
EXPERIENCE OF CREATING A RISK ASSESSMENT UNIT ON THE EXAMPLE OF CROATIA

Strategic and coordination meeting with international experts and SSFSCP representatives on integration of risk-based concepts in risk management by competent authorities

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First Director of Croatian Food Agency (2004-2007)

Questions to be answered



Establishing a risk assessment team in the existing structures



Resource planning



Organizing workflows and communication channels with risk managers

WHY RISK ASSESSMENT UNIT?

Establishing a risk
assessment team in the
existing structures



Traditional approaches to decision making in food safety

- **Ignorance** – just decide
- **Precedent** – do as always
- **Trial and error** - try something
- **Zero tolerance** - allow no risk
- **Precautionary principle** – just forbid
- **Professional judgment** - ask your staff
- **Inspection** – sample end product



Why risk assessment?

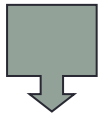


- To improve the quality of our thinking before a decision is made
- To help assure a safe domestic food supply
- To protect human, animal and plant life and health
- It's essential for international trade (SPS Agreement)
- It allows industry to innovate (tolerable level of risk)
- Because the global community use it (WTO, *Codex alimentarius*, OIE, IPPC...).
- Finally, do we have an alternative?

Traditional vs. modern food safety system

Traditional Food Safety System

- **Reactive approach**
- **Main responsibility with government**
- **No structured risk analysis**
- **Relies on end product inspection and testing**



Level of risk reduction:
not always satisfactory

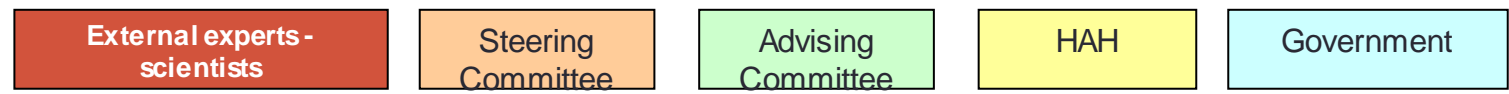
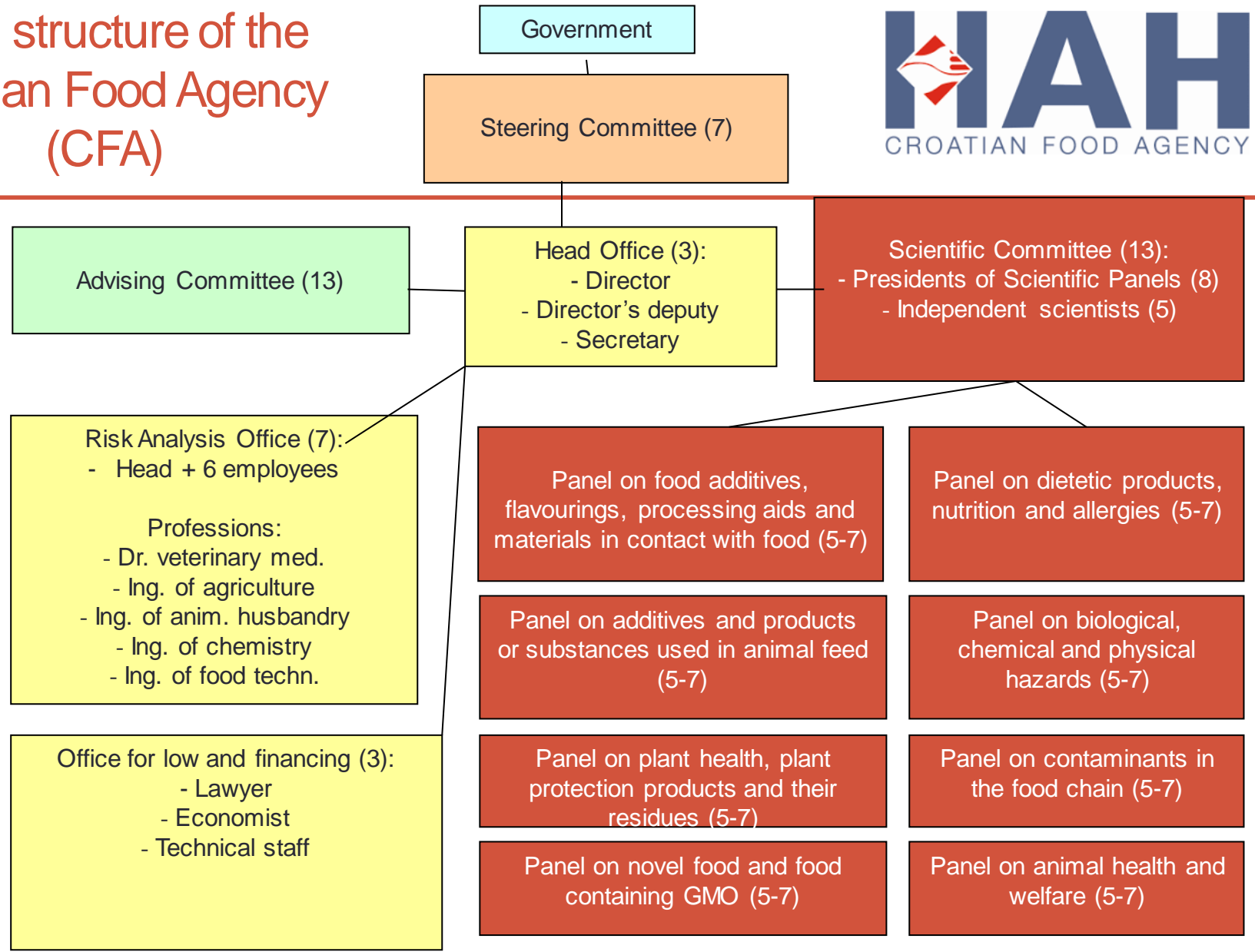
Modern Food Safety System

- ▶ **Preventive approach**
- ▶ **Shared responsibility**
- ▶ **Addresses farm-to-table continuum**
- ▶ **Science based**
- ▶ **Use of structured risk analysis**
- ▶ **Established priorities**
- ▶ **Relies on process control**



Level of risk reduction:
improved

Initial structure of the Croatian Food Agency (CFA)



Initial CFA Risk Assessment Unit (2005)



A/ CFA scientific network (persons)

B/ CFA national network of institutions

A/ Mainly faculties

INDEPENDENCE!

B/ Laboratories, institutes, faculties...

DATA PROVIDERS

- **Multidisciplinary approach**
 - microbiology,
 - epidemiology, medicine,
 - veterinary medicine,
 - chemistry, toxicology, food technology, statistics, etc.



RA is a teamwork!

Now - Croatian Agency for Agriculture and Food - Centre for Food Safety (CFS)



The key CFS activity is **risk assessment (RA)**, that involves:

- **Review** of scientific data and studies
- **Collection, analysis and processing** of data
- **Preparing scientific and professional opinions**

RESOURCE PLANNING

How to decide about the
priorities?



Candy machine „one-coin
dilema”

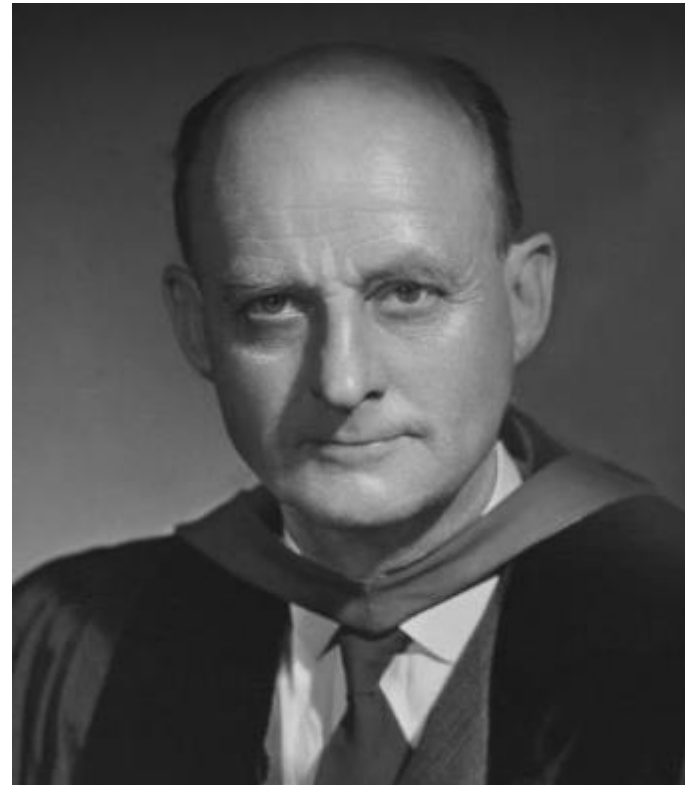
Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr (1892–1971) - American Reformed theologian

„God, give me:

...grace to accept with serenity the things that **cannot be changed,**

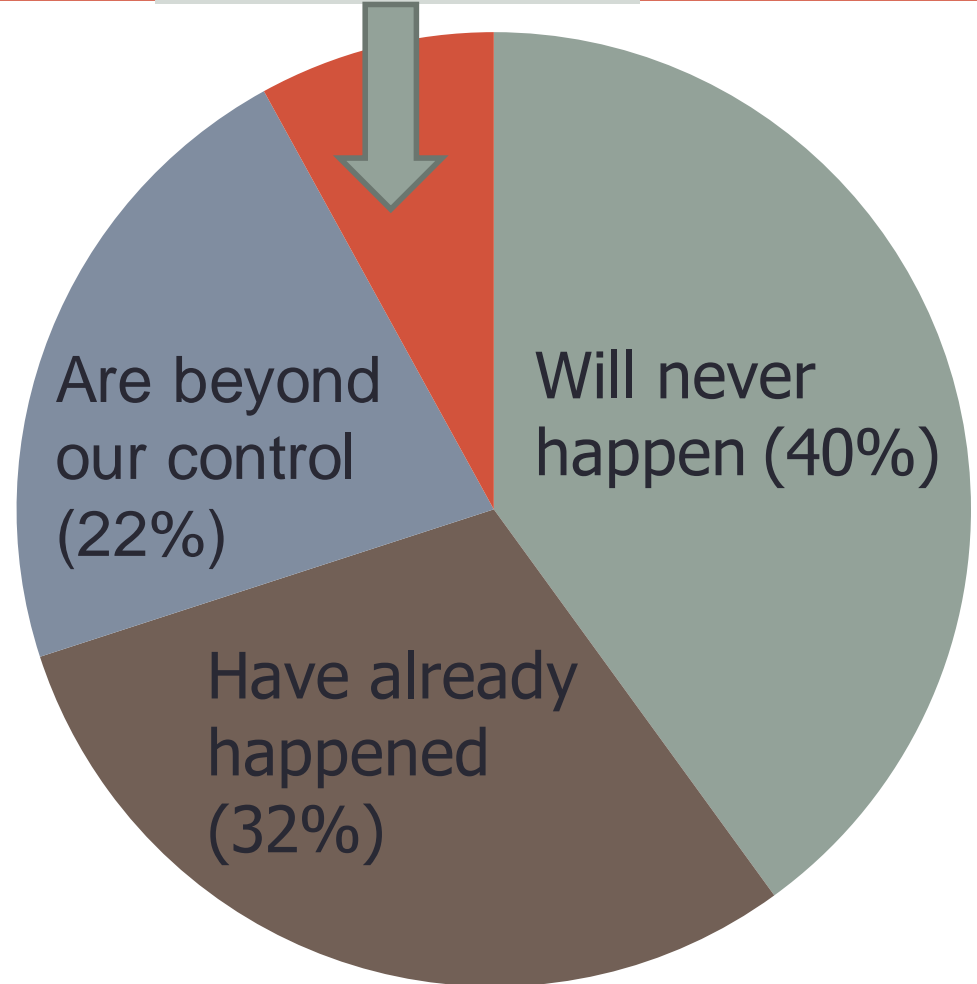
...courage to change the things which **should be changed,**

...and the Wisdom to distinguish the **one from the other.**”



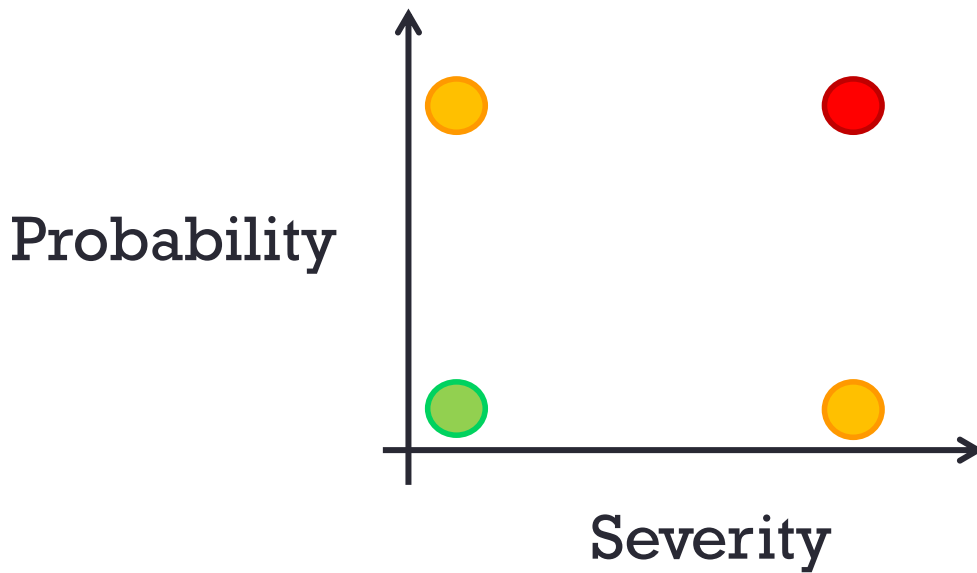
A survey on risks that we should (not) worry about...

Are worth to be worried about (we can influence!) (8%)



What is a risk?

Risk has two elements:
chance and a **bad thing**



Risk estimation:

- high
- moderate
- low

CFS budget for RA

Using available data

- Regular RA activities (using data from official control, scientific publications, etc.)
- Approx. **1.000 € per study**
- 5-10 times per year
- +15 times per year „rapid risk assessments”

Creating new data

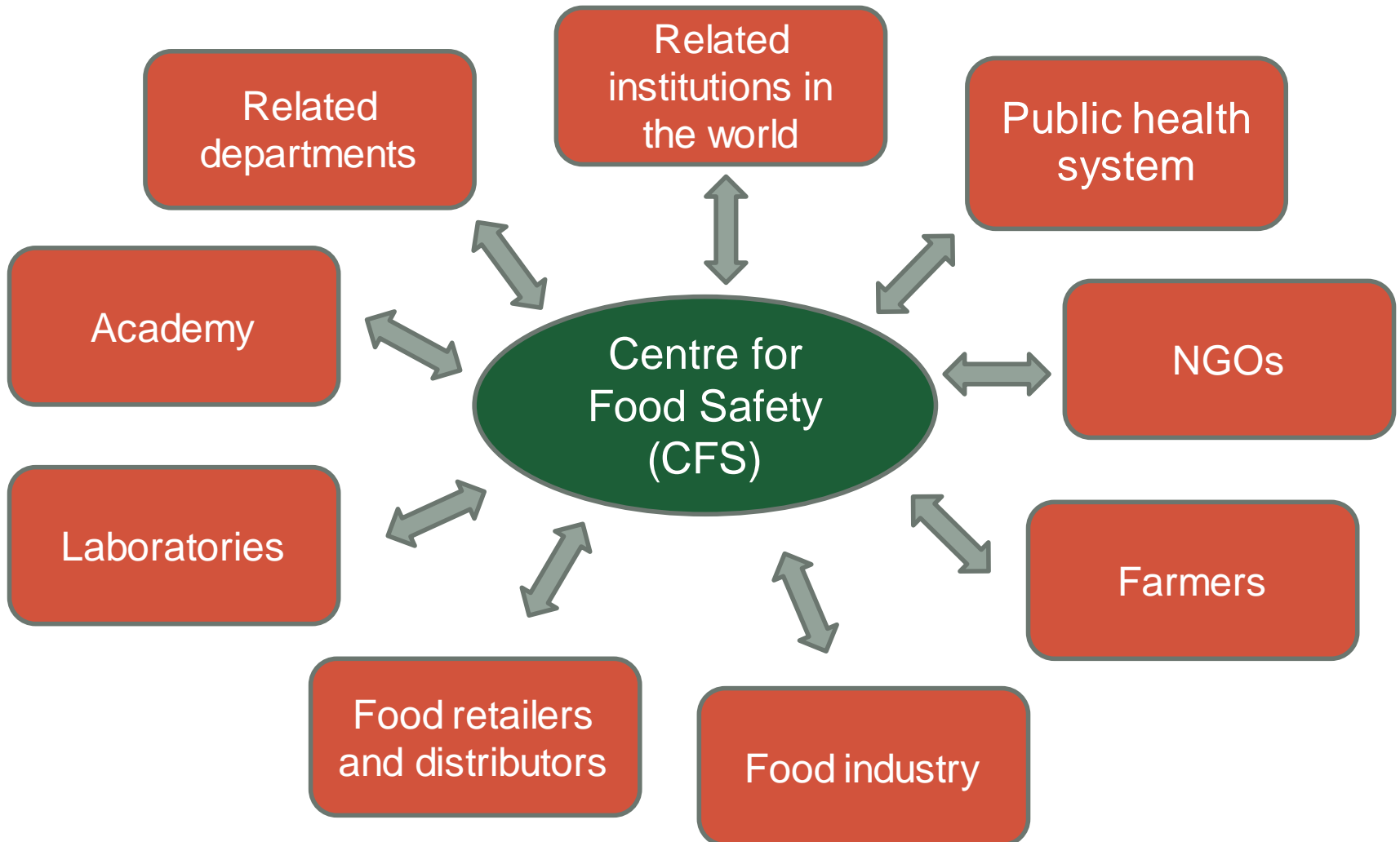
- Specific RA studies - (field research, laboratory analytics, etc.)
- Approx. **15.000 € per study**
- 1-3 per year

ORGANIZING WORKFLOWS AND COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

Interaction with risk managers



Interactive communication



RA – who launches it?

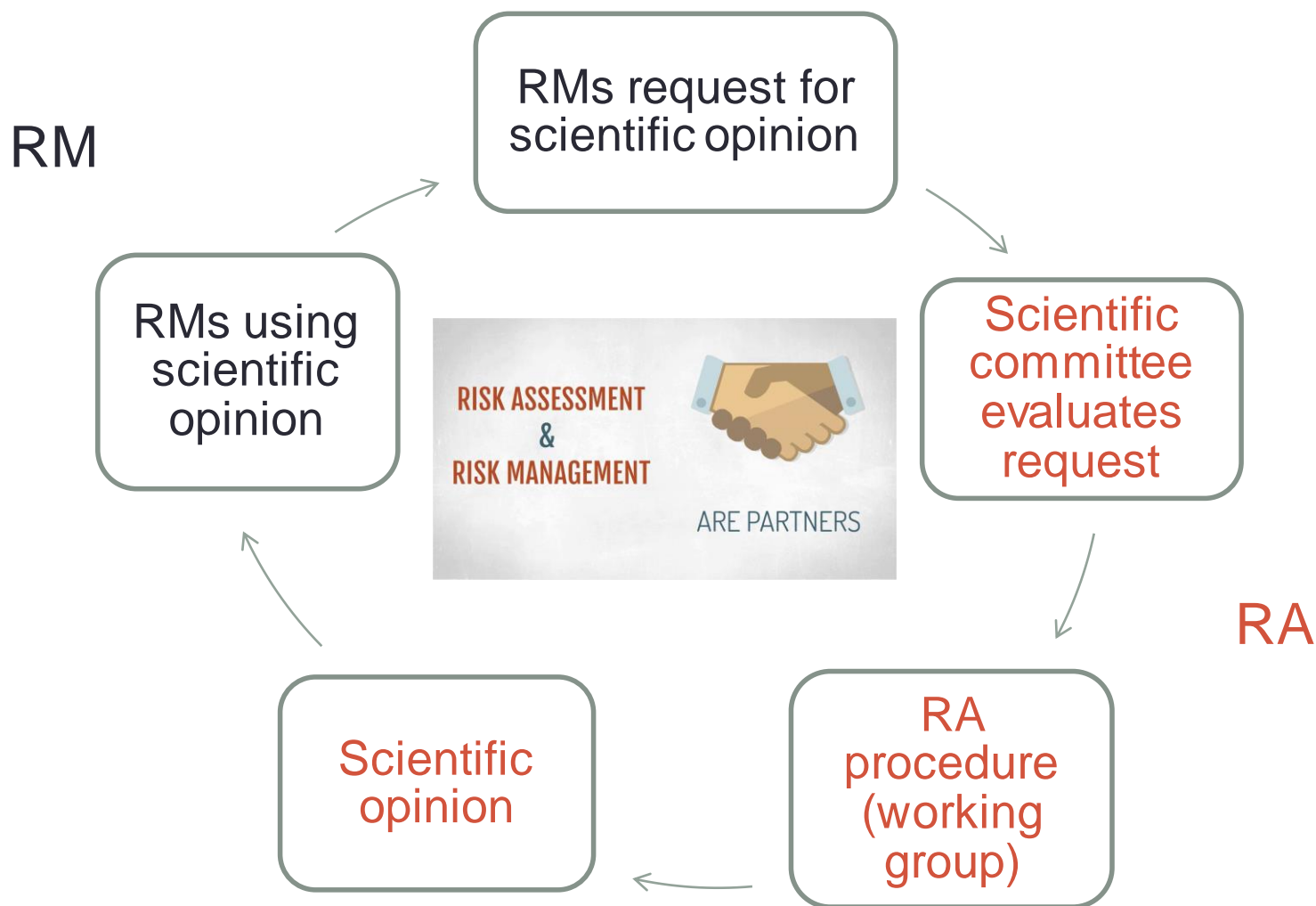
A/ Request from **RM bodies**:

- For carrying out official controls and/or RM;
- For drafting official control plans, adoption of emergency or protective measures, national regulations, orders and instructions;
- At the request of the national contact point of the Rapid Alert System for Food and Feed at the national level (HR RASFF system)

B/ At the request of **interested third parties** for their needs

C/ On own initiative of the **RA body**

Workflow between RA and RM



RA – what is the product?



**Understandable,
unambiguous and
clear information,
necessary for RM
decision-making in
the field of food
safety**



**From 2005 to 2021,
CFS prepared a total
number of 107
scientific and
professional output
documents + 71 rapid
RAs conducted in last
5 years**

Scientific Opinions
Scientific Reports
Opinions
Risk Profiles



Publically available!!!
<https://www.hapih.hr/csh/upisnik-znanstvenih-misljenja/>

Conclusions

- RA is integral part of every modern food safety system
- It helps us to solve problems in systematic and transparent way
- Croatian model has many elements that can be integrated in Ukraine
- SSUFSCP has already taken important steps to enforce RA capacities
- Putting strong RA unit within the SSUFSCP in place will be crucial
- Funding for RA should be planned and allocated

If you don't
attack the risks,

the risks will

attack you.



Project Management proverb.



Questions?