



The Nordic Food Redistribution Project

Results from a research project in the Nordic Council of Ministers

Ole Jørgen Hanssen, Professor
Ostfold Research

Food Redistribution Subproject III Nordic Food Waste Prevention projects
NMR Conference Oslo Gardermoen 27th April 2017

What is the Nordic Food Redistribution Project?

- First ever research project to investigate food redistribution in the Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden)
- Three phase research project, 2014-2016
- Financed by the Nordic Council of Ministers
- Managed by Østfoldforskning, NO in collaboration with PlanMiljø, DK, Natural Resources Institute Finland (Luke), FI, Swedish Environmental Research Institute (IVL), SE
- In collaboration with national food safety authorities, local authorities, national food banks & social organizations

Goal of the Project

Overall goal:

Contribute to reducing food waste through the enhancement of food redistribution in the Nordic countries

Sub-goals:

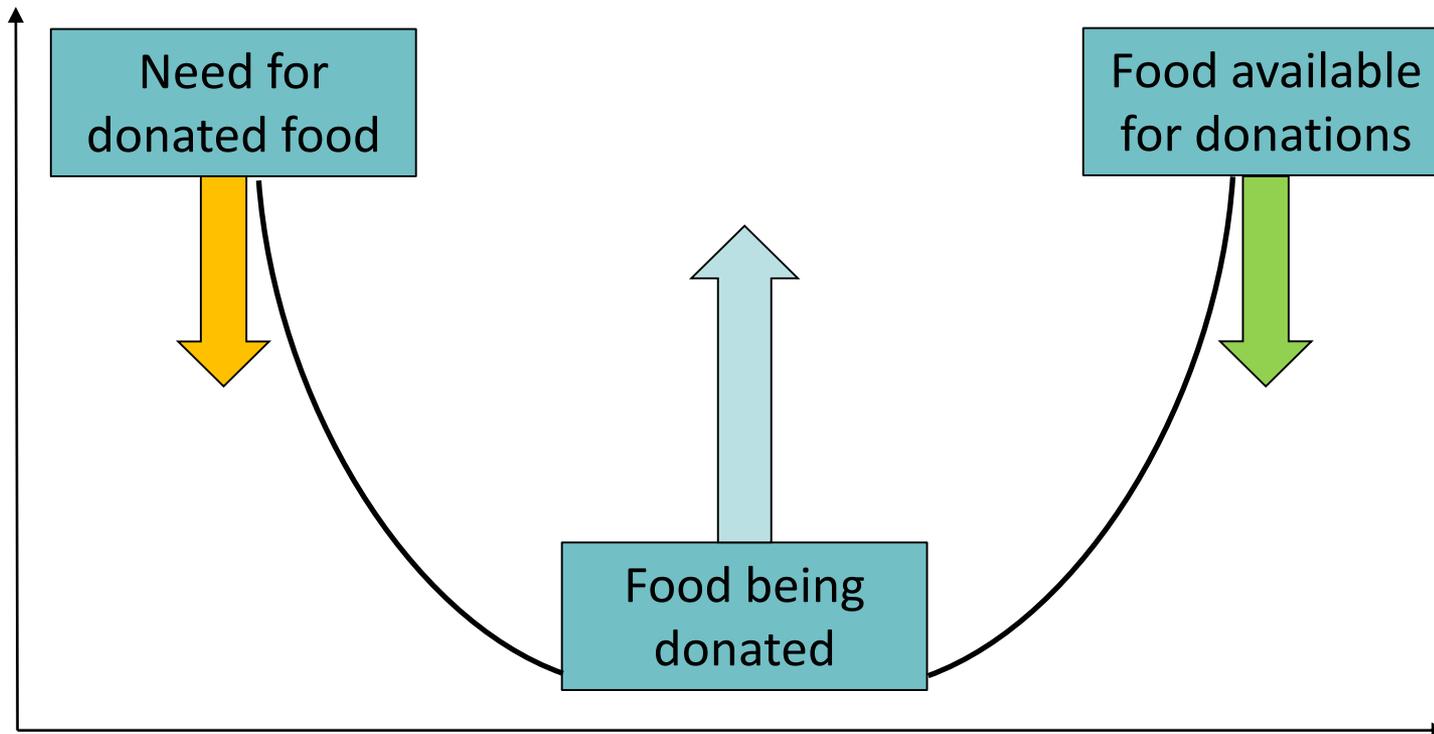
- Phase I – Map existing redistribution activities in the Nordic countries and identify barriers for further activities
- Phase II – Explore key elements in redistribution and develop common platform based on best practices
- Phase III – Develop national pilot-studies based on best practices and suggest further work

Parallel goal: contribute to national, Nordic and EU policy work (the project group has provided input to the EU Expert Group on Food Waste)

Why redistribution?

- Two-fold purpose:
 - Social service - way to feed the hungry
 - Environmental consideration – reduce food waste
- Not new concept – US soup kitchens (1967), FEBA (1986)
- Relatively new in the Nordic countries (exception of Finland)
- Increased awareness of food waste
 - Environmental
 - Economical
 - Ethical
- EU – Circular economy

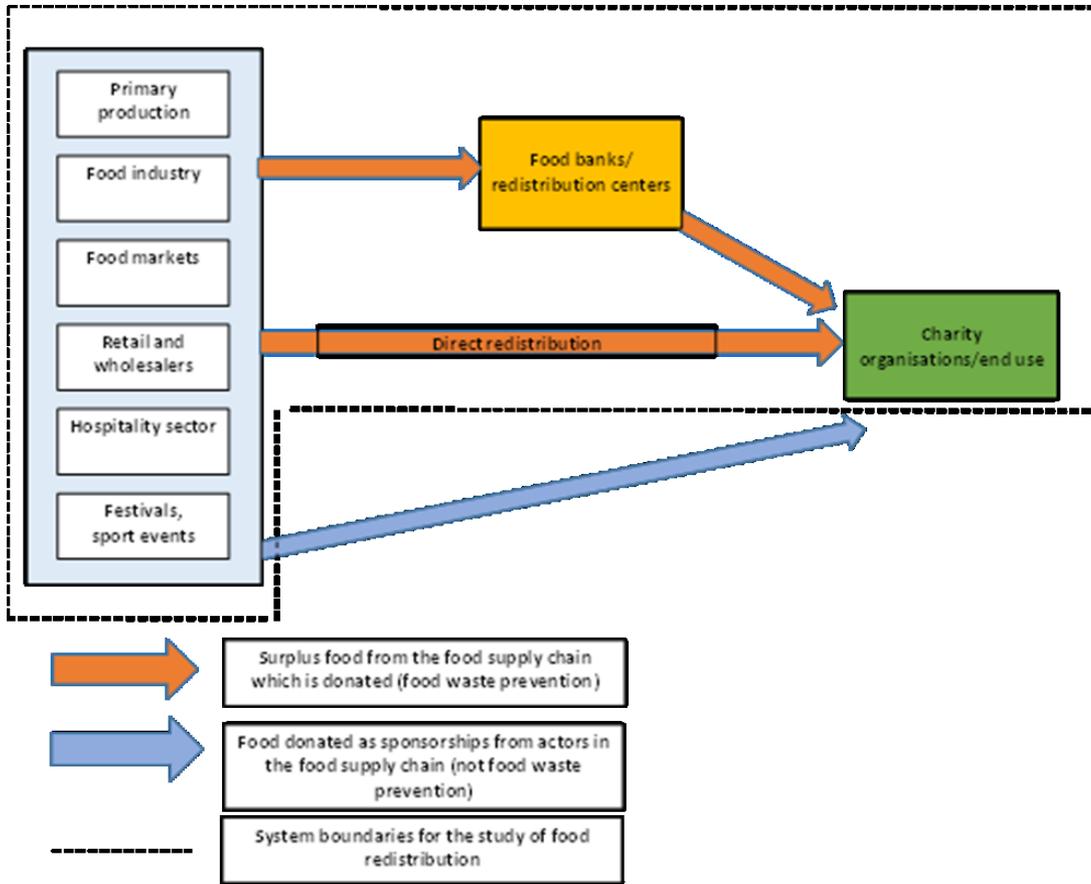
Food redistribution and food waste prevention – need to have two thoughts in head in parallel



Phase I – Aim

- Improve knowledge about food redistribution in the Nordic countries, both through food banks and by direct redistribution
 - Get an overview of current redistribution activities
 - Identify the various models of redistribution
 - Investigate role of food banks versus direct redistribution
- Evaluate existing laws and regulations in the Nordic countries as potential barriers or incentives for food redistribution
- Identify key elements for further research

Phase I – key findings



- Two main models:
 - Food banks
 - Direct redistribution
- In 2013, the three Nordic food banks redistributed 900 tons of surplus food
- This was increased to more than 2800 tons in 2016!
- More food was redistributed via direct redistribution
- Indications from donors and redistribution actors suggested much bigger potential

Number of meals served per week by local charity organizations in Norway

From Capodistrias (2015)

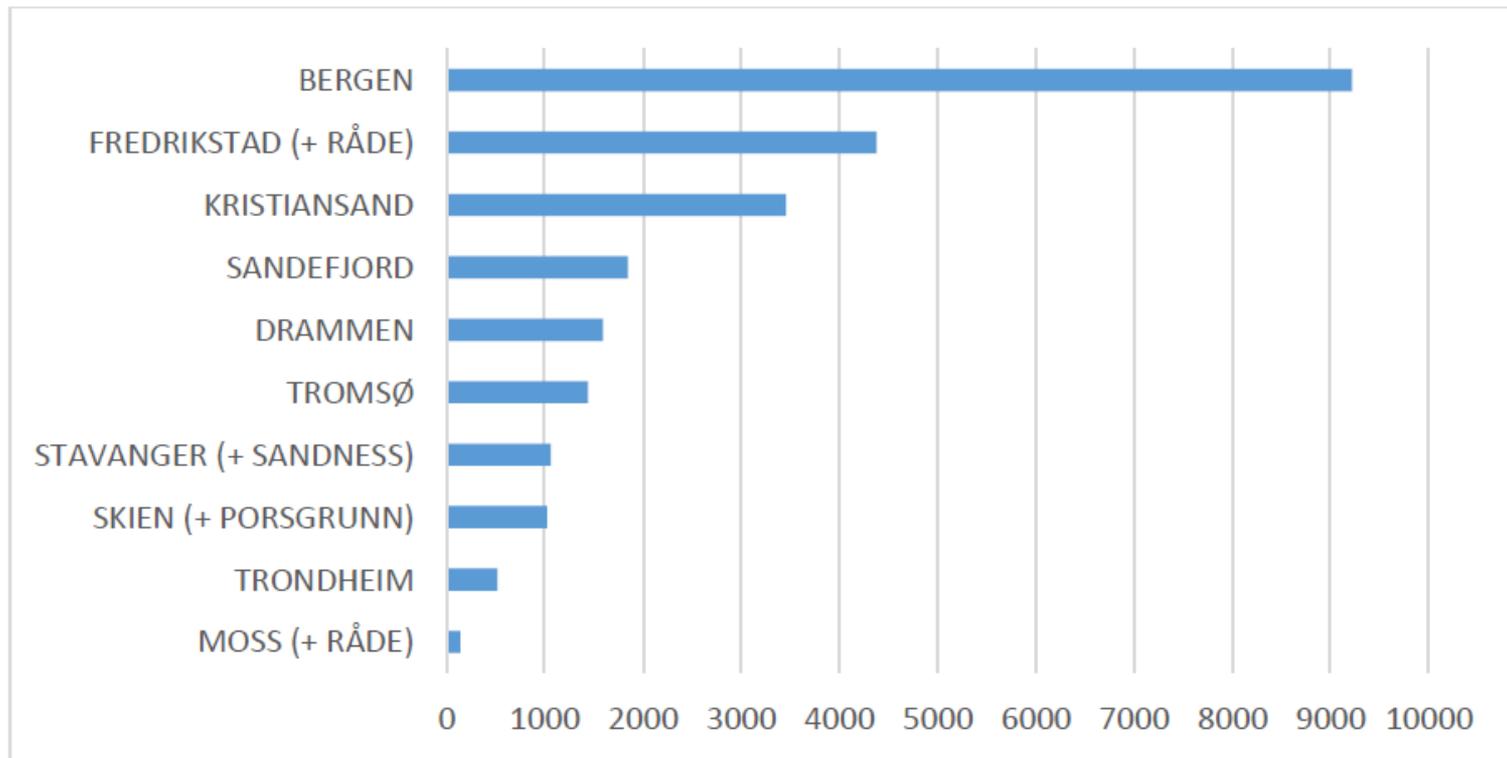


Figure 7: Direct redistribution. Meals served per week at the charity food services

Phase I – key findings

- Legal status:
 - Food banks & charities are considered food business operators, must comply with food safety regulations
 - National regulations based on EU food law – varying interpretations
- Barriers for redistribution include:
 - Lack of financing (food banks)
 - Lack of written agreements/steady supply of food
 - Insufficient understanding of regulations (donors)
 - Certain legislation providing disincentives (VAT)

Phase II – Aim

- Develop a common platform for enhanced food redistribution in order to reduce food waste in the Nordic countries
- Consider both direct and indirect redistribution, including how the two systems can be integrated
- Identify “best practices” focusing on:
 - clear legal guidelines for food safety requirements
 - how to organize direct and indirect food redistribution
 - systems for quality assurance
 - systems for registration and tracing of food
- Provide recommendations for key stakeholders

Phase II – key findings

No one-size-fits-all solutions



Phase II – key findings

Recommendations for food-serving actors

- Establish platform/systems operator for collaboration
- Develop written guidelines for redistribution
- Improve communication to secure sustainable funding

Recommendations for donors

- Food donation as CSR
- Develop written guidelines for donation
- Contribute financially to redistribution systems

Recommendations for authorities

- Prioritize redistribution in food waste hierarchy
- Develop written guidelines for redistribution
- Provide steady funding as part of social and environmental services

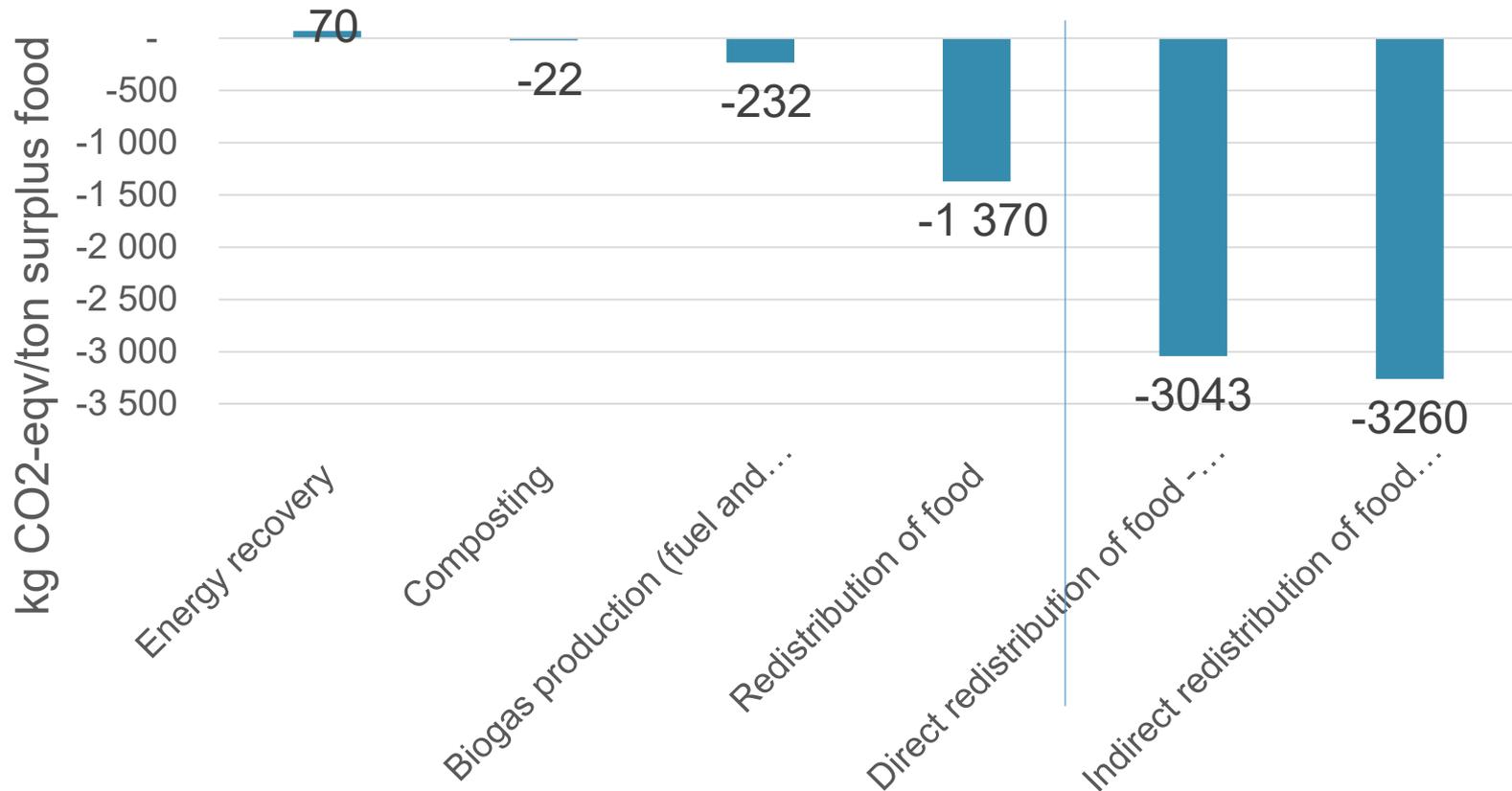
Phase III – Aim

- Carry out one pilot project in each country in cities/regions to implement best practice systems at local/regional/national food redistribution
- Focus on issues identified in previous phases: organization, financing, quality and tracing systems
- Improve data on potential and realized surplus food for redistribution in the pilot areas, as well as food waste from redistribution (secondary waste flows)

Phase III – Experiences

- Financing is the limiting factor for food banks
- More positive attitude to redistribution in the food sector
- More interest for regional food banks or “hubs”, but still a financial challenge
- More actors with focus on business opportunities of surplus food as well as more prevention of food waste through downpricing etc – some charity organizations have problems to get enough food
- Involving donors and authorities is necessary and possible – but time consuming!
- Written guidelines and agreements are important for legitimacy

Quantifying the environmental benefits of food redistribution – reduced GHG-emissions



Concluding remarks

1. The need for more stable financial support of food banks and food redistribution
2. The importance of “national” food banks to establish and operate redistribution systems – being systems operators
3. The need to develop indirect and direct redistribution in parallel, to utilize all types of resources effectively
4. The need for good guidelines, quality systems and tracing systems for food safety requirements

QUESTIONS?

Thank you for your attention!



Resources:

Hanssen et al. (2015) Food Redistribution in the Nordic Region: Experiences and results from a pilot study, <http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:784307/FULLTEXT01.pdf>

Gram-Hanssen et al. (2016) Food Redistribution in the Nordic Region. Phase II: Identification of best practice models for enhanced food redistribution, <http://norden.diva-portal.org/smash/get/diva2:902211/FULLTEXT02.pdf>

Hanssen et al. (2017) in prep: Food Redistribution in the Nordic Region: Phase III: Pilot studies of redistribution at the regional level in Nordic countries