collection and usage
- Documentation of best/worst practices in service provision should be developed
- The use of survey results by the government sector should be monitored and documented by NGOs and communities
- Unique identifier codes to track individual clients should be used to have realistic and reliable data on service coverage and indicators
- Special emphasis should be placed on trans issues (securing funding, planning and carrying out qualitative and quantitative surveys among trans populations in target countries)

The situation of strategic information by each component in **Belarus**

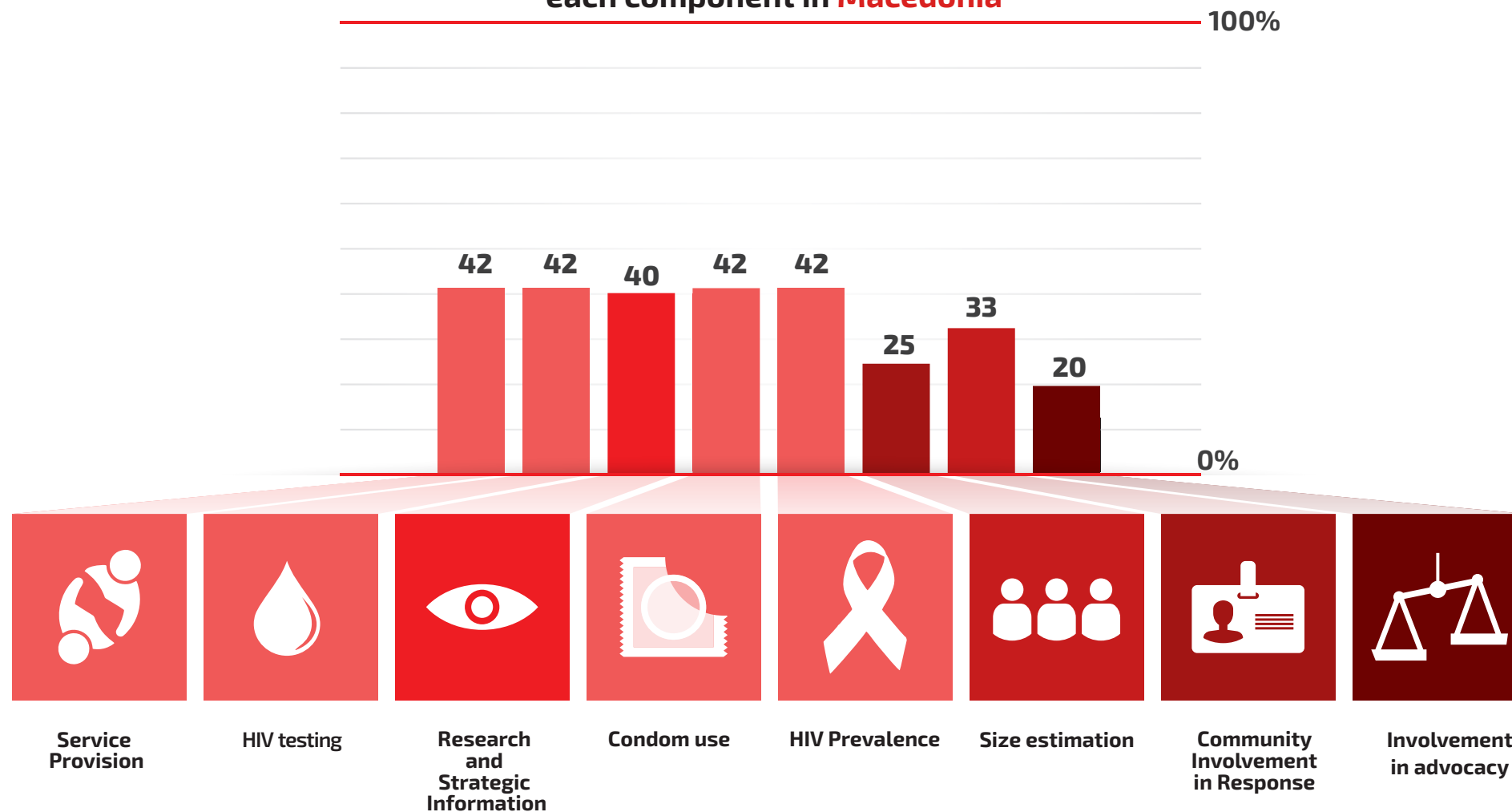


■ Community organizations should carry out activities to build trust between organizations and their clients and ensure their clients that personal data will not be passed on to law enforcement bodies

■ International organizations should make additional efforts towards sensitizing government representatives on LGBT issues, as Belarus currently has the lowest level of state participation

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The situation of strategic information by each component in **Macedonia**

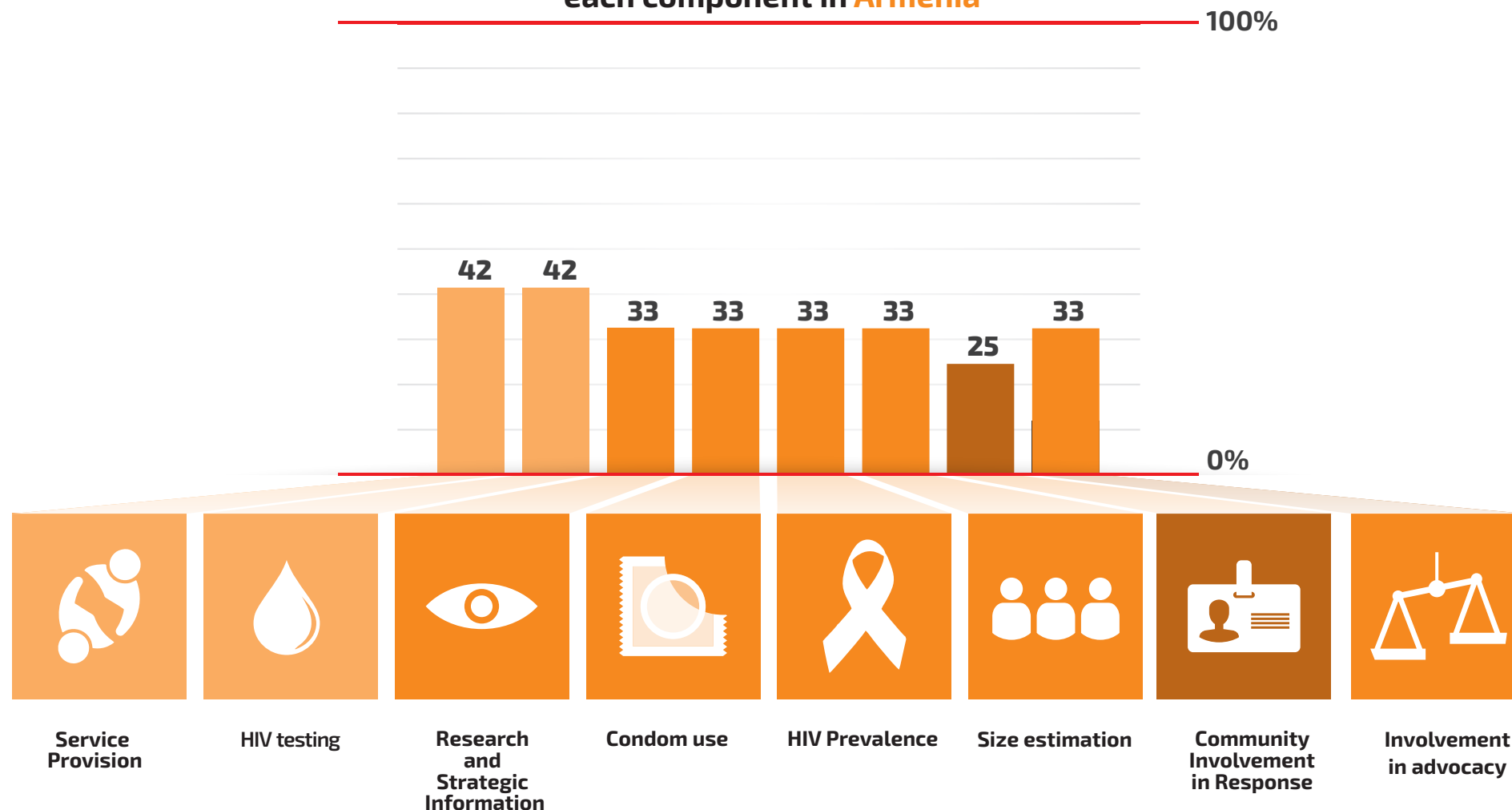


■ An MSM SE study should be carried out in the coming year, as the last SE was conducted in 2010 and is significantly outdated

■ The study should be carried out in at least two different sites

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The situation of strategic information by each component in **Armenia**

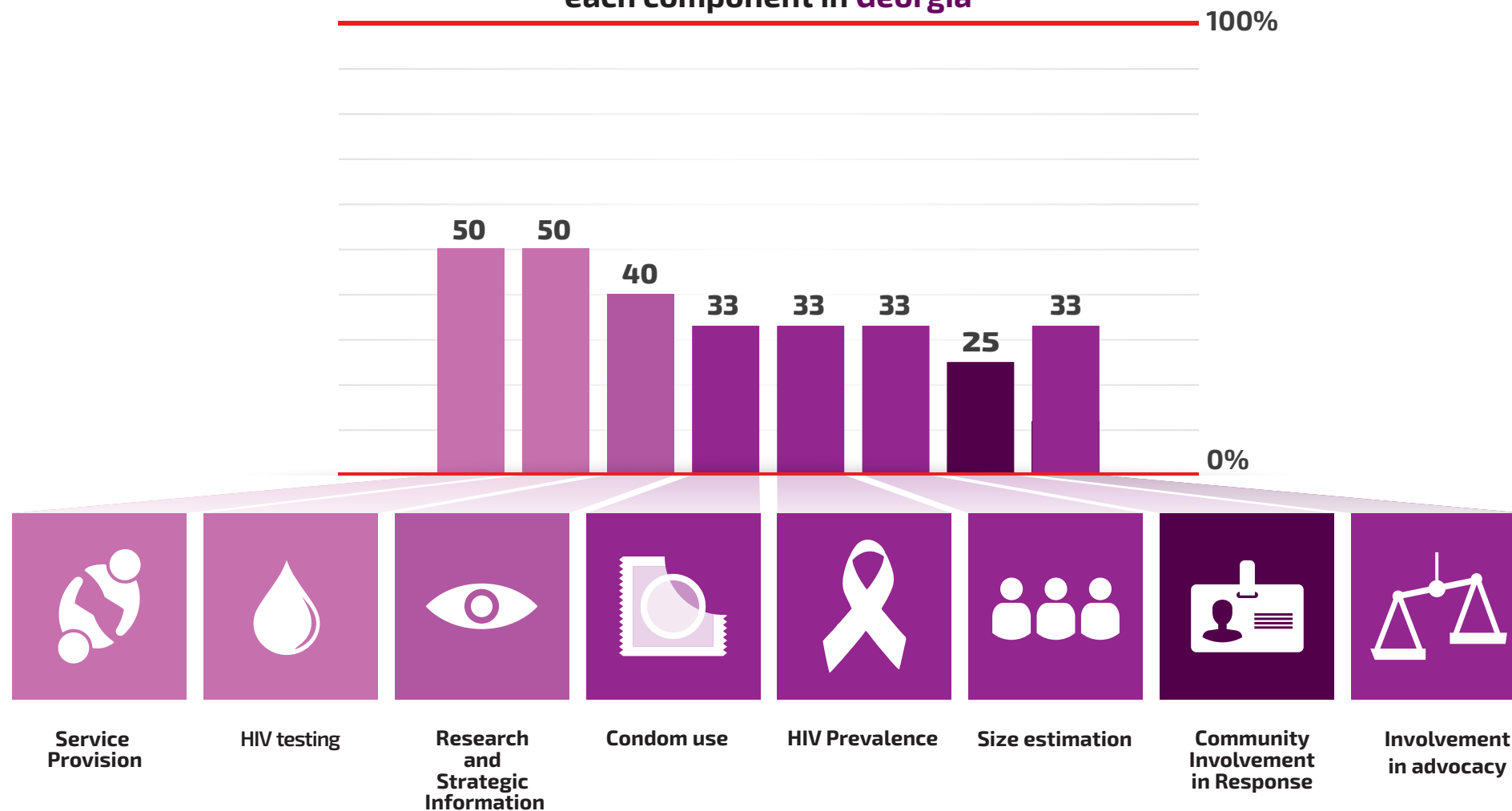


■ Civil society and community organizations should be involved as plenipotentiary partners of state organizations from the initial stages of survey planning. State and civil society sectors should reach a consensus when approving and accepting the results of studies and surveys

■ The NSP and state reports should be translated into international languages so they are accessible to stakeholders in the region

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The situation of strategic information by each component in Georgia

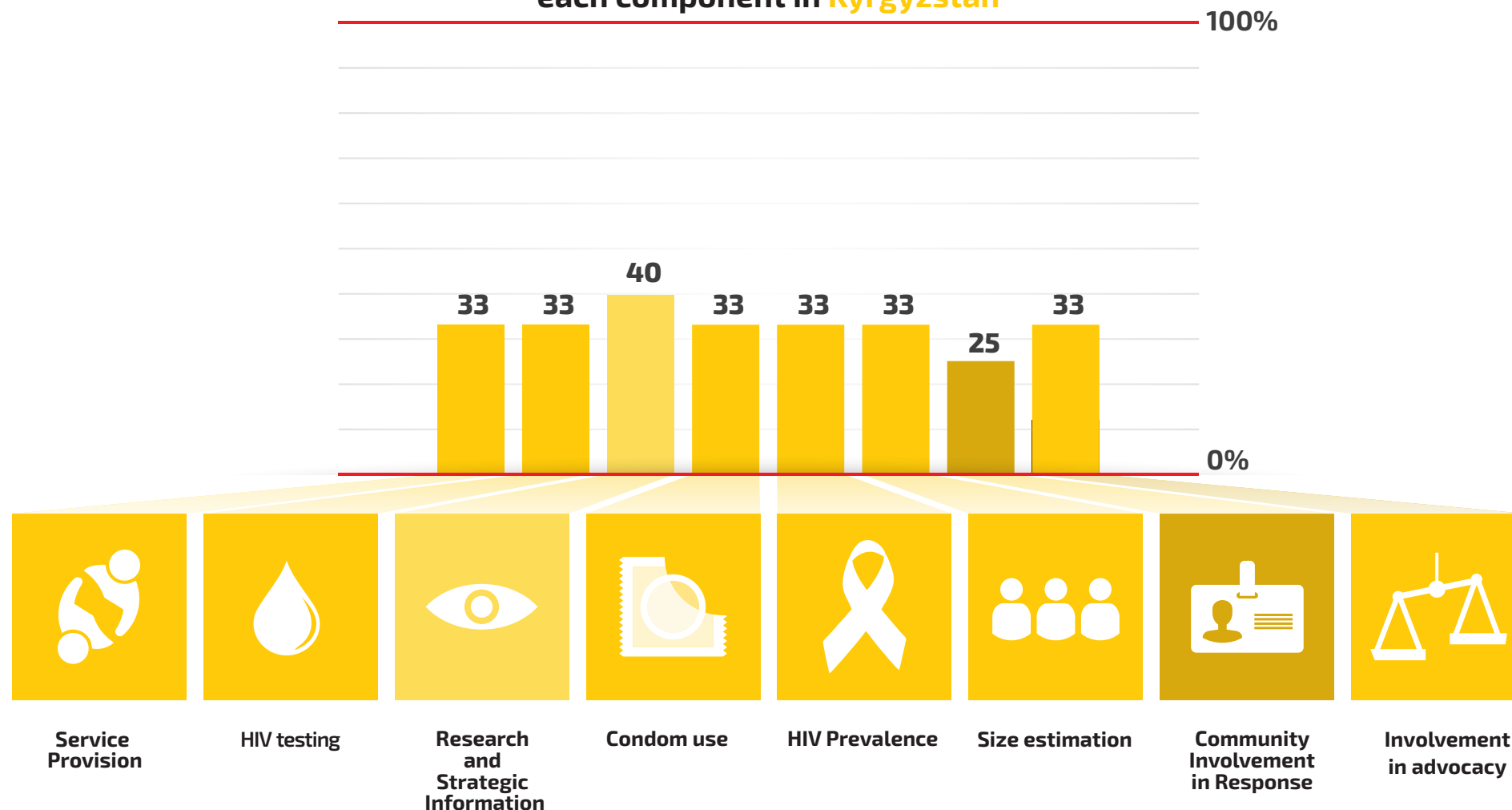


■ When conducting IBBS, better mapping should be carried out and previous issues regarding sample size (such as the failure to reach a sufficient sample size in Batumi during previous IBBS and SE) should be examined

■ The resources of community organizations should also be maximized to mobilize the community while surveys are being carried out

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The situation of strategic information by each component in **Kyrgyzstan**



■ It is recommended to start advocating for the first trans SE study in the region, as trans issues are relatively well addressed in Kyrgyzstan compared to other target countries

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