



The Missing Middle in Sustainable Development Goal 2

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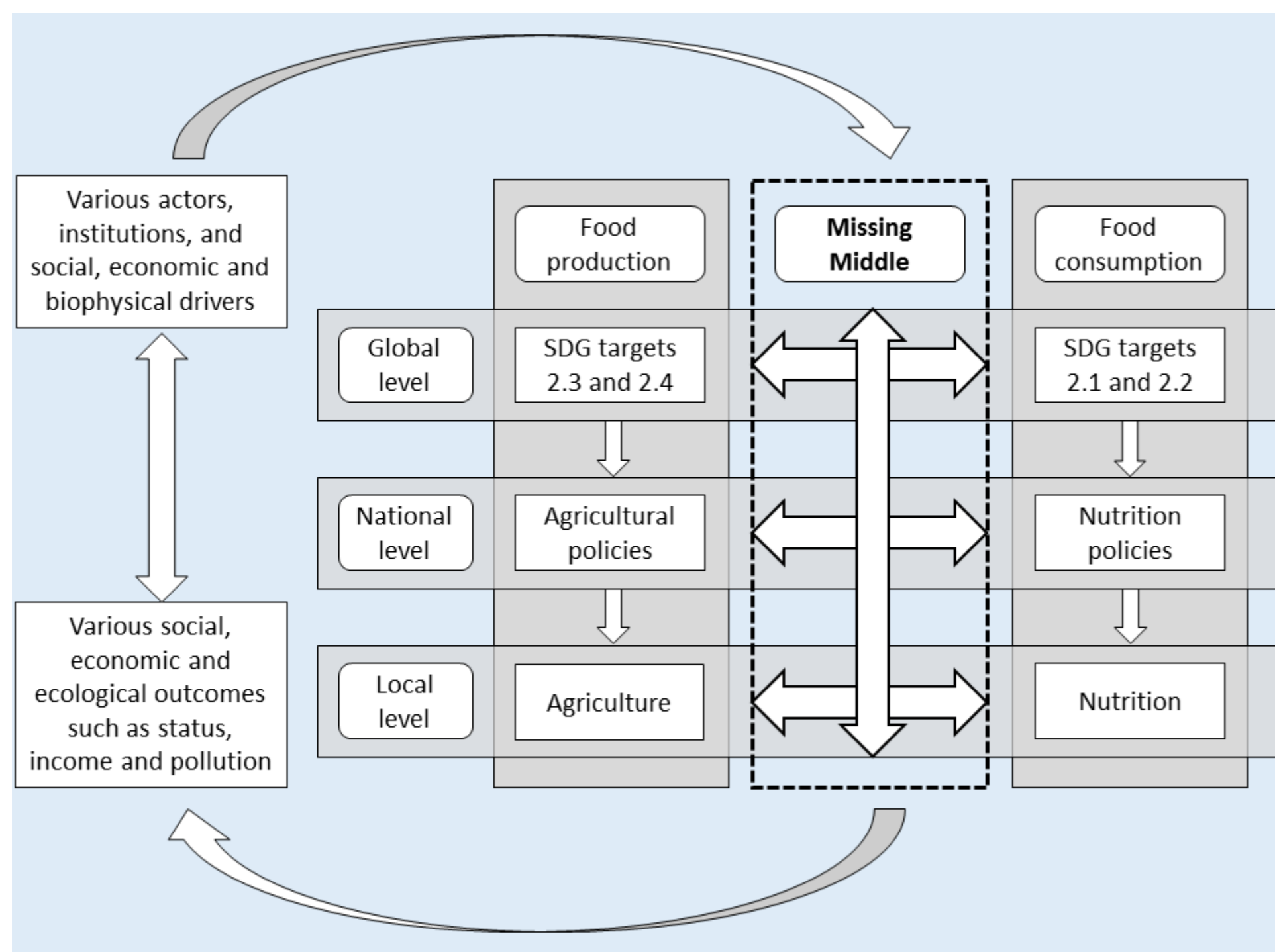


Figure 1. Simplified representation of the Missing Middle (indicated by the dotted square). The arrows in the Missing Middle signal the required but general lack of coordination between production and consumption at various levels of governance.

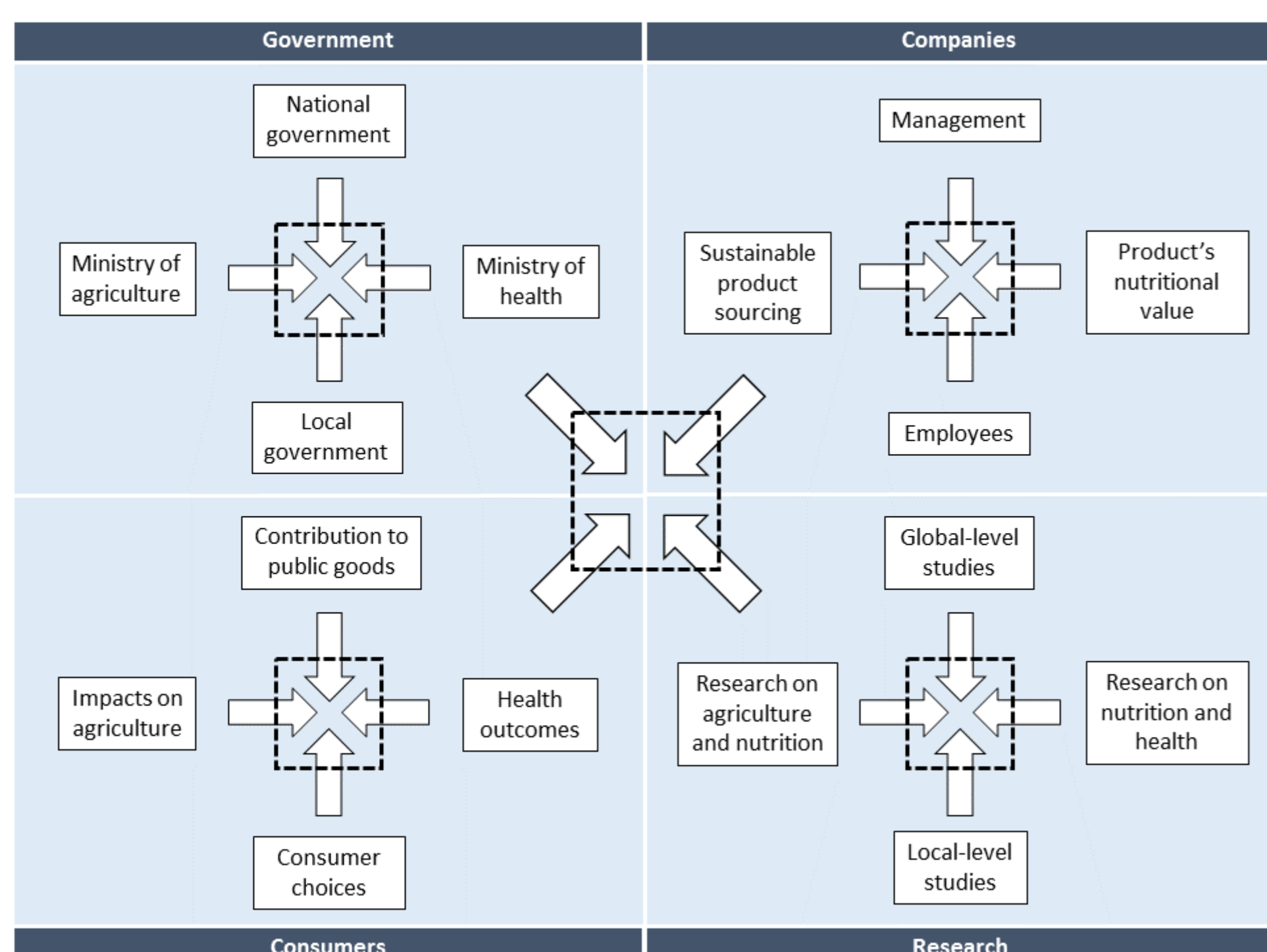


Figure 2. Examples of the Missing Middle within and between government, companies, consumers and research. The arrows indicate that actions on the production-consumption and global-local axes influence SDG 2 outcomes in a non-harmonized way, hence contributing to the Missing Middle (indicated by the dotted square).

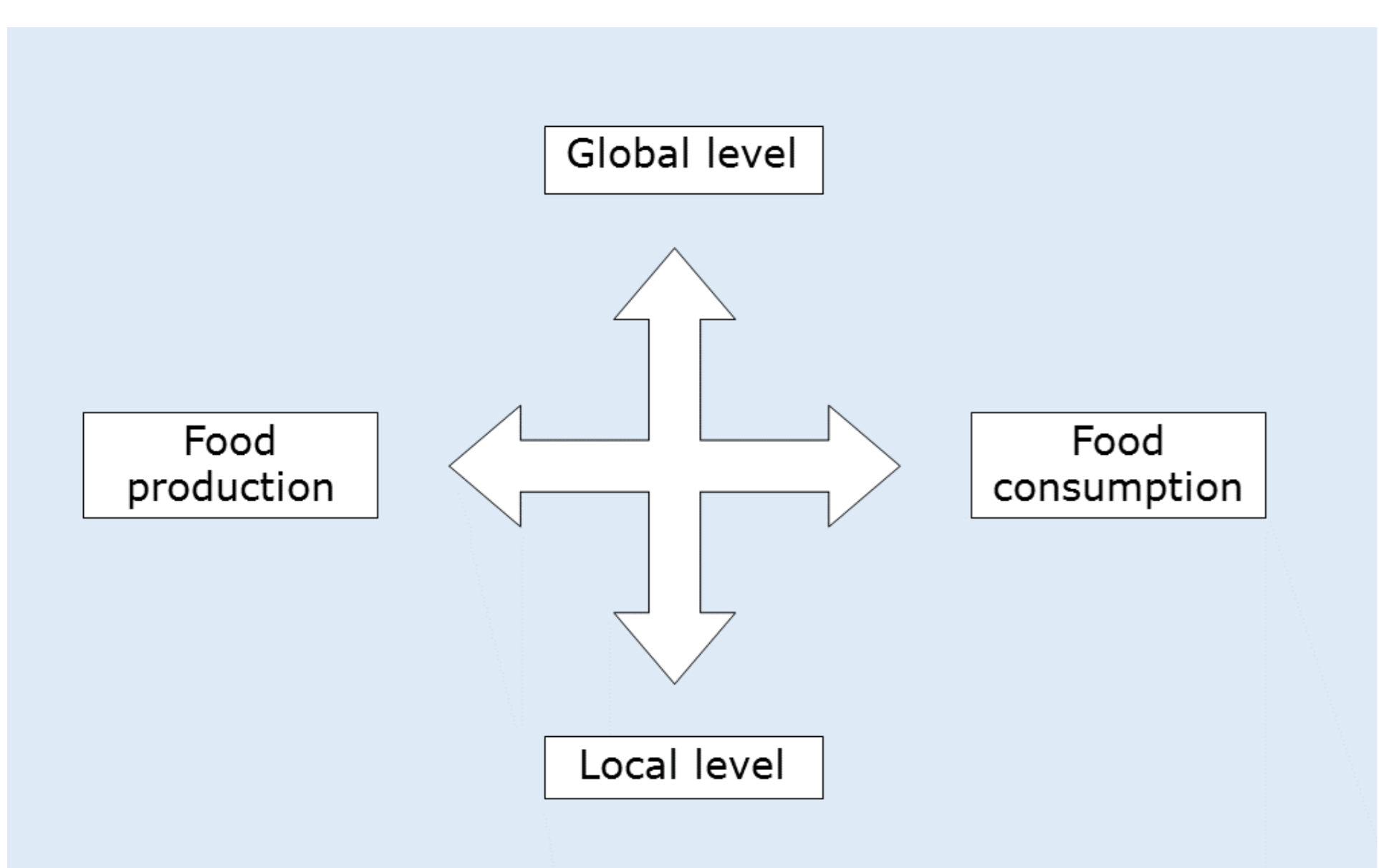


Figure 3. Simplified presentation of bridging the Missing Middle.

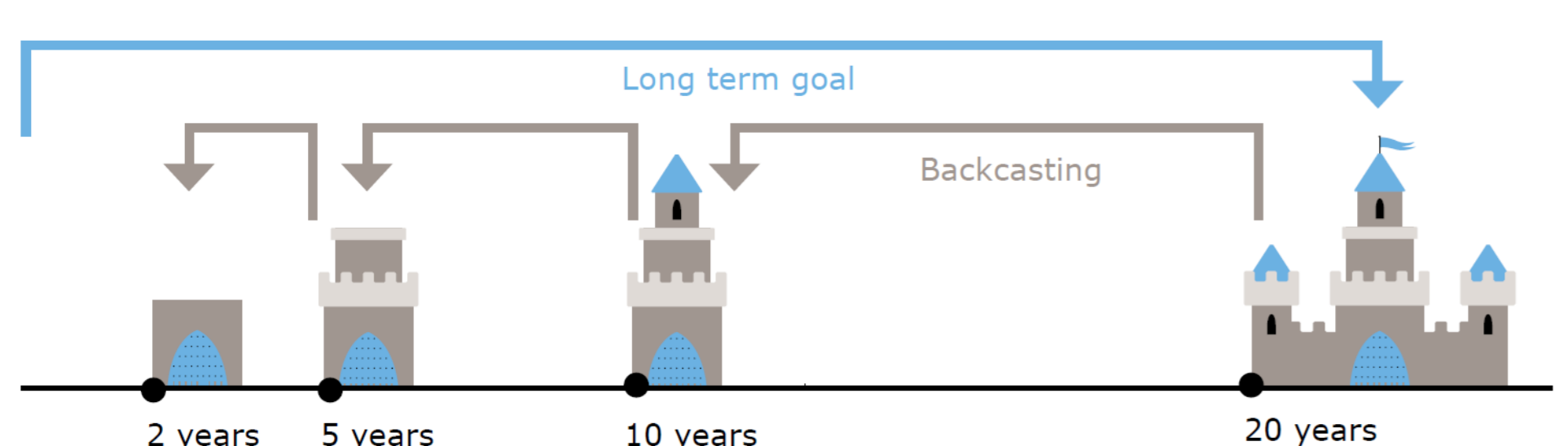


Figure 4 (Kampers and Fresco, 2017). Backcasting involves agreeing on a shared future and then determining the actions (pathways) that are required to achieve that future.

The Missing Middle (Figure 1)

Sustainable Development Goal 2 (SDG 2) concerns healthy nutrition from sustainable agriculture for everyone at all times. There is, however, a Missing Middle in SDG 2 that can hinder implementation. This Missing Middle consists of the disconnects between global goals and local realities (global-local axis), and between food production and consumption (food production-consumption axis):

↕ Global-local axis

- Mismatch between the SDGs and realities on the ground
- Lack of coordinated action by various stakeholders at multiple levels

↔ Food production-consumption axis

- Stakeholders commonly focus on either agriculture or nutrition
- Trade-offs within SDG 2 and with other SDGs are often not addressed

Examples of the Missing Middle (Figure 2)

- **Government** – agriculture and health policies from separate ministries or departments at various levels of government push and pull stakeholders in many directions
 - **Companies** – corporate responsibility efforts focus on sustainable sourcing and healthy consumption in a disconnected way (e.g. sustainably sourcing for unhealthy products), without proper 'grounding' via employees
 - **Consumers** – food choices affect public goods related to agricultural production and public health that many consumers do not consider
 - **Research** – different units of analysis for nutrition in agriculture (diets) and in health research (human physiology), and in global- versus local-level studies hinder interoperability of research results
- + More coordination is needed among government, companies, consumers and research to bridge the Missing Middle

Bridging the Missing Middle (Figure 3)

This work is part of the project "The Missing Middle: Food system transformation pathways to link action at multiple levels to SDGs 2, 12, 13 and 15 in Tanzania and Vietnam":

Preliminary cases in Tanzania

- Soybean-chicken value chain development
- Smallholder tea production

Preliminary cases in Vietnam

- Food safety in vegetables
- Food safety in pork production

Developing food system transformation pathways:

- Assess current state of cases in relation to SDG 2 and related SDGs
- Develop transformation pathways together with stakeholders (iterative):
 - Discuss current state and desired future in relation to SDGs
 - Use backcasting (Figure 4) to develop initial pathways to achieve the desired future
 - Check pathways' effectiveness through calculations and modelling
 - Discuss outcomes and adjust pathways if necessary