



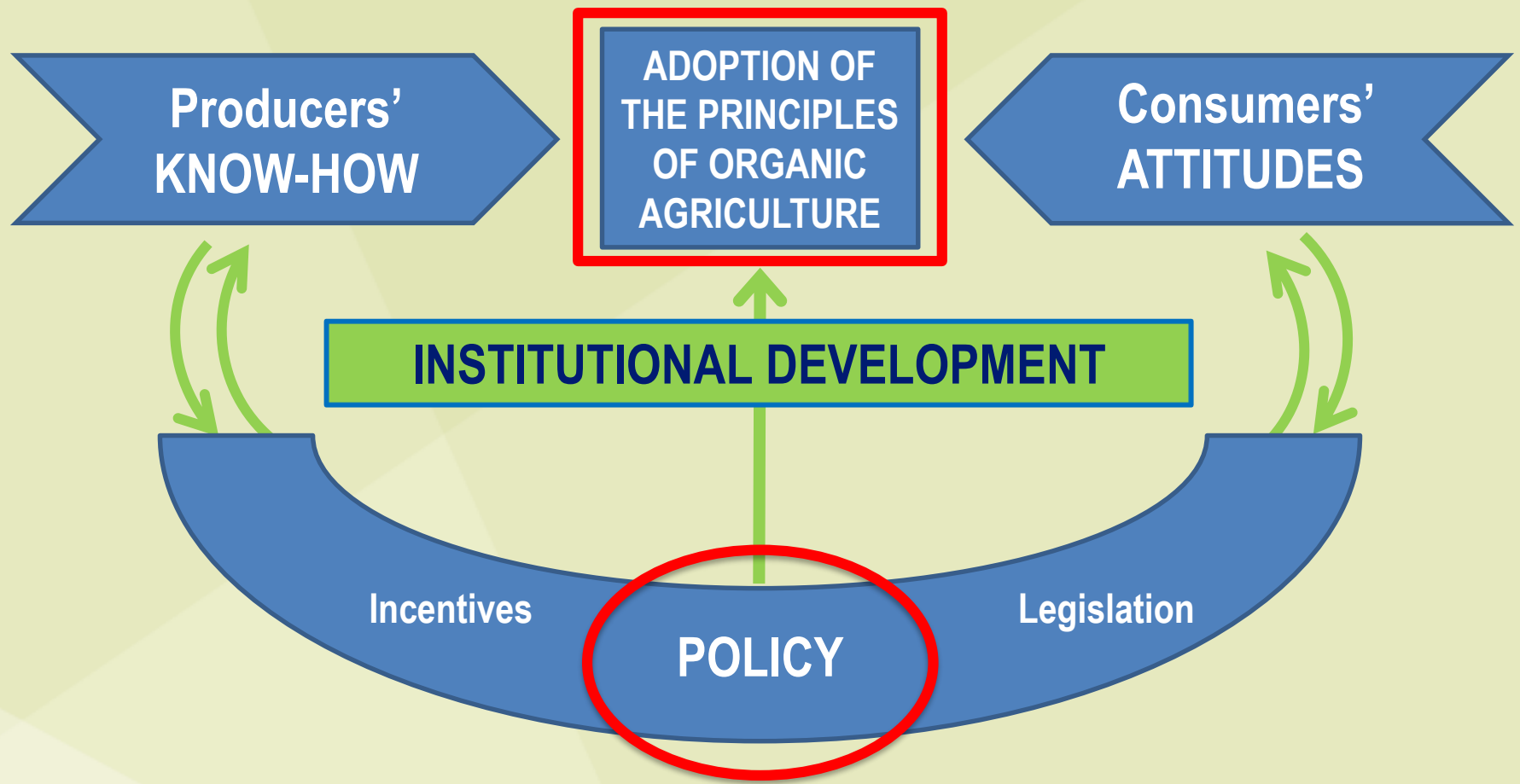
# Conducive policies for transforming agriculture and food systems

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# The role of policies in driving change



Source: IFOAM Organics International, Organizational Strategy

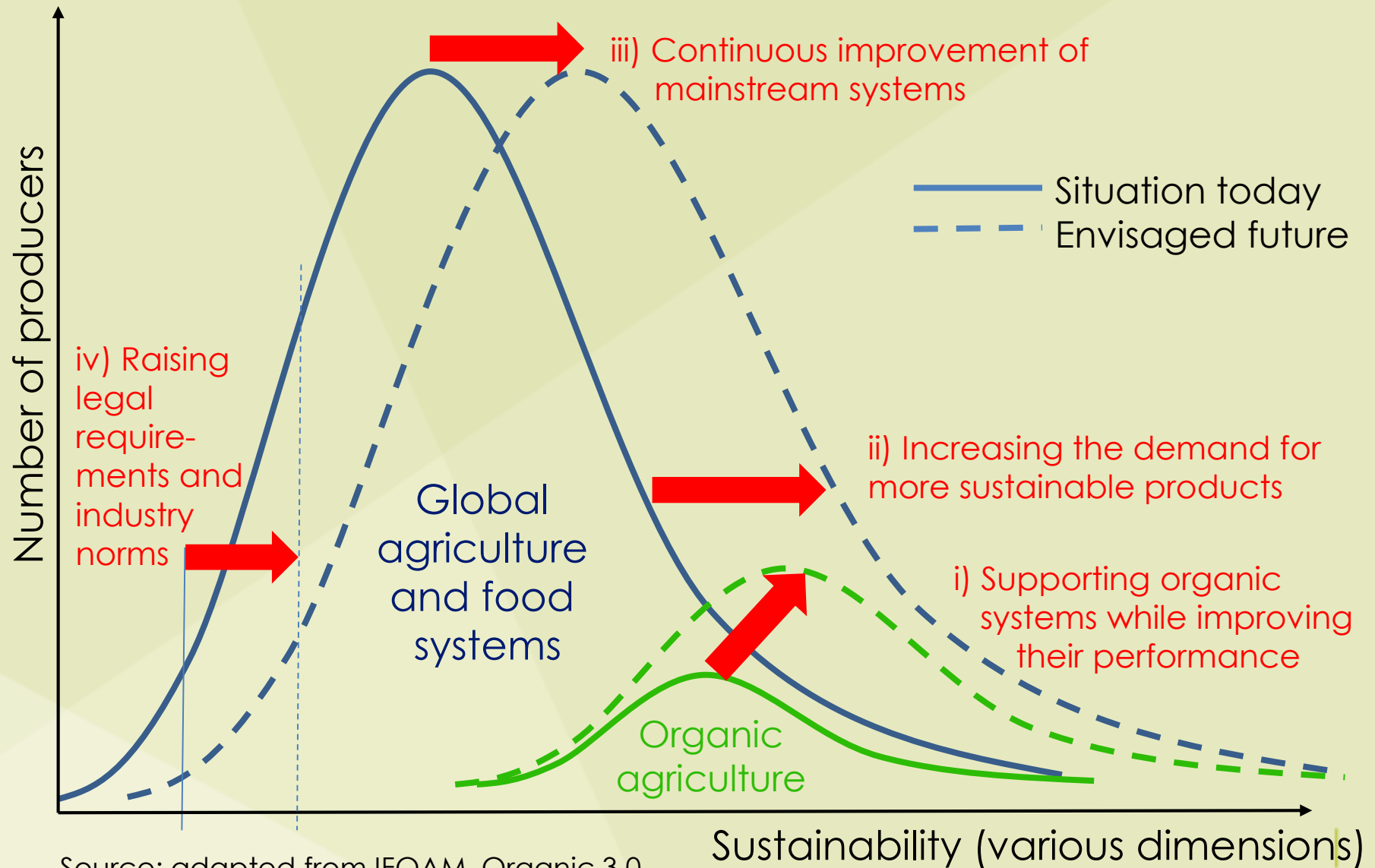
# A new narrative

“Agriculture and food systems need to provide sufficient and nutritious food for all, while minimizing environmental impact and enabling producers to earn a decent living.” (~ SDGs)

## But how?

- Efficiency and substitution?
- Sustainable intensification?
- Agroecology?
- All together? («There is no silver bullet»)

# Policy levers



Source: adapted from IFOAM, Organic 3.0

# i) Supporting organic systems while improving their performance

Organic action plans, containing:

- push measures (e.g., support to research and extension, area-based payments, contributions to certification costs)
- pull measures (e.g., promotion campaigns, label development, public procurement)
- enabling measures (e.g., data collection, institutional development)

Examples:

- Action plans of Germany, Austria, Finland...
- 100% organic strategy in some Indian States (Sikkim, Uttarakhand, Andhra Pradesh, Kerala)

## ii) Increasing the demand for more sustainable products

Stimulating the pull-effect of an increasing market demand:

- Businesses use voluntary sustainability standards to promote more sustainable options to consumers (e.g. organic, fairtrade, Rainforest)
- Governments setting targets in public procurement (e.g. Copenhagen: 90% organic food in public canteens)
- Raising consumer awareness (e.g. campaigns like “Good Food 4 All”, “Honest Food”)



### iii) Continuous improvement of mainstream systems

Incentivizing continuous improvement with regard to combined sustainability objectives:

- Taxes on unsustainable practices (e.g. nitrogen fertilizers, pesticides)
- Incentives for sustainable practices (e.g. crop rotation, cover crops, biological pest control)
- Payments for Environmental Services (e.g. maintaining natural habitats, building soil fertility)

Example: Swiss popular initiative “No subsidies for farmers using pesticides and preventive antibiotics”

## iv) Raising legal requirements and industry norms

Command-and-control approaches that rule-out particularly unsustainable practices, such as:

- using highly hazardous pesticides;
- clearing primary forests;
- leaving the soil uncovered in highly erodible areas.

Food industry (processors and retailers) can agree to adhere to defined minimum requirements (e.g. Roundtable on Responsible Soy, Roundtable on Sustainable Palm Oil).

➔ More level playground for all actors!



# Calling for policy coherence

- Combining the four policy levers → efficient strategy for accelerating transformation
- Tackle policy incoherence (e.g. Sikkim cutting fertilizer subsidies)
- Align stakeholders behind creating public goods: healthy people, healthy communities, healthy environment...  
("Public funds for public goods!")

Agriculture and food systems can become part of the solution instead of being part of the problem!

# Influencing policy making

- Needs a critical mass of scientists, farmers, policymakers, businesses and civil society organizations to align on a transformation agenda.
- Focusing agriculture and food policies on the broadly agreed SDGs.
- Build consensus that organic agriculture is neither a panacea nor an irrelevant niche.
- Key role of citizens = voters and consumers  
→ Engage them! (movements, food councils...)

**Thank you.**