

# Managing fluctuations in UK fresh produce redistribution

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# Food Waste Problem

**40%** of food produced globally is lost or wasted (Lipinski et *al.*, 2024)

**10.7 million** tonnes of food was wasted in the UK in 2021 (WRAP, 2023)

**600 million** people are expected to face hunger by 2030 (UN DESA, 2023)

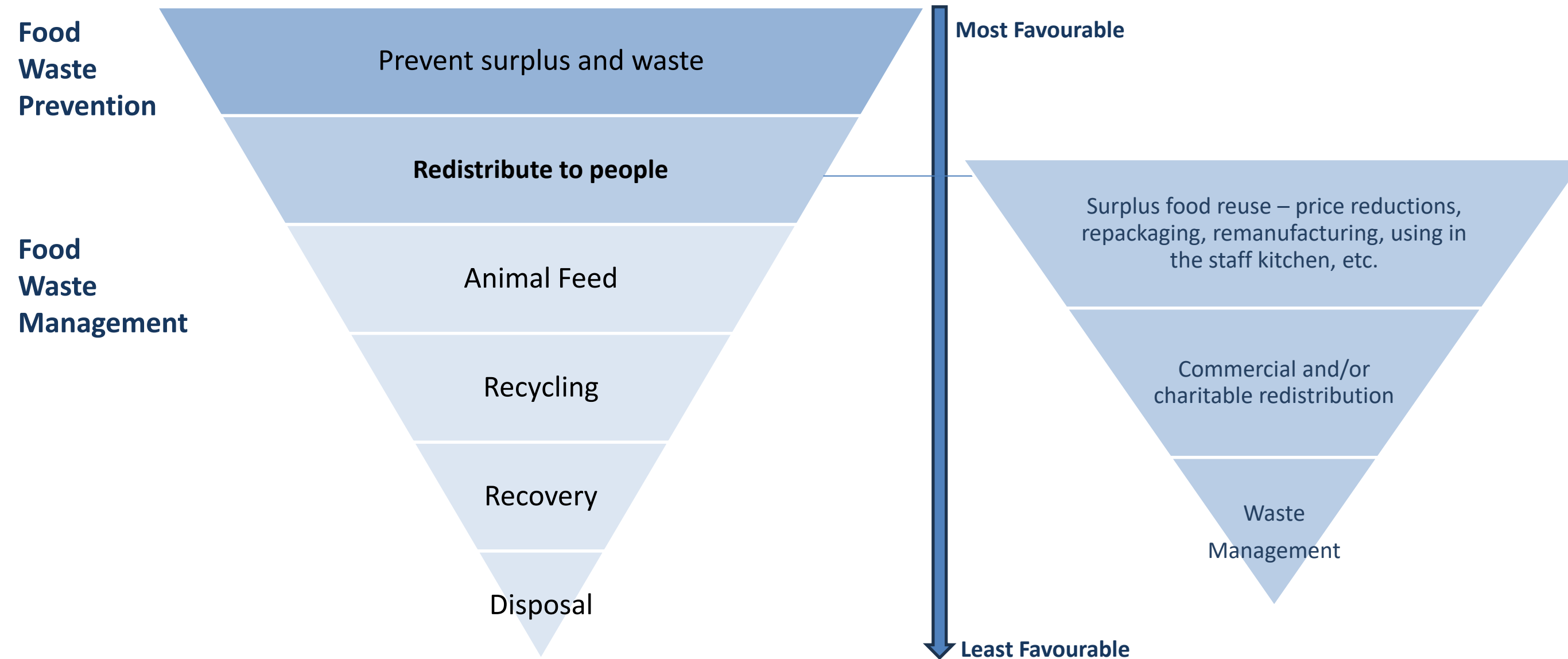
**£21.8 billion** is the estimated value of wasted food post-farm gate in the UK in 2021 (WRAP, 2023)

**8-10%** of global greenhouse gas emissions come from food that is not consumed (UNEP, 2021)

**11%** of the UK population lived in food insecure households in FYE 2024 (DWP, 2025)



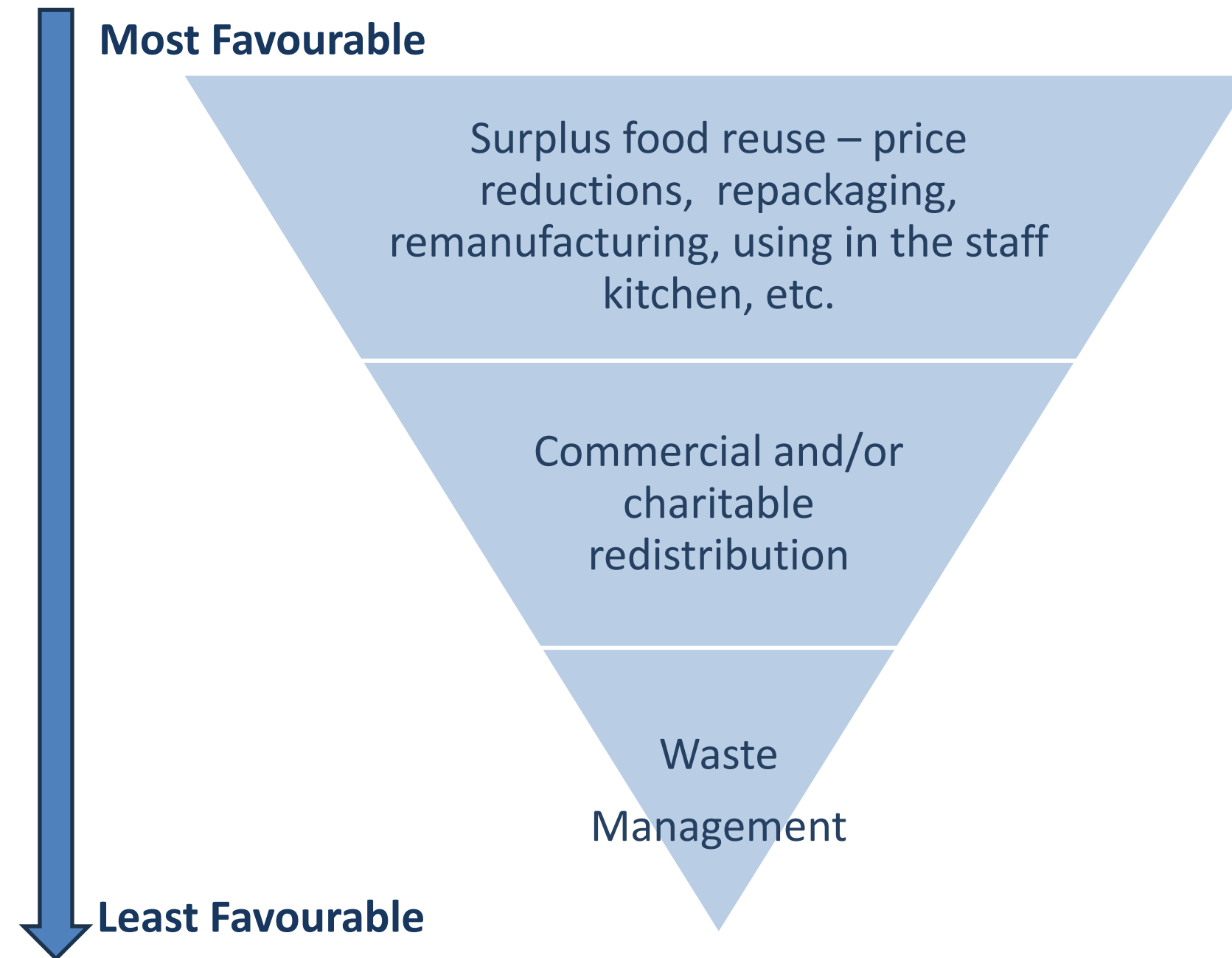
# Food and Drink Waste Hierarchy



Food and Drink Waste Hierarchy. Adapted from DEFRA, 2021; Alexander & Smaje, 2008; Garrone et al., 2016



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# Surplus Food Redistribution

**782,000  
tonnes**

of surplus food was redistributed in the UK between 2015 and 2023 (WRAP, 2024)

**130,000  
tonnes**

of surplus could be saved post farm gate yearly (WRAP, 2024)

**91%**

of surveyed food aid workers said that they have had to discard donated food due to it being damaged or inedible (Foodrise, 2025)

*'We don't want to send you [partner FWRD] 30 kilos of pastry because you're not going to be able to send that to one place. So, like a little 2 kilo pack is perfect, you can send one to every little soup kitchen in and around your area very easily'* (Respondent, Donor Company).



# Large UK Surplus Food Redistributors

**Surplus food wholesale redistributors:** FareShare, Company Shop, Community Shop, His Church, The Felix Project, City Harvest, The Trussel Trust, UK Harvest, Bread and Butter Thing, Neighbourly

## FareShare

*Charitable redistribution*

57,000 tonnes of surplus food redistributed in FY 2023/24  
Equivalent to 135 million meals  
106,000 tonnes of embedded CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions prevented  
Over 700 food partners

## Company Shop Group

*Commercial and charitable redistribution*

Over 46,000 tonnes of surplus food and drink redistributed in 2024  
Equivalent to 110 million meals  
124,000 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions saved  
Over 800 donors

## The Felix Project

*Charitable redistribution*

16,000 tonnes of surplus food redistributed in 2024  
Equivalent to 38 million meals  
18,000 tonnes of embedded CO<sub>2</sub>e emissions prevented  
Over 300 donors

## The Bread and Butter Thing

*Charitable redistribution*

9,005 tonnes of surplus redistributed in 2024  
Equivalent to 21.4 million meals

## Neighbourly

*Redistribution*

*Platform*  
Over 30 million meals donated in 2024



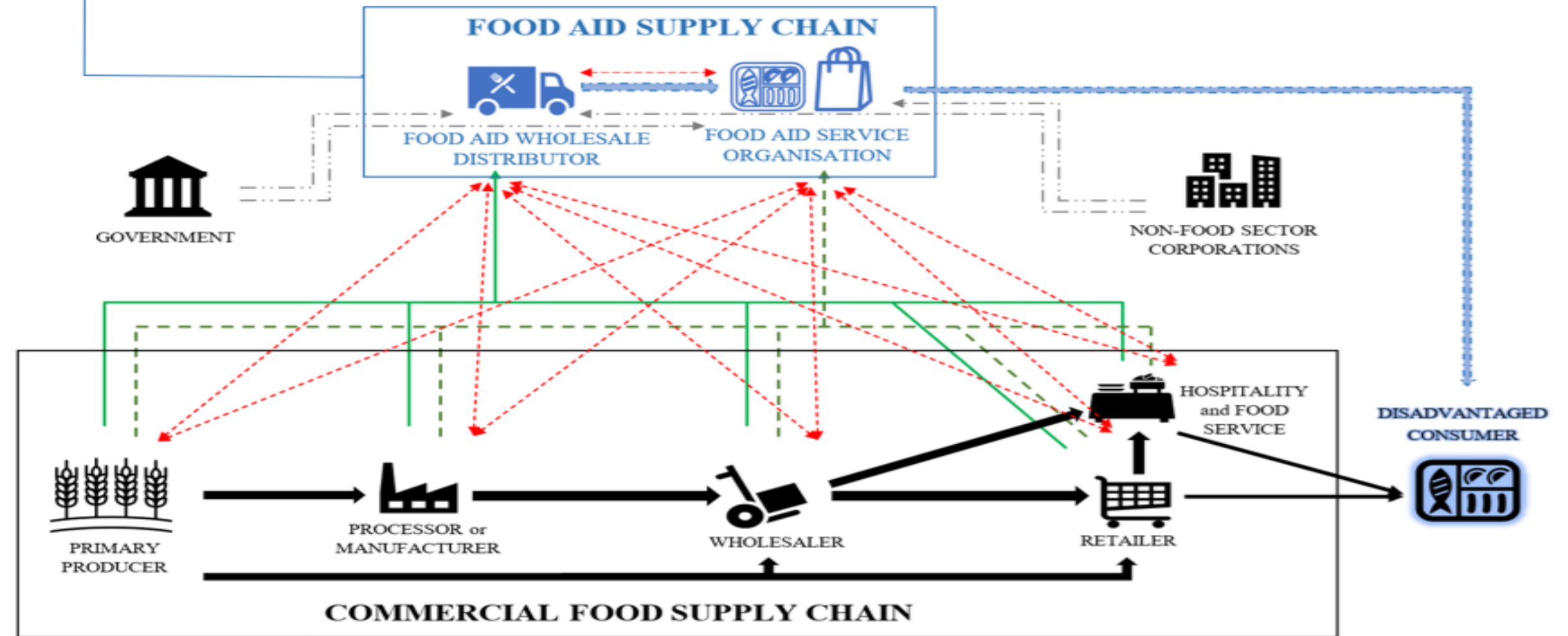
# Food Aid Supply Chain

## Redistributor challenges

- Greenwashing
- Inadequate expertise, resources & capacities
- Inconsistent supply
- Food perishability
- Power imbalance
- Quality and appropriateness of donated food
- Limited inter-redistributor collaboration
- Limited funding
- High staff turnover
- Limited consumer choice
- Unmet peculiar consumer dietary needs
- Fraudulent users
- User dependency

## Donor-Redistributor Challenges

- Limited collaboration
- Cost of redistribution & associated processes
- Process & resource inefficiencies
- Planning difficulties
- Health & safety risks
- Supply-demand mismatch



## KEY:

- Food product flows in the commercial food supply chain
- Food product flows in the food aid supply chain
- Large-scale donated/discounted food products and/or charitable financial flows
- Small-scale donated/discounted food products and/or charitable financial flows
- ↔ Bilateral information flows
- Charitable financial flows

## Donor Challenges

- Reputational risks
- Economically appealing alternatives
- Limited inter-donor collaboration
- Surplus food processing complexities
- Limited redistributor capacity for available surplus

# Fresh Produce Supply

- Supply of fresh produce is extremely variable in both quantity and quality
- Bad weather
- Smaller production from glasshouses due to soaring energy prices
- Labour challenges to pick up harvest
- Significant waste in primary production especially in developing economies



# Objectives

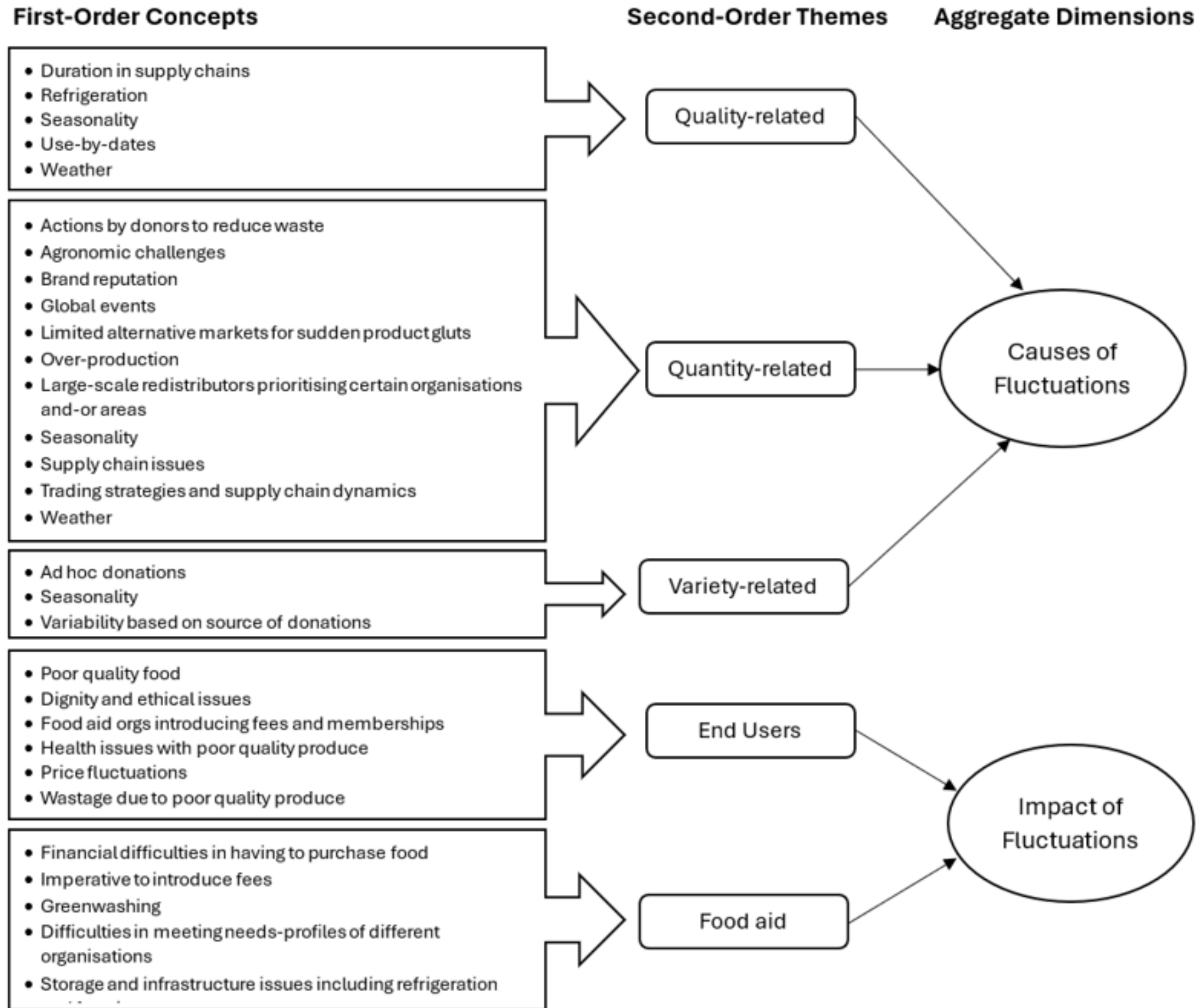
1. Identify the factors that influence the high variability of fresh produce supply and availability in the food aid supply chain
2. Review current adaptations to fresh produce fluctuations and identify supply chain practice modifications towards improved and consistent quality and supply, and
3. Indicate policy recommendations to support fresh produce supply in the food aid supply chain

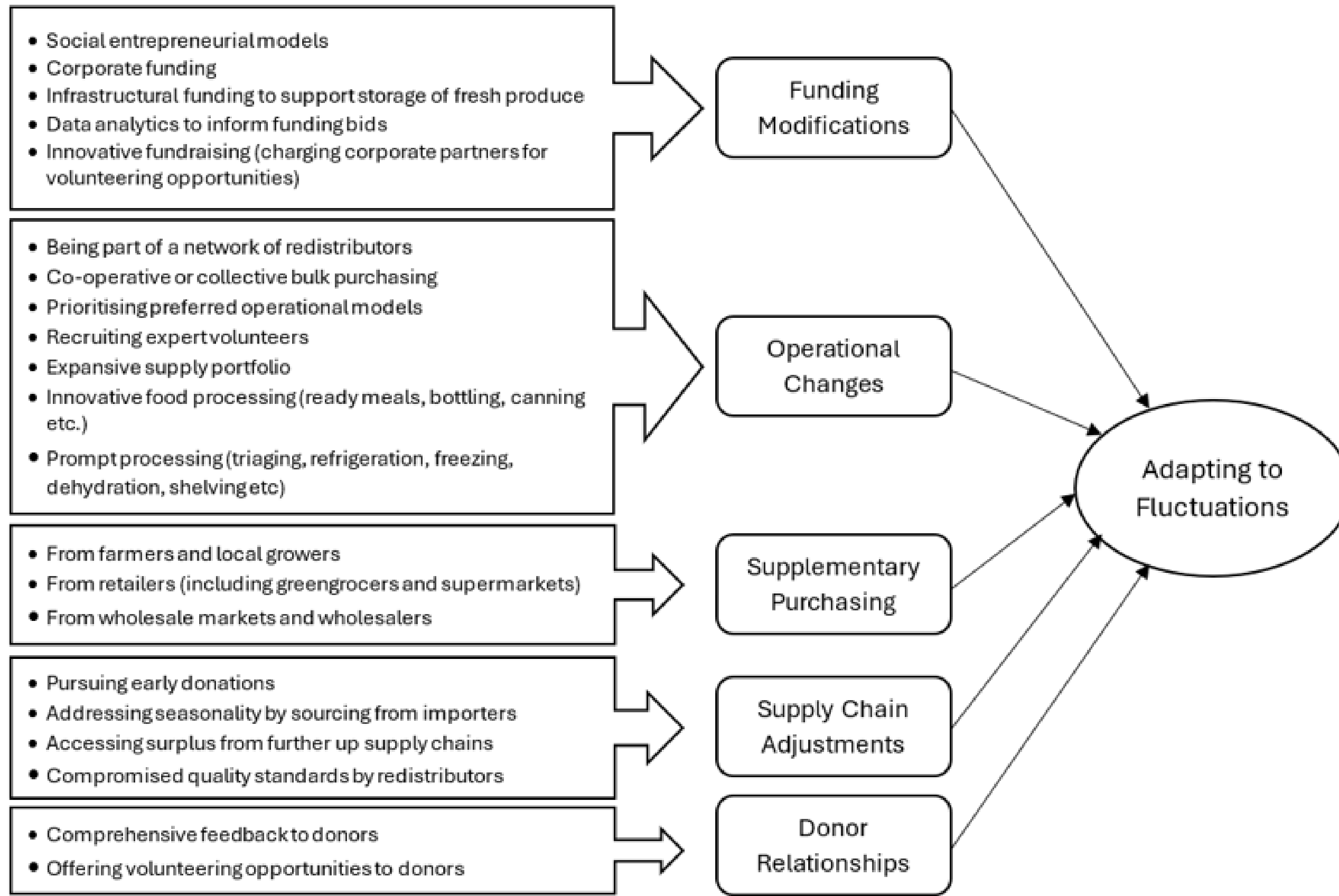


# Methodology

- Qualitative research design
- Fourteen semi-structured interviews
- Food aid redistributors & their suppliers: growers, retailers and wholesalers
- Representatives involved in policy and practice-support related to fresh produce
- Great London and Yorkshire
- Inductive coding & thematic analysis
- Three coders using NVivo







# Conclusions

- Hybrid pull-push model
- Redistributors driven by humanitarian values
- Agility required – Redistributors diversify supply base
- Large redistributors: Data analytics
- Food aid is disproportionately impacted by food systems risks
- Dialogue urgently required between all food aid chain members
- Supply chain responsibility: major potential in food aid chain



**Thank you!**  
**Any questions?**



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