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AFRICAN FOOD RISK ASSESSMENT HUB

A proposed AFRAF mechanism for expertise, competency
development, data, tools and scientific assessment

*Discussion concept • Third Meeting of AFRAF
Cairo, Egypt • 30 September – 2 October 2026*

An Initial Concept Co-Developed With African Regulators



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The Proposition: An African Food Risk Assessment Hub

A **regulator-led** African Hub that **mobilizes existing expertise and institutions** to **strengthen food risk assessment** in support of food regulatory decisions.



An enabling mechanism

A coordinated mechanism under AFRAF — not a new statutory structure.



Mobilizes what exists

Competent authorities, African and international academic centres, laboratories and research institutions.



Serves every level

Makes capacity more readily available to address national, REC and continental needs.

SCOPE

INITIAL FOCUS

Food risk assessment serving regulatory decisions

POSSIBLE LATER EVOLUTION

Selected elements of the broader food risk analysis framework — subject to AFRAF priorities

Why a Hub? A Practical Capacity Constraint

Modern food risk assessment requires competencies **rarely concentrated in a single institution**

Toxicology

Microbiology

Exposure assessment

Epidemiology

Statistics

Mathematical modelling

Data science

Academic training pathways dedicated to regulatory food risk assessment remain limited — and **short-term training and workshops alone cannot develop independent, experienced risk assessors.**

SUSTAINABLE CAPACITY REQUIRES



Structured learning



Mentoring



Supervised practice through real risk assessments



Access to appropriate data and scientific tools



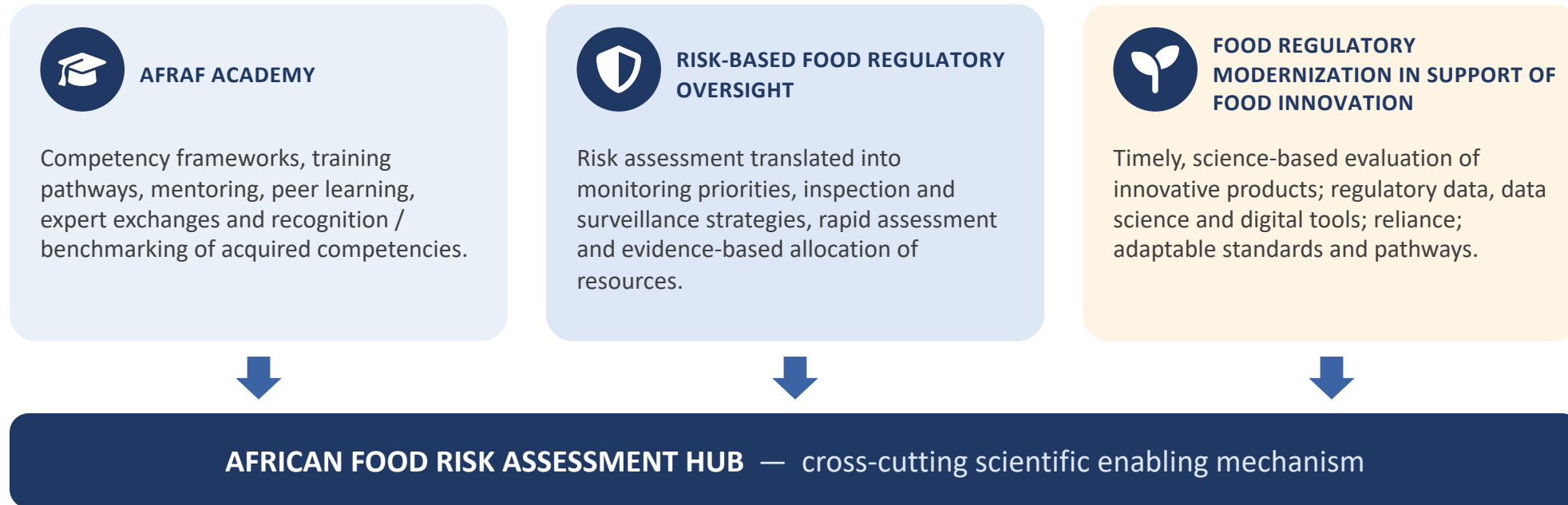
Peer review



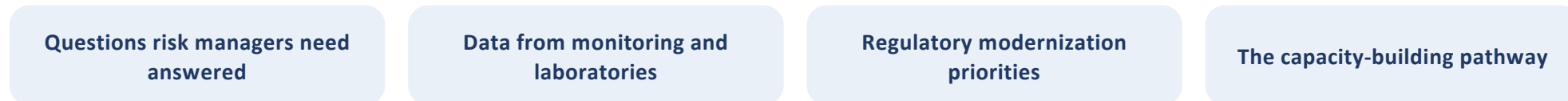
Sustained communities of practice

The Hub would bring these elements together for the African food regulatory community.

A Shared Workstream Across AFRAF's Three Working Groups



RISK ASSESSMENT SHOULD NOT BECOME AN ISOLATED SCIENTIFIC EXERCISE — IT MUST CONNECT TO:



Eight Proposed Functions

**A**

African expertise pool

Voluntary roster of qualified experts and institutions, mobilized through panels, peer review and mentoring.

**B**

Competency development

African competency framework, progressive pathways and benchmarking of demonstrated competencies.

**C**

Training & international connectivity

Map and tailor existing programmes; link to EU-FORA, xORA, BfR, ANSES, EFSA and FAO/WHO networks.

**D**

Food-safety data resources

Federated access to occurrence, consumption, Total Diet Study and monitoring data, with common metadata and quality rules.

**E**

Tools, methods & data science

Exposure, probabilistic, predictive microbiology, dose-response, uncertainty and evidence-synthesis tools.

**F**

Priority-setting & assessments

Full, rapid or targeted assessments — reliance on JECFA, JEMRA and trusted assessments before de novo work.

**G**

Standards, regulations & innovation

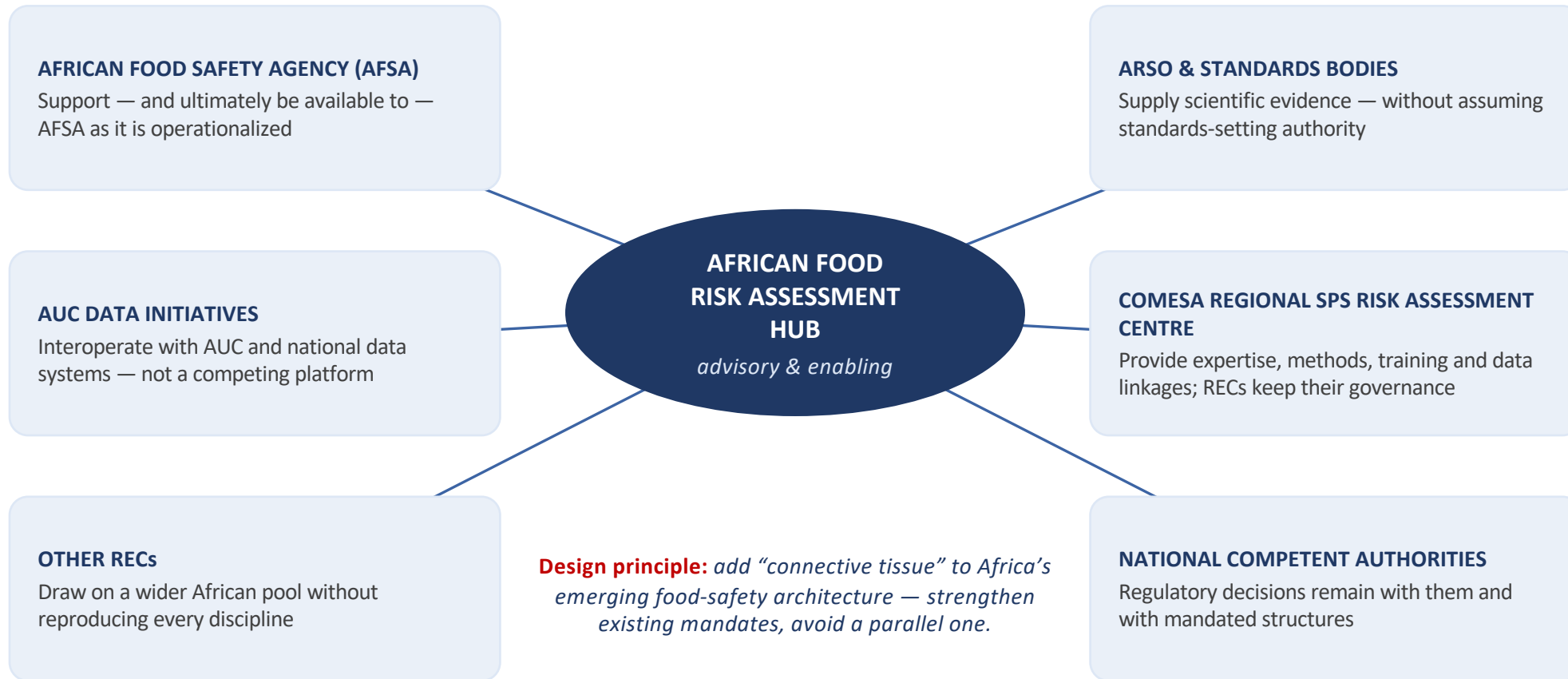
Scientific input to ARSO, REC and national measures; safety assessment of innovative products.

**H**

Horizon scanning

Early identification of emerging hazards, technologies and regulatory questions of shared relevance.

Complementarity — Not Institutional Duplication



Governance and Scientific Integrity

DEVELOPED PROGRESSIVELY

“By regulators, for regulators”

Preserve African regulatory ownership while drawing effectively on the wider scientific community.

Start with an initial coordination arrangement linked to AFRAF governance and its Working Groups.

GForSS could facilitate this phase and explore, with members and partners, options for sustainable governance, hosting and operations.

Credibility depends less on location than on **transparent, credible and repeatable scientific procedures**:

Request intake & prioritization

Question formulation with risk managers

Expert selection on documented competencies

Declaration & management of interests

Confidentiality & data governance

Documented assumptions & uncertainties

Appropriate peer review

Communication & publication of outputs

Rapid assessment when required



Industry and other stakeholders may contribute data, expertise and resources — under safeguards that protect the **independence and integrity of scientific conclusions**.

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Financing and Sustainability Considerations



POTENTIAL SOURCES

- Development partners
- Continental and REC programmes
- Participating authorities
- Scientific or technical partners



IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

- Expert time
- Access to datasets
- Laboratory and analytical capacity
- Scientific tools and software
- Training resources and institutional support



POSSIBLE COST-RECOVERY

- Commissioned scientific assessments
- Safety assessments for innovation and regulated products
- Specialized data analysis
- Tailored training and technical services

Safeguard: financing supports the assessment process and scientific capacity of the Hub — **without influencing scientific conclusions.**

From Concept to Operational Model

First agree on the **need, purpose and scope** of the Hub — then determine its institutional and operational arrangements.

1 NOW

AFRAF considers the concept

Consideration and endorsement of the concept and proposed functions of the Hub.



2 IF SUPPORTED

A subsequent operational paper

Governance and hosting models; links with the three Working Groups and national, REC and continental structures; expertise mobilization; priority activities; data and digital infrastructure; partnerships; financing.



3 COORDINATION

GForSS could coordinate its preparation

In consultation with AFRAF members, the Working Groups, competent authorities, RECs and technical and development partners — including funding sources.

Initial Work Programme for AFRAF Consideration

1

Map the African risk-assessment ecosystem

Units, universities, laboratories, experts, REC initiatives, training programmes and data assets.

2

Define an African competency framework

Competencies and specializations; map courses; identify gaps; mentoring and supervised practice.

3

Create an expert roster & communities of practice

Chemical, microbiological, exposure/data science and innovation safety assessment.

4

Select 2–3 pilot scientific questions

Multi-country relevance and clear regulatory users; reliance wherever possible.

5

Develop the minimum data architecture

Common metadata, quality and access principles; connect existing repositories.

6

Establish strategic partnerships incrementally

RECs, AFSA/AUC, ARSO, universities, laboratories, xORA and EFSA-linked initiatives.

7

Prepare a sustainability & hosting plan

Expressions of interest from authorities; cost the core coordination function; funding.

A Practical Hub — and What We Ask of AFRAF

Africa does not need to reproduce every risk-assessment discipline in every authority, nor create another large institution. It needs a **practical Hub**.

SUCCESS WOULD BE MEASURED BY



Assessments completed



Competencies demonstrated



Data made usable



Regulatory decisions better anchored in evidence



African experts increasingly contributing to regional and international risk-assessment science

FOR AFRAF'S CONSIDERATION

1. Consider and endorse

the concept and the proposed functions of the African Food Risk Assessment Hub

2. Support a subsequent operational paper

on governance, hosting, expertise, data, partnerships and financing

3. Keep the initial mandate focused

on risk assessment, with any later extension decided by AFRAF

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