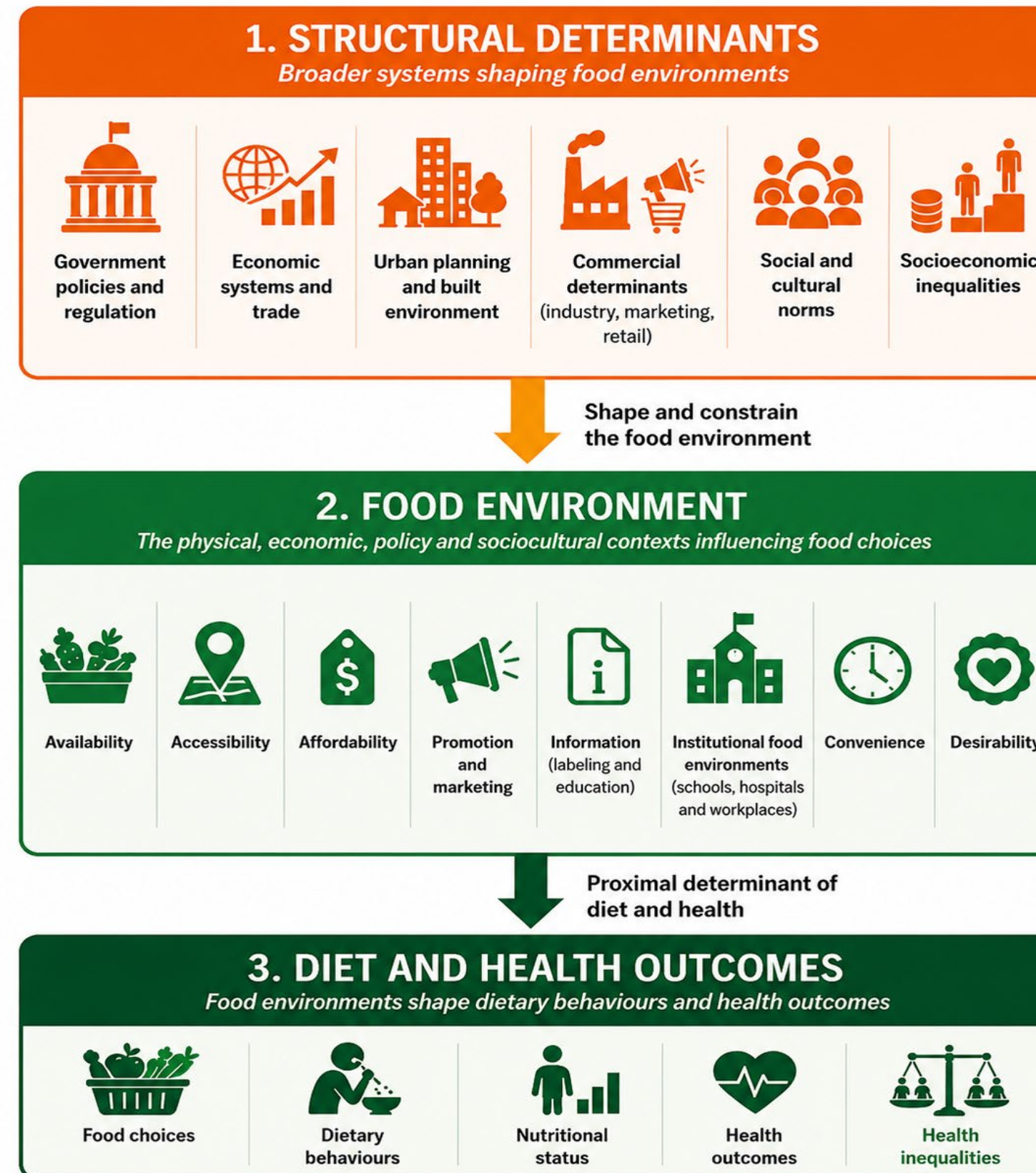


STALLING ON STRUCTURAL CHANGE

Evaluating Food Environment Policy Implementation and Inequalities in Ireland



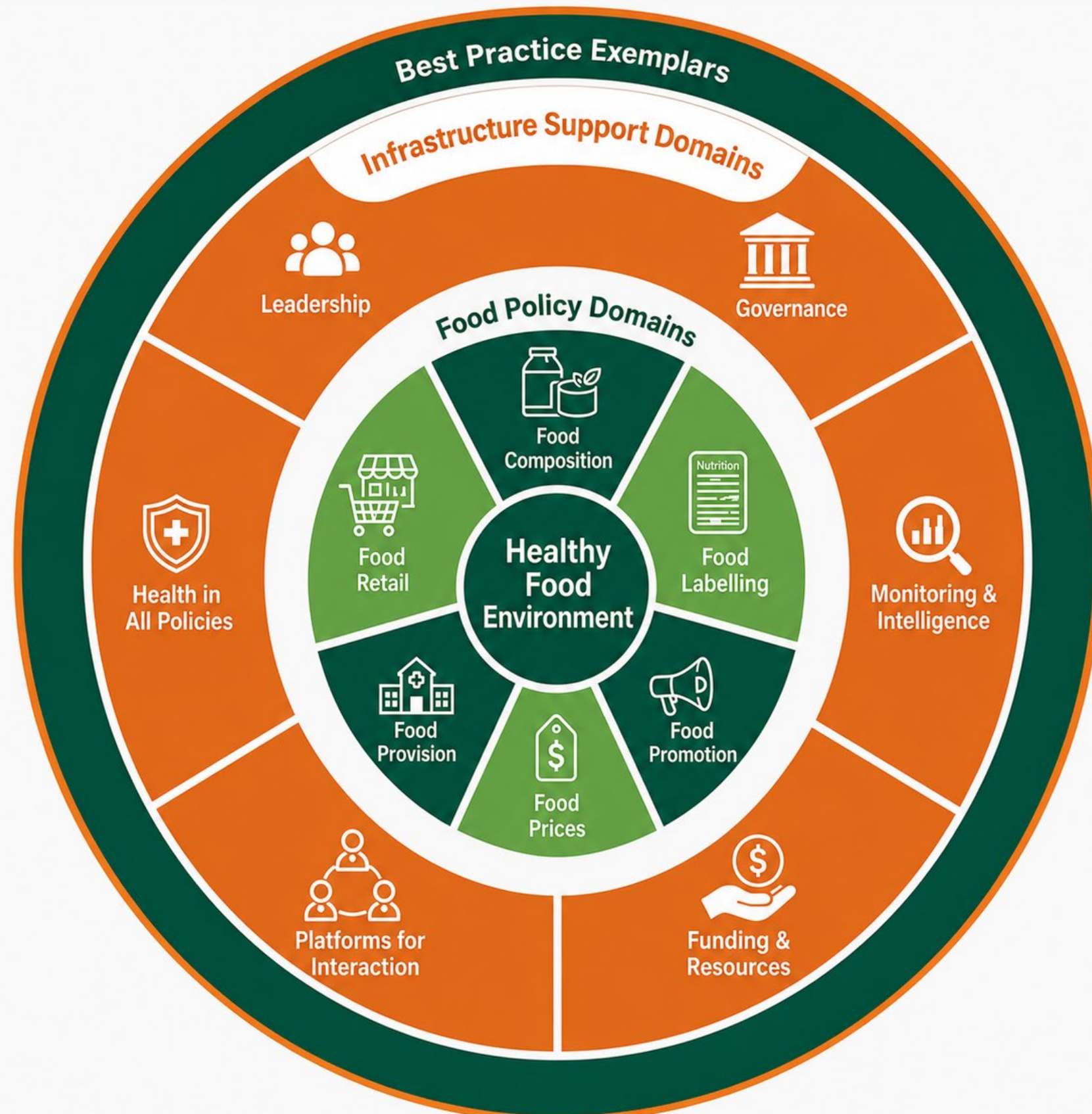
FOOD ENVIRONMENTS LINK STRUCTURAL DETERMINANTS TO HEALTH INEQUALITIES



Ireland completed its first Food-EPI assessment in 2019/2020. Six years later, we asked: what has changed?

Food Environment Policy Index

Framework Overview



The Food-EPI Ireland Process: A Roadmap for Healthier Food Environments

1. Adaptation

Researchers reviewed and adapted INFORMAS indicators to align with EU jurisdiction and Irish context.



OUTPUT:
45 Good Practice Indicators

2. Evidence Collection

Comprehensive compilation of Irish policy actions gathered alongside international benchmarks.



OUTPUT:
Evidence Document

3. Validation

Government officials reviewed the evidence.



OUTPUT:
Validated Evidence Document

4. Expert Panel Establishment

Multidisciplinary team recruited to assess implementation.



5. Rating of Implementation

Experts rated government action across policy and infrastructure support domains via online survey.



OUTPUT:
2 Scorecards

6. Prioritisation

Actions proposed, refined and ranked by experts based on three criteria.



OUTPUT:
10 Priority Actions

7. Synthesis

Findings from all stages, including scorecards, prioritisation and feedback collated into a final review.



OUTPUT:
National Food-EPI Report

Policy implementation has largely stalled

Comparison across food environment policy domains: 2016–2019 vs 2020–2025



4.5%

Improved

1 indicator



50.0%

No change

11 indicators

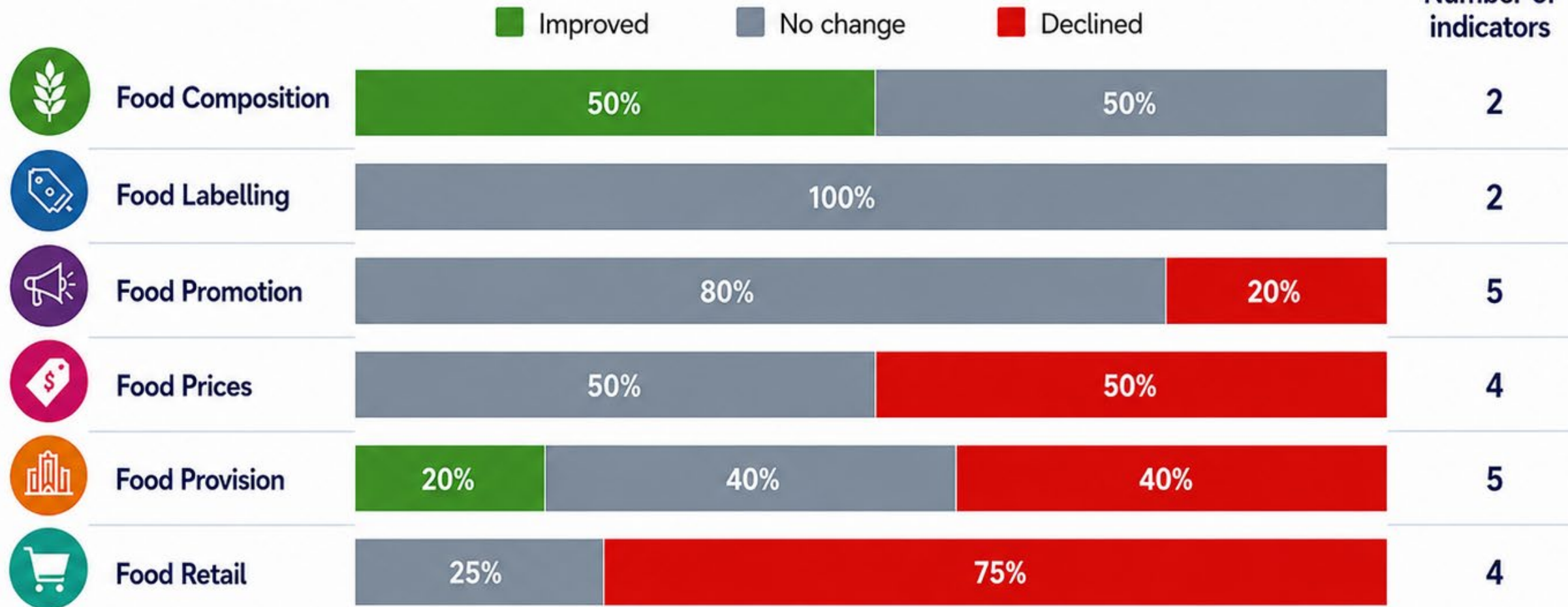


45.5%

Declined

10 indicators

Distribution of indicators by policy domain and direction of change (%)



No change often reflects indicators remaining at low or moderate implementation levels, rather than strong policy progress.

Food Environment Implementation Gaps:

1. FOOD PROMOTION



Broadcast media
restriction

Places where children
gather

Food packaging
promotion **(Persistent gap)**

2. FOOD PRICES



Reducing taxes on
healthy foods

Subsidies favouring
healthy foods

3. FOOD PROVISION



Public sector healthy
food policies

Support and training
systems

4. FOOD RETAIL



Zoning laws: limit
unhealthy outlets

Zoning laws: encourage
healthy outlets
(Persistent gap)

Healthy food availability
in-store

Healthy food availability
in food service

Infrastructure support for policy implementation has declined

Comparison across infrastructure support domains: 2016–2019 vs 2020–2025



0%

Improved

0 indicators



25.0%

No change

6 indicators

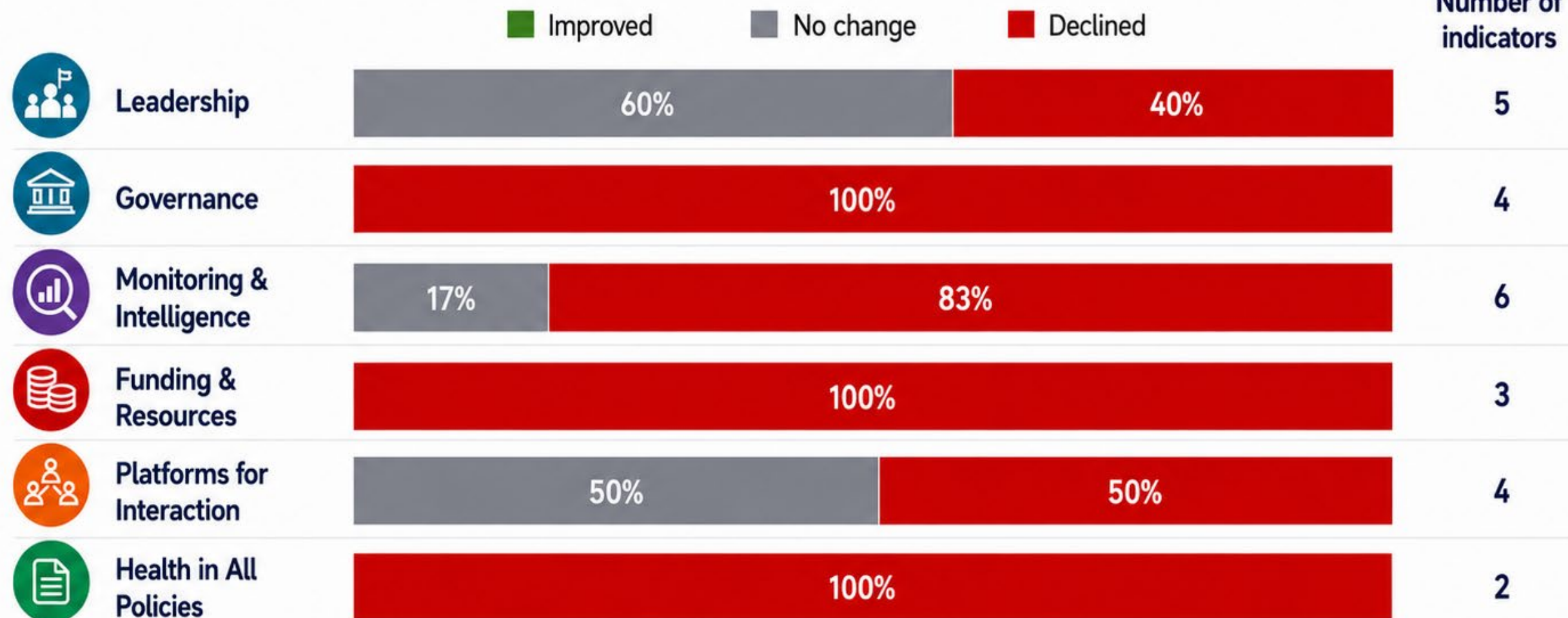


75.0%

Declined

18 indicators

Distribution of indicators by infrastructure support domain and direction of change (%)



Widespread declines indicate weakening infrastructure for policy implementation.

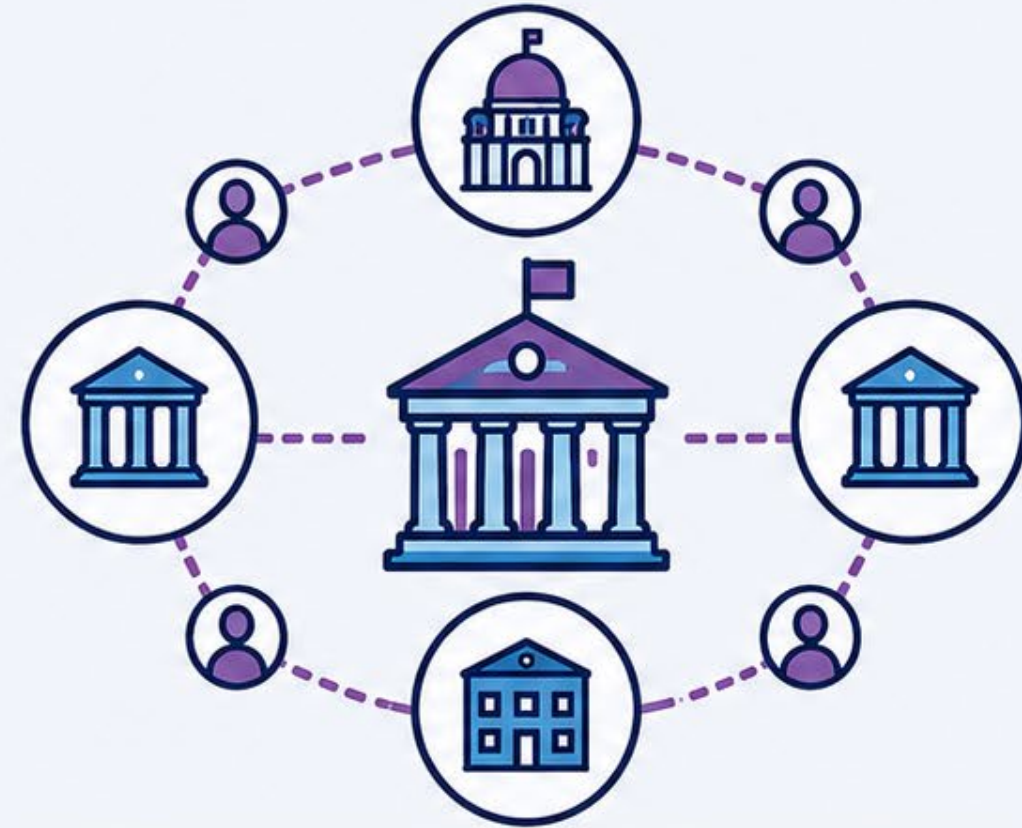
Infrastructure Support Implementation Gaps

1. GOVERNANCE



Use of evidence in food and nutrition policy development
(Significant gap)

2. PLATFORMS FOR INTERACTION



Coordination mechanisms across levels of government (national, state, local) for policy coherence, alignment and integration
(Significant gap)

Areas of Progress in Food Environment Policies



**Slight
improvement**

FOOD COMPOSITION

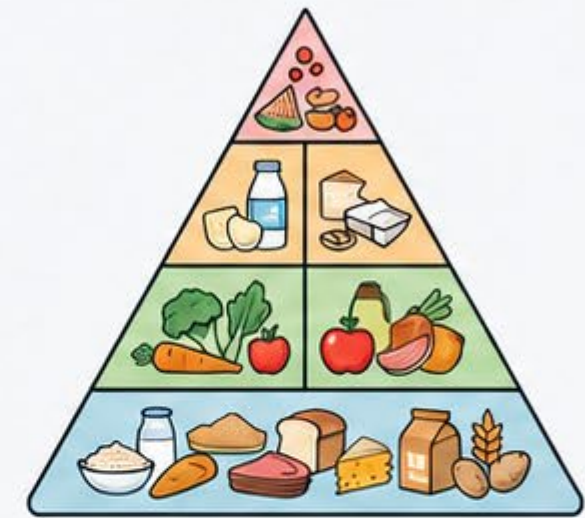
Nutrient targets for meals in food service outlets



**Slight
improvement**

FOOD PROVISION

Healthy food policies across public sector settings.



**Maintained high
implementation**

LEADERSHIP

Evidence-based dietary guidelines established.

HIGH EQUITY POTENTIAL, **LOW IMPLEMENTATION**



FOOD RETAIL

EQUITY POTENTIAL

increased from
small to
considerable



IMPLEMENTATION

remained
limited



PRIORITY ACTION IN 2020



PRIORITY ACTION IN 2020

Introduce a 'No Fry Zone for kids'
within 400m of schools.



FOOD PRICES

EQUITY POTENTIAL

increased from
small to
considerable



IMPLEMENTATION

stable
or declined



PRIORITY ACTION IN 2020



PRIORITY ACTION IN 2020

Ring-fence proceeds from unhealthy
foods to healthy food subsidies
targeting disadvantaged communities.

THE POLICIES WITH THE **GREATEST POTENTIAL** TO REDUCE
HEALTH INEQUALITIES REMAIN AMONG THE **LEAST IMPLEMENTED**.



Recognised potential to reduce
health inequalities is increasing



Implementation remains low
or is declining



Identified as a priority action
by experts in 2020

IMPLICATIONS AND NEXT STEPS



Food environment
policy implementation
has **stalled**.



Infrastructure
support for
implementation
has **weakened**.



Food pricing and
retail policies offer
the **greatest potential**
to reduce
health inequalities.



Experts are
currently prioritising
actions for
government to
address **implementation
gaps**.



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