

Reaching the first 90: Identifying barriers to ensure uninterrupted supply of HIV Rapid Test Kits (RTKs) in low and middle-income countries

Results from a multi-country online survey

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A head nurse outside of Accra, Ghana, withdraws blood from a woman for an HIV test. | PHOTO CREDIT: © 2006 Adam Scotti, Courtesy of Photoshare

The Challenge

- In 2014, UNAIDS and partners launched the 90–90–90 targets; the aim was to diagnose 90% of all HIV-positive persons, provide antiretroviral therapy (ART) for 90% of those diagnosed, and achieve viral suppression for 90% of those treated by 2020.
- To be able to diagnose 90% of all HIV-positive persons, countries need to ensure a dependable supply of HIV rapid test kits (RTKs) at all levels of the public health supply chain.

- In 2017, anecdotal reports indicated site-level stockouts of HIV RTKs in several countries.

Understanding the Barriers

The USAID Global Health Supply Chain Program – Procurement and Supply Management (GHSC-PSM) project and the Rapid Test Kits (GHSC-RTKs) project, on behalf of USAID – investigated stockout causes, service delivery barriers, and supply chain management.

- Between October 24 and November 15, 2017, GHSC-PSM and GHSC-RTK collaborated to develop a qualitative survey that GHSC-PSM conducted in 22 countries.

- The 47-question survey, which included multiple-choice and open-answer questions, was administered to GHSC-PSM field offices via SurveyMonkey, a cloud-based online survey development service.
- Responses were cleaned, aggregated, and analyzed by headquarters staff of GHSC-PSM and GHSC-RTK.

Findings and Results:

- All countries reported RTK stockouts in the last two years. 86% of countries reported stockouts from site level and 81% from the central level (Figure 1).
- Major issues that hinder countries' ability to provide testing services (Figure 2) include:
 - Poor planning and forecasting practices (of the 23% of countries without established min/max levels, 80% reported stockouts at one or multiple levels in the last two years);
 - Limitations of distribution systems: Only 25% of countries use a push model; 86% of countries have emergency distribution procedures. Both approaches can help prevent stockouts.
- Correlation between service delivery practice/planning and availability of RTKs at all supply chain levels (58% of countries test through unplanned campaigns, of which 43% reported stockouts at all levels in the last two years).

FIGURE 1.0
 Number of Countries Reporting Stock Outs by Level in the Last 2 Years (n=22)

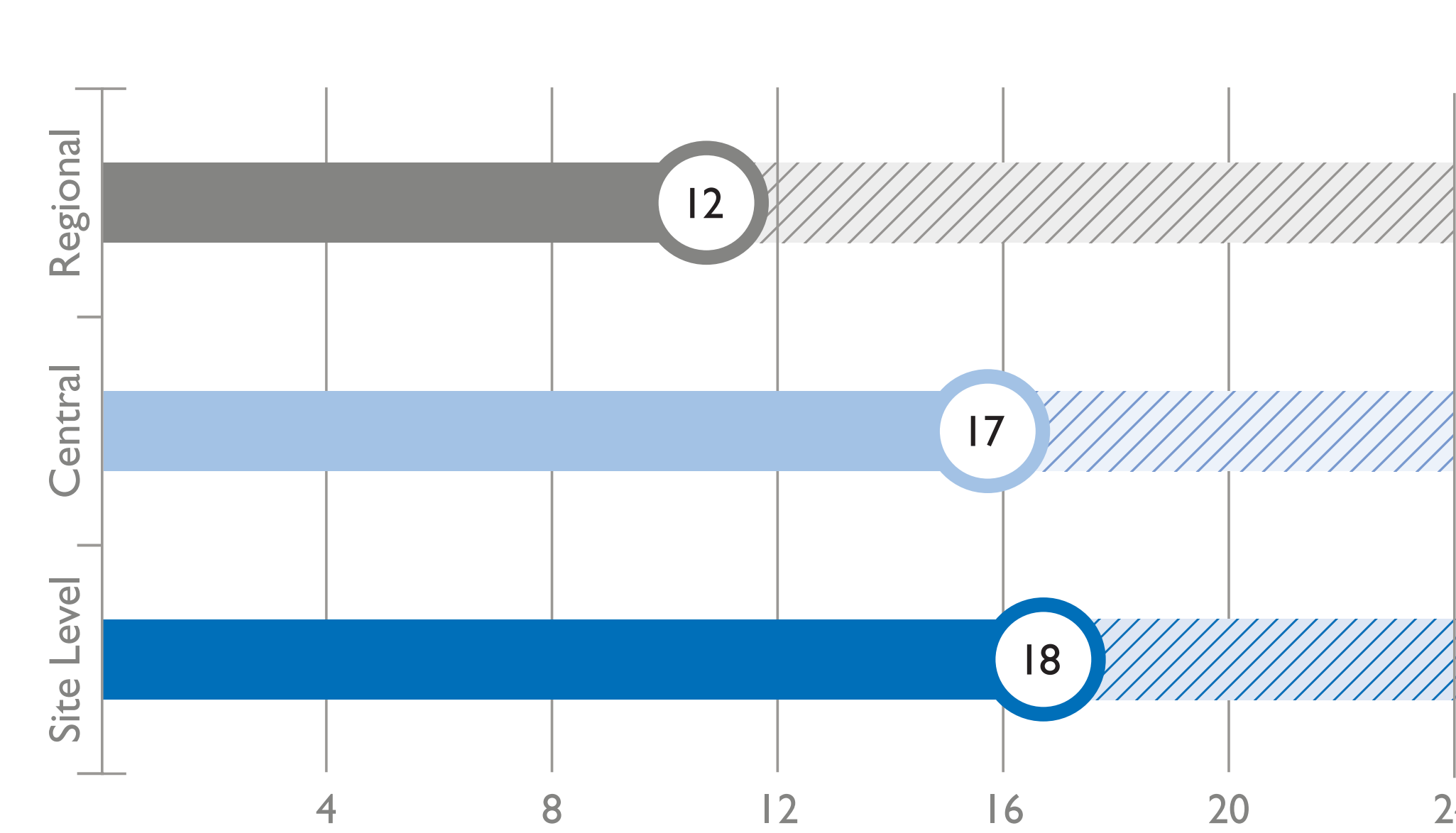
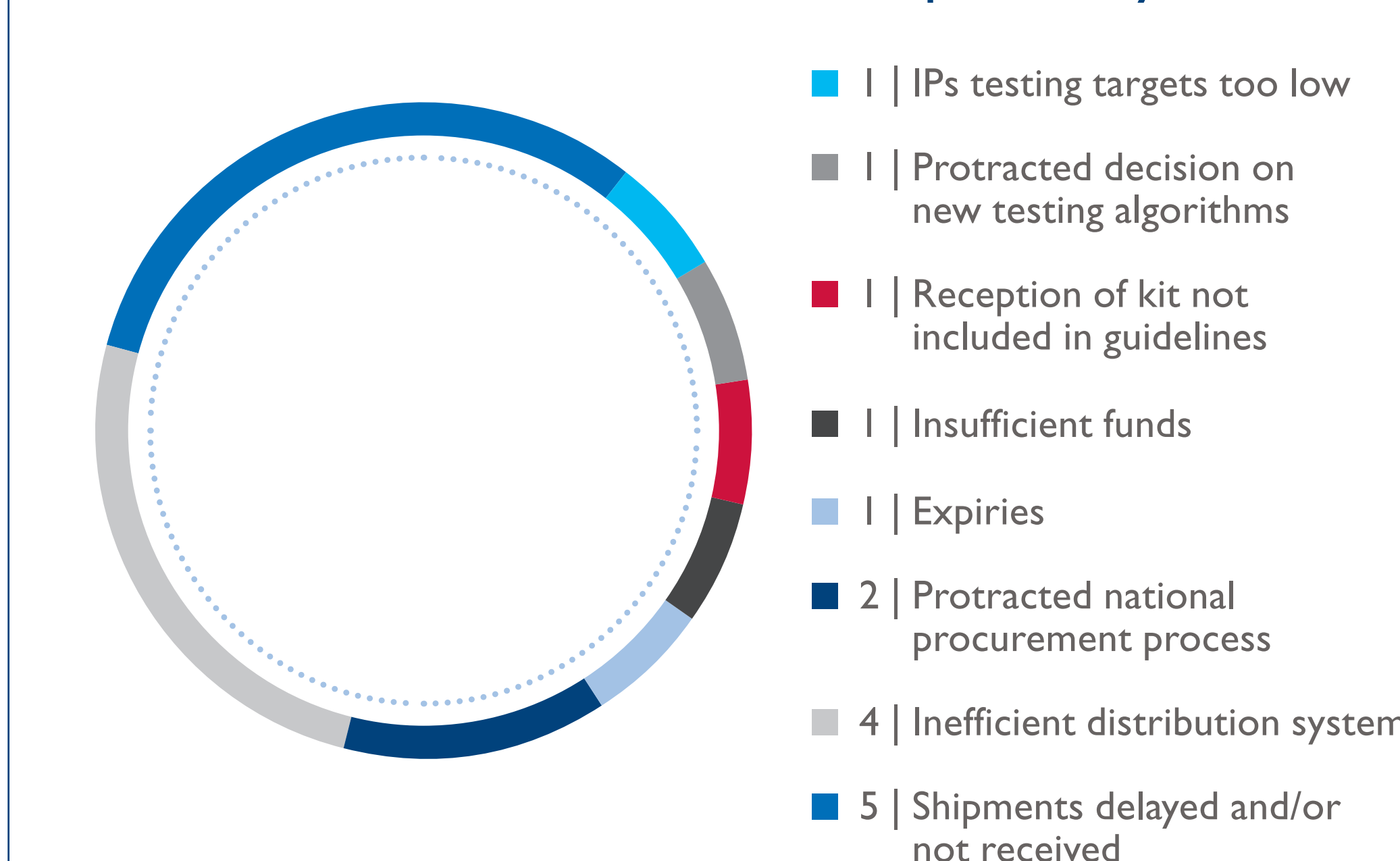


FIGURE 2.0
 Main Causes of RTK Stock-Outs Reported by Countries



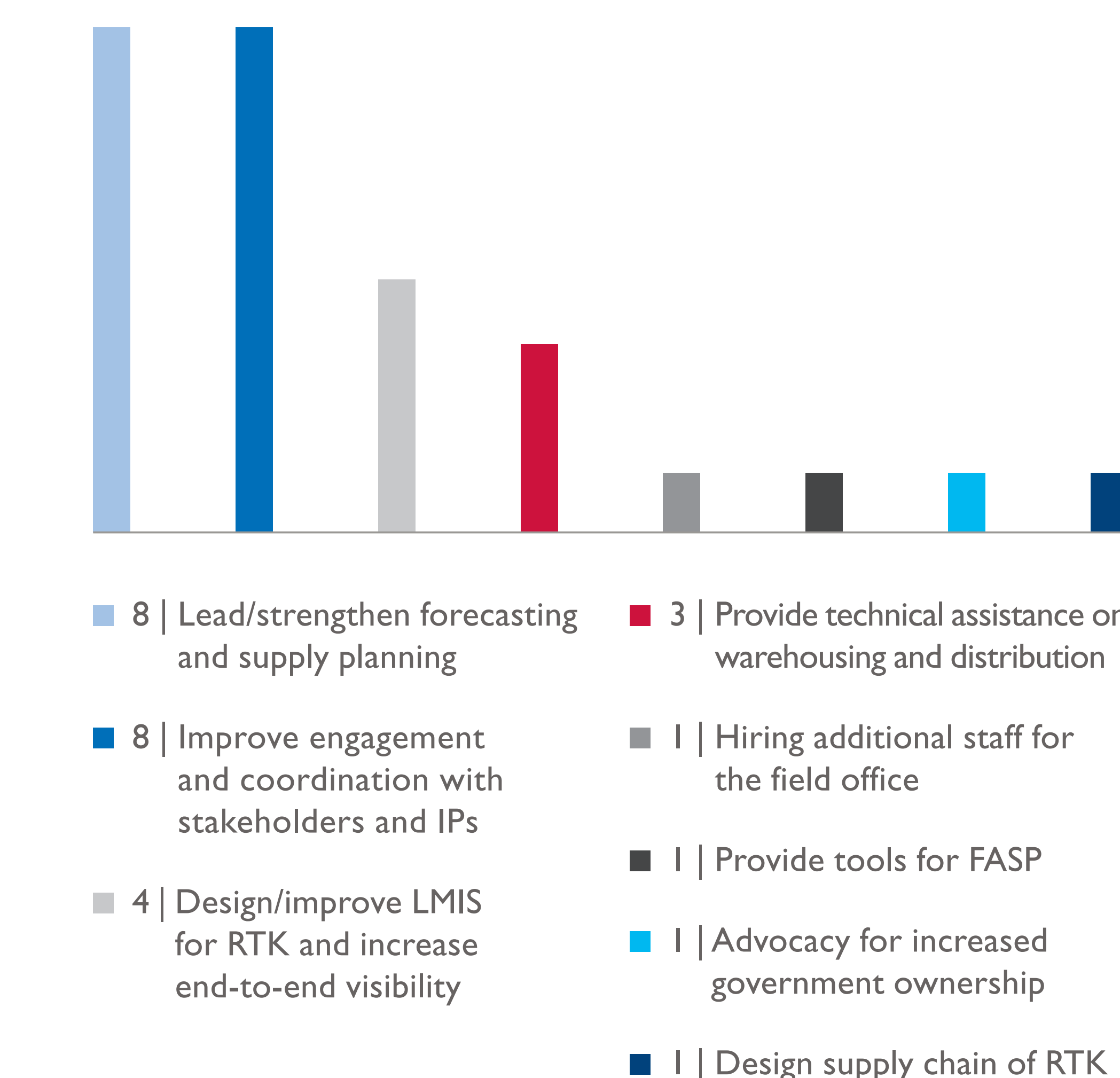
- Eight out of 22 countries highlighted that priorities for technical assistance from GHSC-PSM include strengthening Forecasting and Supply Planning (FASP) capacity and improving coordination with stakeholders (figure 3).

Positive Impact:

- This survey was a first in helping to identify the considerable barriers in countries to reaching the first 90.
- Results highlighted a correlation — if not causality — in how service delivery decisions can affect product availability, and ultimately a program's ability to reach its testing objectives
- Finally, the survey is helping GHSC-PSM and in-country partners to identify gaps, prioritize interventions, and highlight opportunities for service delivery planning and improved communication to help ensure availability of RTKs at all levels.

- The survey will form the basis for intensified country support, complemented by updated approaches to FASP for HIV RTKs in countries in light of the emphasis of PEPFAR on index testing as a major HIV testing strategy to reach the first 90.

FIGURE 3.0
 Potential Areas for Technical Support Requested from the GHSC-PSM to Strengthen the RTK Supply System



Baby Bridget gives a blood sample as part of an early infant diagnosis test for HIV in Zambia. At 18 months, she is HIV negative. PHOTO CREDIT: Kevin Kawana



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