Lifelong Learning

The EU innovation transfer project IRM organic:

How to support inspector's competence for risk-based inspections by a targeted competence management?

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WARSAW, 23.09.2014

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Objectives of the EU-legislation on organic production:

- Fair competition
- Consumer protection
- Transparency and support of the development of the organic sector

Two major reasons for nonconformities in organic production:

- Errors and negligence
- Fraud (deliberate act with intended financial gains)

“Food Fraud” becomes an politically increasing relevant issue on EU level

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Food fraud on EU level

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT 2009 - 2014

Plenary sitting

A7-0434/2013

4.12.2013

REPORT

on the food crisis, fraud in the food chain and the control thereof
(2013/2091(INI))

Committee on the Environment, Public Health and Food Safety

Rapporteur: Esther de Lange

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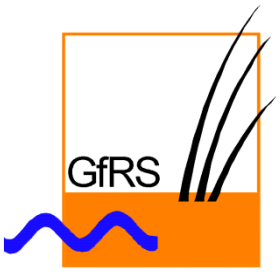
Is there fraud on the organic marketplace?



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Some say not at all.

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Others recommend not to talk about it.

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Some overestimate the dimension of the problem.

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But what is the dimension of the fraud problem in the organic sector?

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Some data on official controls in Germany

Food and Feed control authorities

- Supervise 1.220.164 food and feed operators
- Employ 2.480 inspectors (**1 inspector : 500 operators**)
- Inspect 529.969 food and feed operators (43%)

(BMEL, 2012)

Some data on official controls in Germany

Control bodies in organic production

- Supervise 39.053 organic operators
- Employ 539 inspectors (**1 inspector : 70 operators**)
- Inspect 118% of organic operators
- Find 127 deviations leading to Article 30-sanctions

(BLE & BMEL, 2013)

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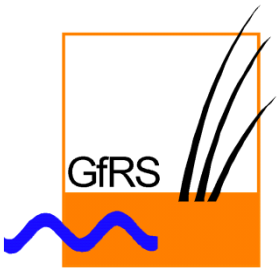
Why risk-based approaches in organic inspections?



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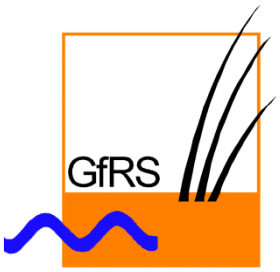
Objectives of the risk-based approach in organic inspections

- Focus limited resources on possible major non-conformities endangering the organic status of products and operators

- Integrate “surprise elements” to organic inspections which cannot be foreseen by the operators to gain effectiveness

What is the relation between inspector‘s competence and effectiveness and efficiency of the risk-based approach?



Why is the inspector’s competence (hard skills and soft skills) a key for the risk-based approach?

- It determines the ability of the inspector to focus on the right critical points at operator level
- It influences the ability of the inspector to communicate, to understand, to draw the right conclusions referring to the legislative requirements and to document the results of the inspection including objective evidence.

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ISO 17065 – competence management

6.1.2 Management of competence for personnel involved in the certification process

6.1.2.1 The certification body shall establish, implement and maintain a procedure for management of competencies of personnel involved in the certification process (see Clause 7). The procedure shall require the certification body to:

a) determine the criteria for the competence of personnel for each function in the certification process, taking into account the requirements of the schemes;

b) identify training needs and provide, as necessary, training programmes on certification processes, requirements, methodologies, activities and other relevant certification scheme requirements;

c) demonstrate that the personnel have the required competencies for the duties and responsibilities they undertake;

d) formally authorize personnel for functions in the certification process;

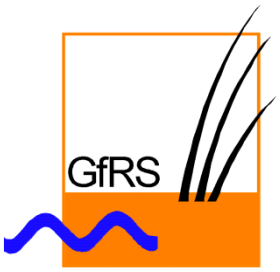
e) monitor the performance of the personnel.

ISO 17065: A flexible approach to competence

- Personal abilities + qualification (hard + soft skills)
  + Training
  + Professional experience
  = Competence
- Performance review
- Deduction of further training needs

ISO 17065: A flexible approach to competence

What does IRM-Organic contribute?



- **Aims**
  - Improve fraud prevention in the organic sector through
  - open minded exchange between control authorities and control bodies
  - exchange on better inspection methods and techniques
  - training of organic inspectors

Why the train-the-trainer approach?

The world is different.

- Different geographical and socio-economical realities across the EU member states
- Different operator structures at control bodies and authorities
- Different competence level of staff and inspectors at control bodies and authorities

Project work packages

- Analysis of current training status and focus concerning the RBA through guided interviews of organic stakeholders in 4 countries (AT, DE, IT, PL) and EU-wide online survey of organic inspectors
- Analysis of the training concepts in adjacent food and feed certification programs
- Development of a tailor-made train the trainer course
- Pilot train the trainer courses in four countries (AT, DE, IT, PL), open for other EU-control institutions
- Development of a final curriculum for the train-the-trainer courses

- **Some data**
  - Comparison with OFFC and with 10 relevant private certification schemes
  - Interviews of organic experts: 239 experts from 3 sectors
    AT: 67; DE: 67; IT: 60; PL: 45
  - Online survey for organic inspectors:
    534 inspectors from AT, DE, IT and PL
    Inspectors from 12 other EU member states
    134 inspectors active in third countries
  - Participants in Pilot Train-the-Trainer courses:
    AT: 20 participants from 6 countries
    DE: 19 participants from 10 countries
    IT: 25 participants from 7 countries
    PL: 22 participants from 1 country

Some results

Training concepts of private certification schemes

- ✓ Regular training by the certification body (content and methodology in the responsibility of the CB)
- ✓ Regular information by the scheme owner (online or face to face)
- ✓ Exams (online exams as well as exams with physical attendance; content: multiple choice tests, case studies)

Some results

Training concepts of private certification schemes

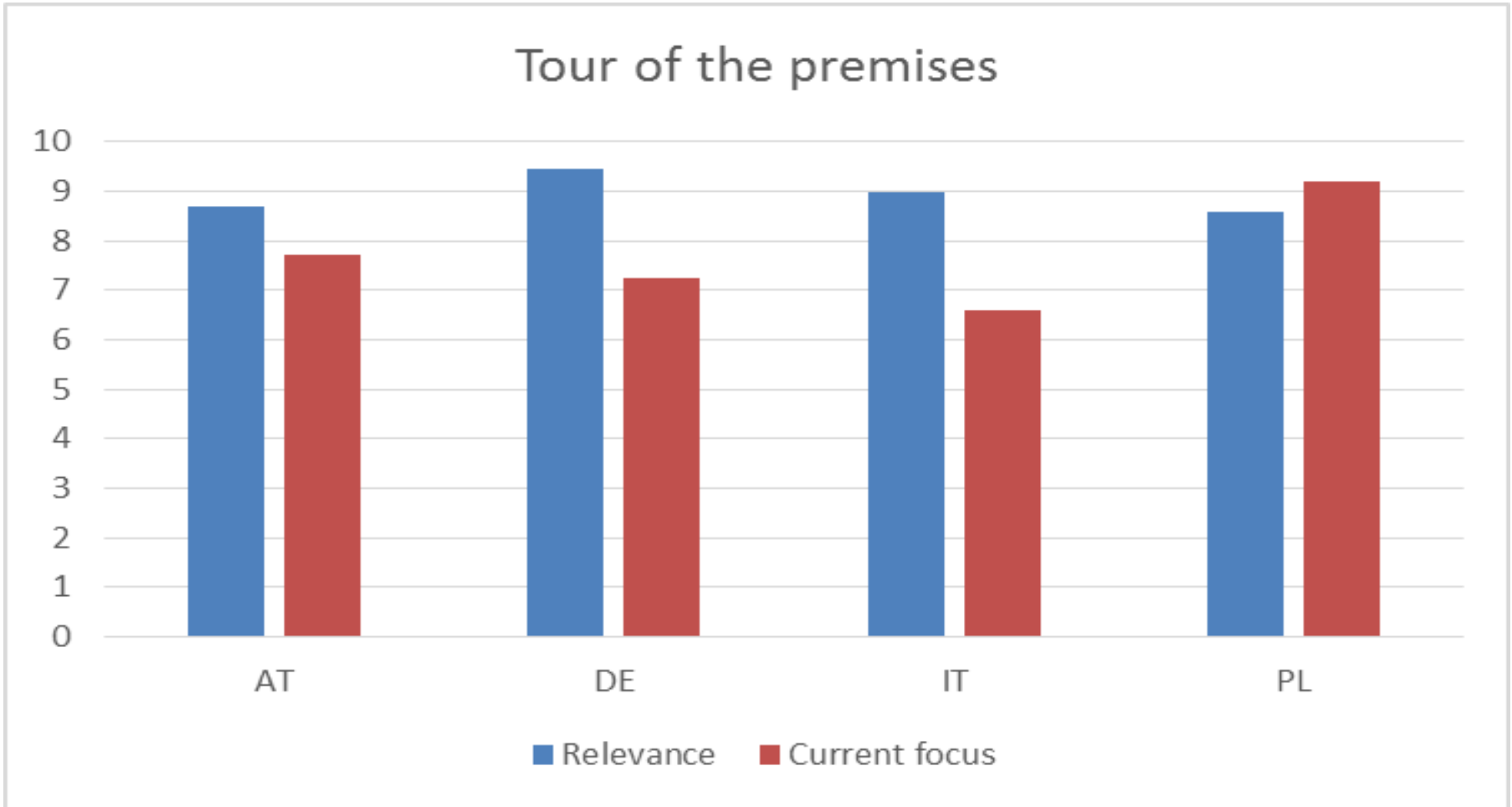
- ✓ Witness audits (observation and evaluation of the auditor’s performance on-site during an audit by the CB or/and the system owner)
- ✓ On-going audit participation (defined number of performed audits for a specific time frame)

Some results

Training concepts of private certification schemes

- None of the private certification schemes analysed has a particular training component to train auditors and inspectors how to deal with severe irregularities and fraud

Some results – Current status and what is desired by experts



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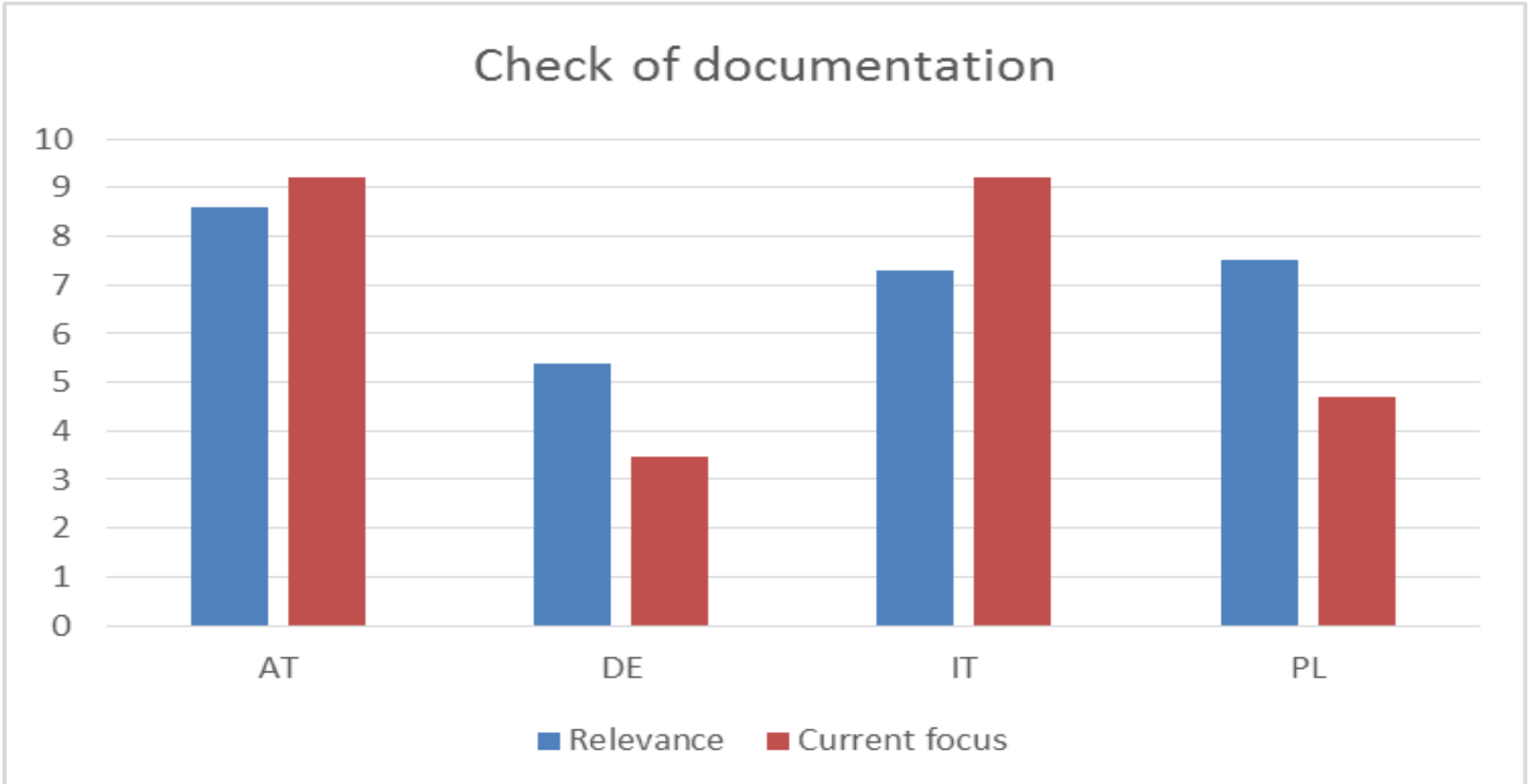

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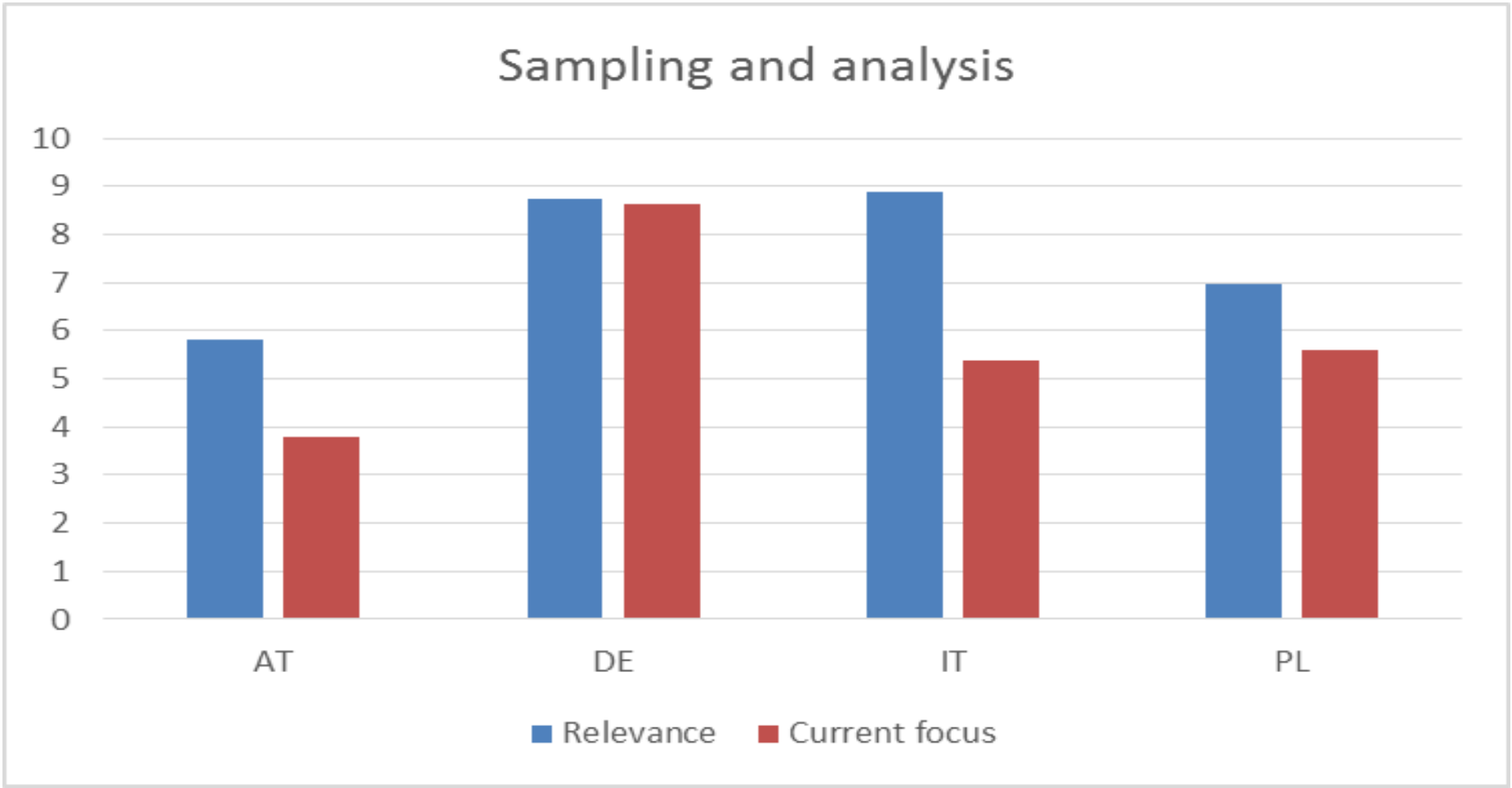
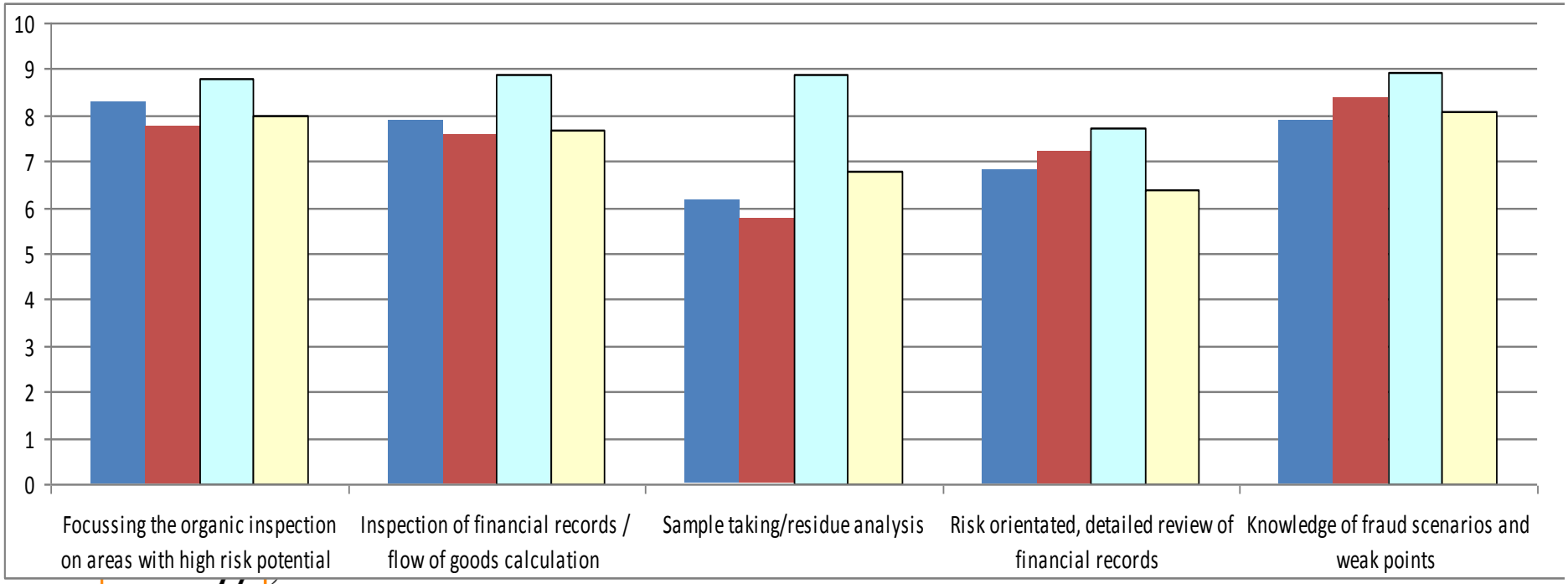
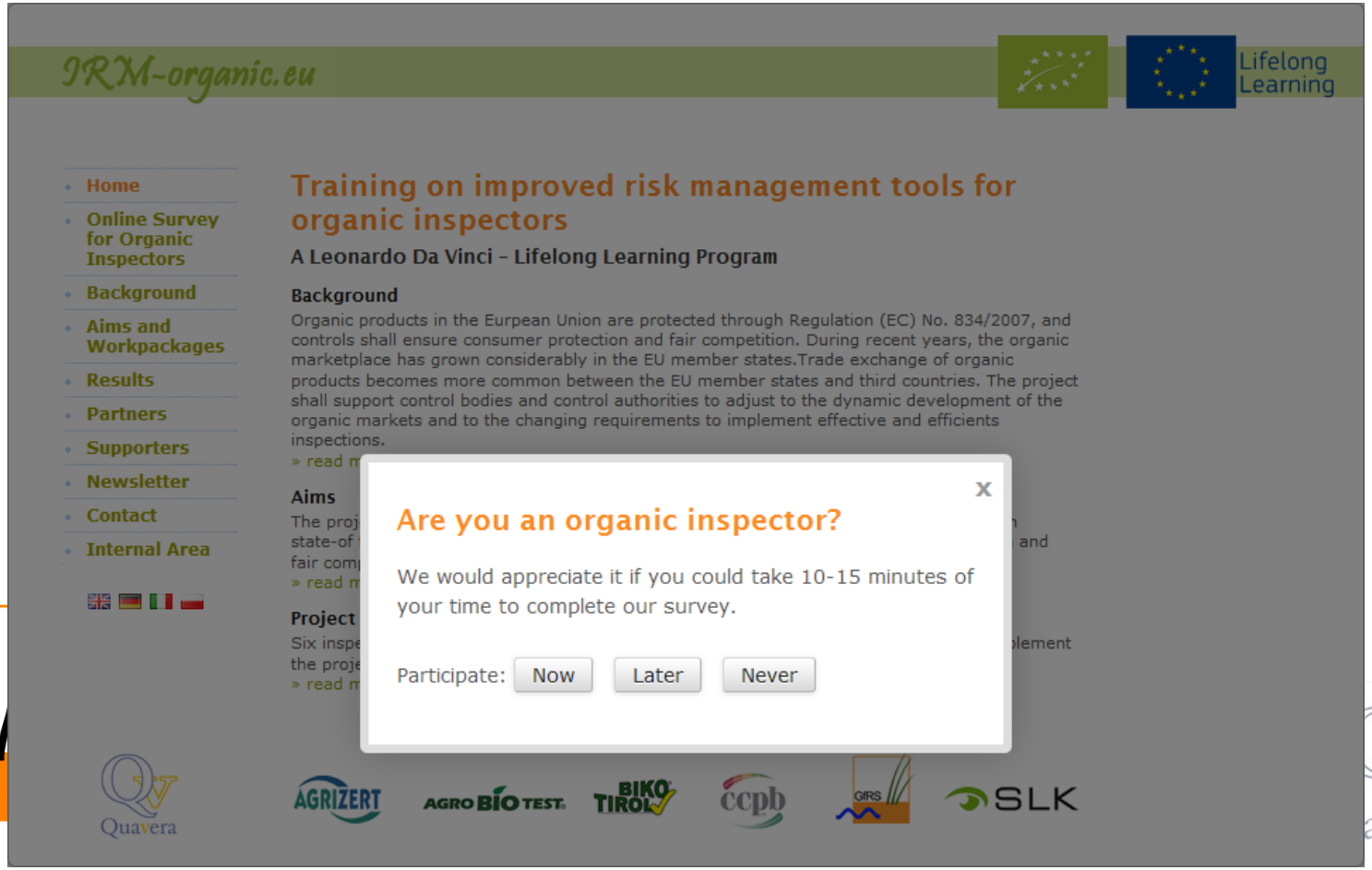


Some results – what shall be the focus in future (expert view)



Online survey – inspectors



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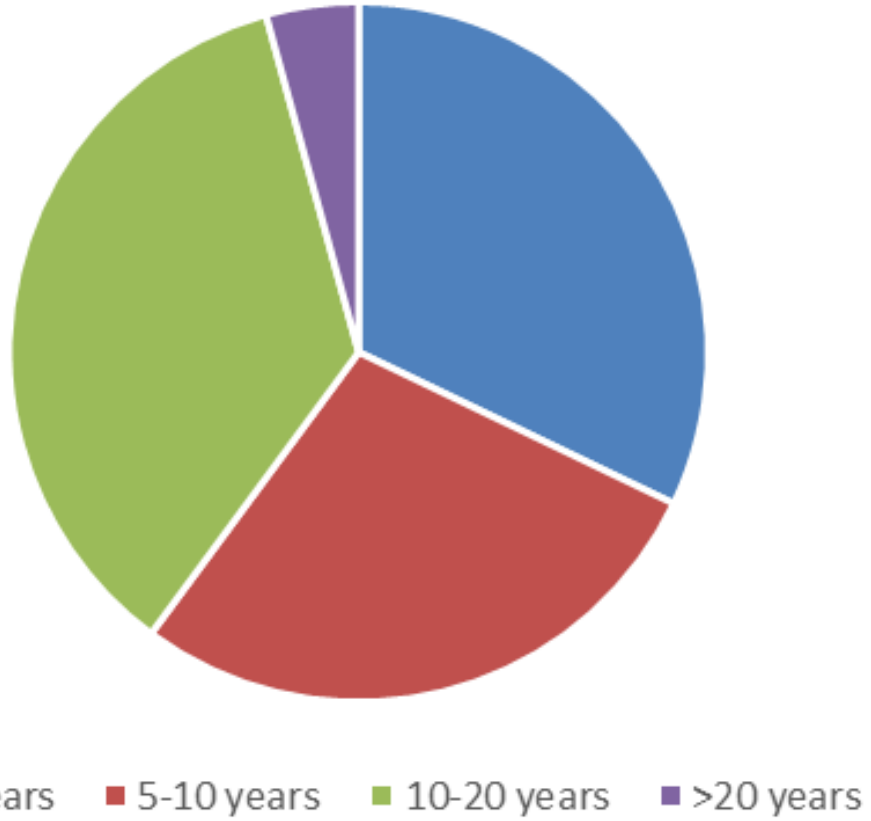

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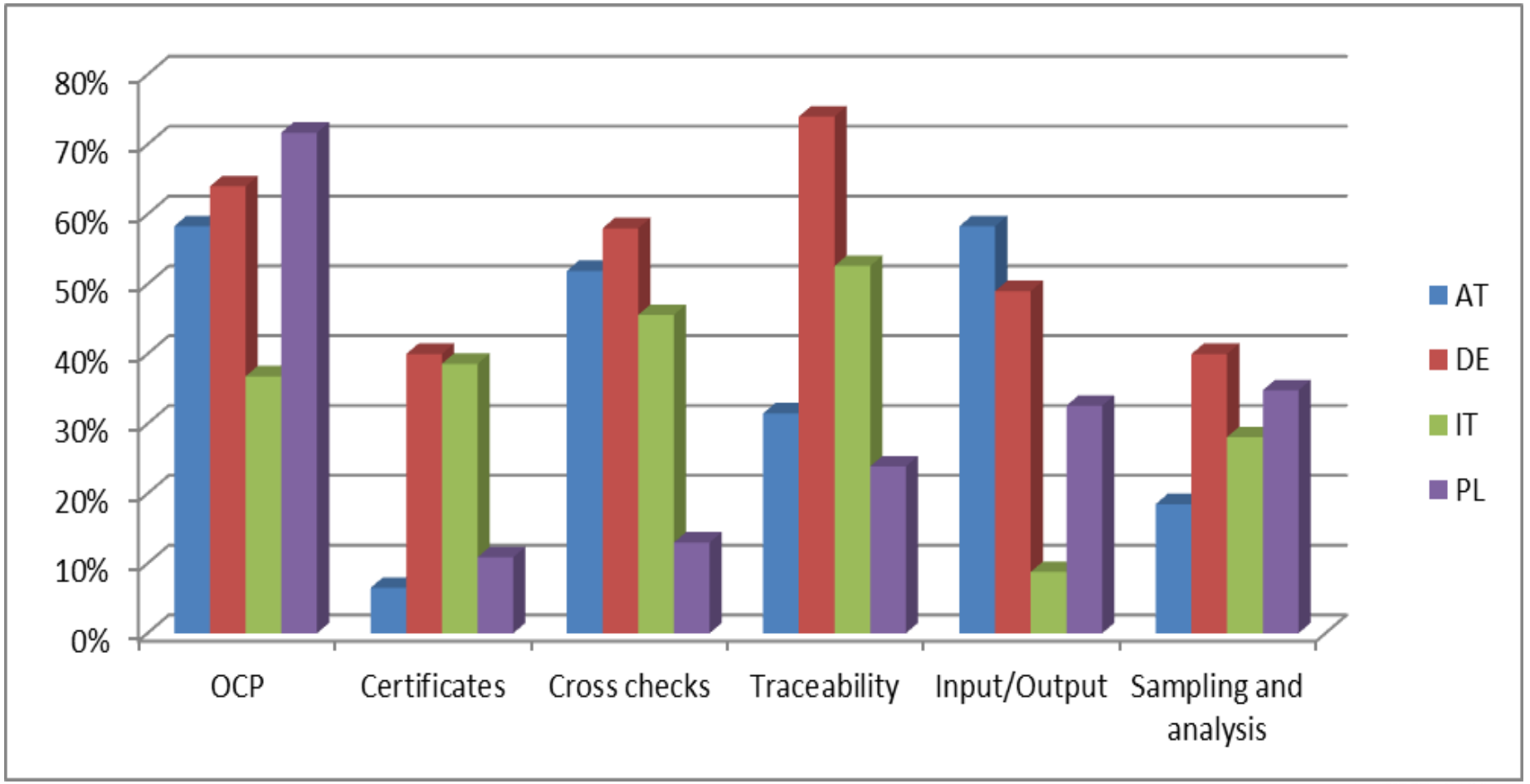

Online survey - inspectors

- 83% – 91% of participating inspectors received a training relating to possible major nonconformities and irregularities from their CA/CB.
- 89% - 100% of participating inspectors feel able to recognize major nonconformities and irregularities.
- 64% - 94% of participating inspectors feel competent to recognize fraud, but only 35% - 68% dealt with fraud cases already.

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Some conclusions:

- The competence targets for new and experiences inspectors are different.
- Internal trainer(s) within a CA/CB makes sense.
- Trainings should include different interactive training methodologies (e.g. presentations, working groups, case studies, experience exchanges)
- Exams support the verification of learning success

Some conclusions (II):

- The experts wish to see a more intelligent control approach in future
- Experts and inspectors are tired of “checklist-governance” approaches.
  Focussing on critical points at operator level, taking into account possible fraud scenarios and using “intelligent” control techniques are seen as suitable to maintain and effective and efficient organic control system.

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…any questions?

Thank you!

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This communication reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.