



# **Aligned network and strategies for cofunding**

D3.2

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**Author(s)** Mine Silje Sanddal Lindemann (AU-ICROFS), Ivana Trkulja (AU-ICROFS), Jasmina van Driel (ZonMW) Emilie Gätje (FZJ), Nikola Hassan (FZJ)

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## Contributors

Name	Organisation
Merete Studnitz	AU-ICROFS
Frank Hensgen	FZJ
Valentina Amorese	Cariplo
Barbara Wieliczko	IRWIR PAN
Pawel Chmielinski	IRWIR PAN
Giulia Lombardi	Philea
Marco Cucé	Philea
Terhi Junkkari	SeAMK
Karri Kallio	SeAMK
Bernadette Conrads	ZonMW
Larissa van der Bent	ZonMW

## Revision history

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## Executive summary

Why is it necessary to work on the R&I programming and funding cycle from a FOODPathS perspective? The concept of a systems approach is gaining attention and its importance is increasingly understood since a systems approach offers a holistic view on complex problems and acknowledges interdependencies within the system. Food systems are highly complex and so are the challenges. As a consequence, programming and funding approaches must enable systems approaches and co-creation. Although the recognition of food systems approaches in R&I is evolving, the programming and funding is lagging behind.

Therefore, FOODPathS WP3 follows the overall aim of “Building a Food System co-funding network and aligning funding strategies”. This implies thinking and working towards a transformation from established funding schemes and designs towards more co-creation based funding approaches respecting the needs of public authorities and researchers as well as providing the necessary room needed for stakeholder engagement and participation following the idea of a systems approach.

This Deliverable showcases the work that has been undertaken by WP3 since the beginning of FOODPathS. The main results stemming from the different tasks are showcased and also set into context of the programming and funding cycle, thereby focussing on 3 areas: A) Programming and alignment of actors, priorities and objectives, B) Funding (including a systematic analysis of calls, funding instruments and evaluation) and C) Funded projects.

Several recommendations for shaping future funding activities in the SFS Partnership and beyond are highlighted.

# 1. Introduction

FOODPathS aims to design a prototype for the now running Sustainable Food Systems (SFS) Partnership in Europe. The instrument of this Partnership under Horizon Europe is based on co-funding, underlining the historical grounding in the former ERA-Net Cofunds and European Joint Programming Initiatives. Thus, co-funding is of high relevance both as a backbone for the Partnership project and its members, but also with respect to the specific funding activities and how those are conducted within the Partnership.

This Deliverable sets focus on the aligned network and strategies for co-funding. It thereby succeeds the Deliverable D3.1 Report on funders engagement and forum agenda (submitted in April 2023), which looked at the engagement of funders, first insights via individual interviews and results from the first two Funders Forum events (out of 6 in total). WP3 work also resolved into two other major Deliverables from WP2, namely D2.1 Mapping and D2.2 Food systems approaches.

## 1.1. WP3 aims, structure and team

The FOODPathS WP3 follows the overall aim of “Building a Food System co-funding network and aligning funding strategies”. This implies thinking and working towards a transformation from established funding schemes and designs towards more co-creation based funding approaches respecting the needs of public authorities and researchers as well as providing the necessary room needed for stakeholder engagement and participation following the idea of a systems approach. The main target group of this WP are thus funders, both public and private, on regional and national scale and from different sectors of the food system.

FOODPathS is a “network of networks” and also for WP3 it is imperative to have a good geographical coverage as well as a diversity of actors represented in the WP3 team itself. Seven partners from seven countries are involved, who represent networks of

- public-public partners (ERA-NET Cofund SUSFOOD2 and CORE Organic, Joint Programming Initiative a Healthy Diet for a Healthy Life),
- regional actors (ERIAFF network of regions)
- eastern European network (BIOEAST)
- philanthropic organisations (Cariplo foundation and Philea)

Associated network	FOODPathS partner	Representatives	Type of organisation	Country
<b>BIOEAST</b>	Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IRWIR PAN)	Barbara Wieliczko Aleksandra Pawłowska Pawel Chmielinski	Research Organisation	Poland
<b>CORE Organic network</b> (44 partners in 28 countries/ regions (21 partners are funders))	Aarhus University - International Centre for Research in Organic Food Systems (AU-ICROFS)	Ivana Trkulja Merete Studnitz Mine Lindemann	Research Organisation	Denmark
<b>ERIAFF network of regions</b> (54 members and 39 observers)	Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences (SeAMK)	Terhi Junkkari Karri Kallio	Higher Education	Finland
<b>Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio Delle Provincie Lombardie (Cariplo)</b>		Valentina Amorese	Philanthropic Organisation	Italy
<b>Healthy Diet, Healthy Life (HDHL, 28 partners from 19 countries)</b>	The Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development (ZonMw)	Jasmina van Driel Larissa van der Bent	Funding Organisation	Netherlands

<b>Philanthropy Europe Association (Philea)</b>		Giulia Lombardi Marco Cruce	Philanthropic Organisation	Belgium
<b>SUSFOOD2 network</b> (26 partners from 15 countries)	Research Center Jülich (FZJ)	Nikola Hassan Emilie Gätje Frank Hensgen	Research Organisation	Germany

Table 1 – Associated networks in work package 3 (alphabetical order)

The WP is structured in 4 tasks:

- Task 3.1 – Mapping of public and private potential co-funders and engagement scheme (M1 – M18)  
Leader: FZJ; Contributors: AU, IRWIR PAN, Cariplo, EFC, SeAMK, ZonMw
- Task 3.2 – Funders forum (M3 – M24)  
Leader: ZonMw; Contributors: AU, IRWIR PAN, Cariplo, EFC, FZJ, SeAMK
- Task 3.3 – Aligning transnational call procedures and funding strategies in a system approach (M6 – M30)  
Leader: AU; Contributors: Cariplo, EFC, IRWIR PAN, FZJ, SeAMK, ZonMw
- Task 3.4 – Preparing for a branded network of SSFS-Partnership projects (M16 – M30)  
Leader: FZJ; Contributors: AU, SeAMK, ZonMw, IRWIR PAN

This Deliverable is based on results stemming from all the four tasks, with a slight focus on task 3.3 dedicated to funding strategies and integration of a system approach in the call mechanism, which serves as a main collector and processes results from the other tasks. Thereby, the work performed in task 3.1 focusing on variety of funding organisations builds a strong starting point, looking and mapping public and private co-funders, who are diversely engaged with sustainable food systems with differing needs and expectations and who are supposed to be directly involved as funders of the Partnership. The second task 3.2. aimed at starting interaction with and between the various funders in an open environment of the “funders forum” to enable exchange of knowledge and information but also sharing of experiences. The funders forum events comprised rich sources of information, ideas and insights to feed into WP3’s core work of preparing for future funding activities and to foster transformation through co-creation towards a systems approach (task 3.3). An intense analysis of calls for R&I funding was performed and results have been integrated into a report including recommendations for future transnational calls. Moreover, researchers themselves are an important target group when working on R&I funding schemes and practices. They are the ones to bring those theoretical frameworks to live in implementing the R&I projects. Hence, task 3.4 looked at the needs, experiences and ideas of researchers and research managers towards implementation of food systems approaches in R&I projects as well as good examples of capacity and community building.

## 1.2. Introduction to the R&I Programming and Funding cycle

Optimally, programming and funding is a continuous process and thus often referred to run in cycles. As such it gives room for reflection and learning which could then be used for improvements within the single parts of the cycle and possibly the whole cycle as well. Figure 1 depicts a simplified programming and funding cycle consisting of different core elements as well as surrounding elements and is partly mirroring the structure of the SFS Partnership activities. The starting point is one or more underlying problems/ societal challenges and respective knowledge gaps. Filling of the knowledge gaps should help solving underlying problems and leading to impact on the long-term. With this starting point, the programming sets off and in R&I this commonly means the design of a strategy. Such a strategy including a Strategic Research Agenda (SRA) can be implemented in various ways and in our context of food systems, the major aim is to support R&I and thereby implementing the strategy by knowledge creation. A call, as chosen funding activity in this figure, resolves into R&I projects, undertaken by researchers. A number of projects can be gathered building a portfolio (of themes, results, collaborations etc.) providing a broader basis and stronger collection of R&I results (at the same time other portfolios can be build as well, such as a portfolio of research priorities or call topics). Other activities which support the generation of knowledge or the interaction of different actors and stakeholders can be knowledge hubs or food labs. Those can be part of the funded projects or could happen in parallel. An observatory (such as envisioned to be established in the FutureFoodS PS) will help to get an



overview and may provide orientation of the status of knowledge or missing aspects. These elements encompassing R&I strategy, transnational calls, research projects tackling societal challenges, together with a self-reflection and analysis of the R&I portfolio at hand as well as continuous analysis of the area and latest developments can be used to refine and adapt the cycle – over and over again.

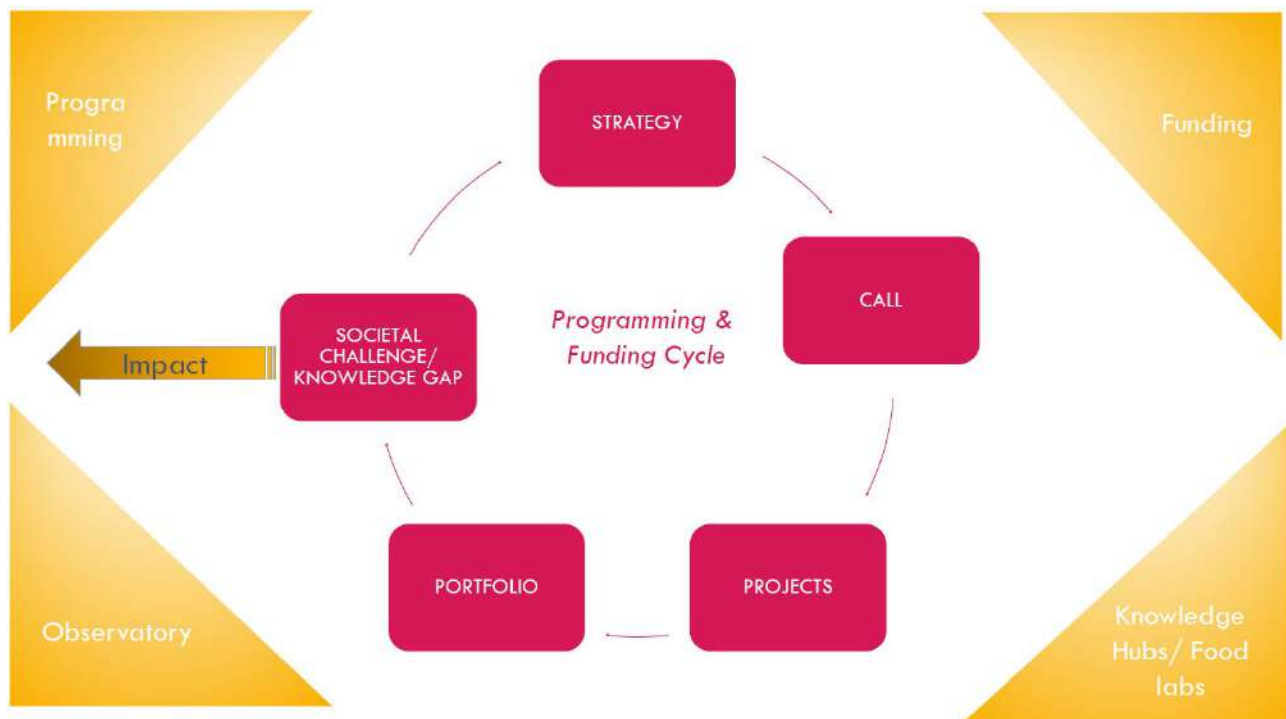


Figure 1: Example of a R&I programming and funding cycle with core elements as well as exemplary selected surrounding elements (in relation to the FutureFoodS PS actions at large)

Such programming and funding cycles can be performed by single funders (like public ministries or the European Commission) but also by a group of funders joining a funding network (such as joint transnational calls known from former ERA-Nets, Cofunds and the current Partnership instrument).

### 1.3. FOODPathS context and focus

What is the role of FOODPathS in this context or, why is it necessary to work on the R&I programming and funding cycle from a FOODPathS perspective? The concept of a systems approach is gaining attention and its importance is increasingly understood since a systems approach offers a holistic view on complex problems and acknowledges interdependencies within the system. Food systems are highly complex and so are the challenges. As a consequence, programming and funding approaches must enable systems approaches and co-creation. Although the recognition of food systems approaches in R&I is evolving, the programming and funding in accordance with the systems approach is lagging behind. The analysis of 21 selected examples of systems-related calls in the food domain revealed that most of the calls did not define or even mention a systems approach and it was also not clearly considered in the evaluation (see section 4.2.3). This shows that efforts are needed to work on the integration of food systems approaches into calls, but moreover, into the programming and funding cycle as a whole, starting with the co-creation of the research agenda.

## 2. Towards and aligned network of co-funders

The aim of setting up a network of funders was a preparatory step towards the Partnership. One goal was the involvement of a diversity of funders, from different countries and regions and from public and private domains. Thereby the co-funding instrument was better known and more targeted towards public funders, which make up the majority of the FOODPathS Funders Network members. While private funders, such as foundations were also interested, they were more hesitant to sign up with the Funders Network and were more interested in receiving information and participating to the Funders Forum events to gather insights. With the start of the building of the Partnership consortium, the first aim of the FoodPathS Funders Network materialized. Noteworthy, 70% of the current SFS Partnership funders have been Funders Network members. A look on the overlap between the funders who joined the FOODPathS Network and those who finally participated in the Partnership consortium revealed that 60% of FOODPathS Funders Network members migrated to the PS, whereas 40% of the Funders Network did not take part in the Partnership (first grant). This indicates that there is a space for membership enlargement in the FutureFoodS Partnership and consequentially an opportunity for further increase of R&I funding.

### Who do we mean, who did we reach, who is missing

With task 3.1 a mapping of potential funders to join the future Partnership was undertaken, setting up a network of funders at the same time. End of 2024, a number of 49 funding organisations answered the survey and signed up for the network. A number of 23 countries are represented, thereof ~70% governmental organisations, 23% non-governmental organisations and 8% others (such as clusters; see figure 2).

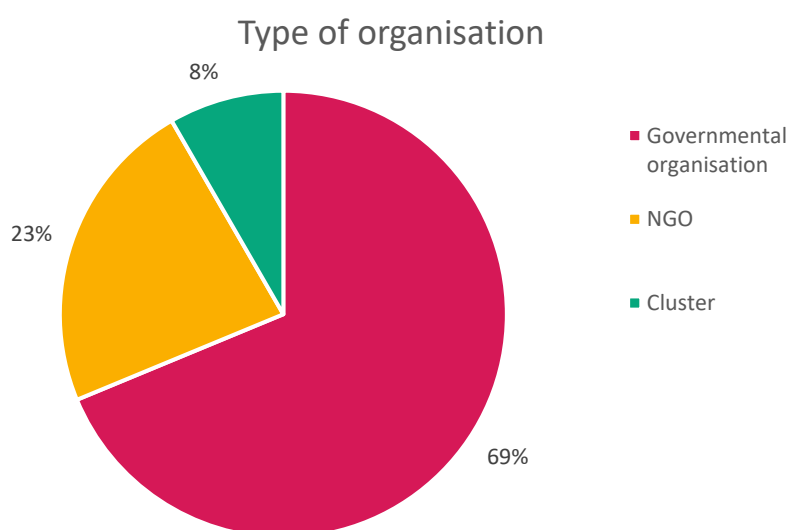


Figure 2: Types of organisations who answered the survey for the funders Network

The countries and number of entities from each country on the map are displayed in Figure 3. It shows that some countries responded very strongly to the survey, being engaged with several funding entities such as Belgium, Netherlands, Spain, Italy, whereas from some European countries, no funding entity answered, namely Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Greece, Hungary, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland and Slovenia. Most of those countries that did not join the Network are also not involved in the PS, which might indicate low political priority of the thematic area or need to prioritize public investments.

Countries and number of entities per country including funders with regional focus

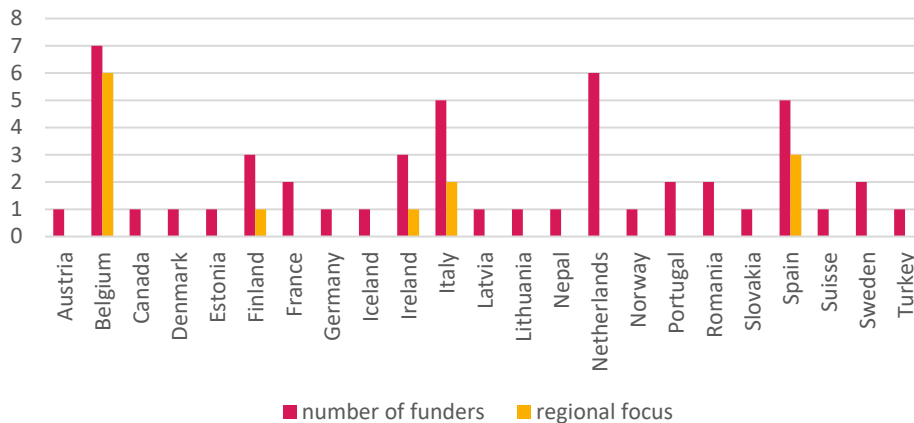


Figure 3 Country distribution and regional funders

Figure 3 also shows those funding entities which have a regional focus, which is clearly country specific with a high number of regional actors in Belgium, Italy and Spain. This mirrors the funding landscape and system of the countries.

The source of funding is mostly public funding, only 12% of the entities provide private funds.

Where do the funding entities stand with regard to the R&I areas proclaimed in the SRIA for the Partnership? Figure 4 shows the level of priority estimated by funding entities. All four R&I areas are recognized as high or medium important by the vast majority of the funders answering the survey, but while two of the R&I areas had only positive feedback, the latter two R&I areas (“the way we connect” and “the way we govern”) are not prioritized by all funding organizations.

Priority of R&I areas (based on SRIA)

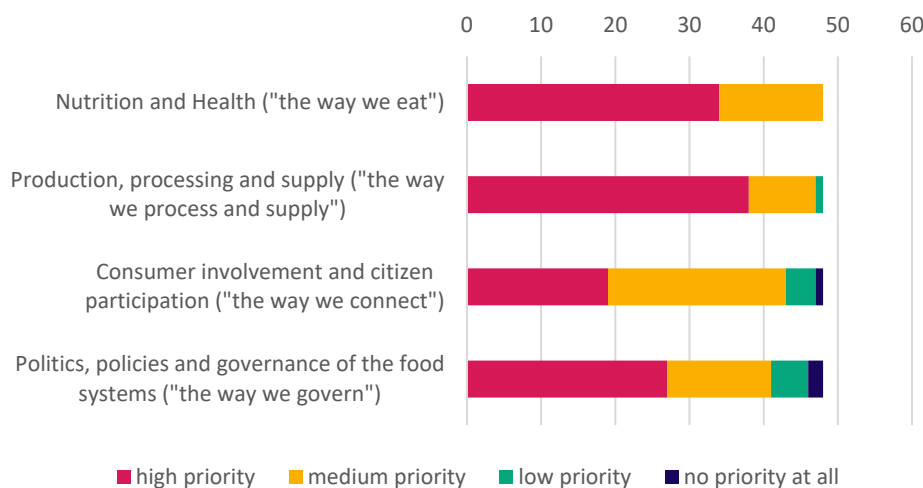


Figure 4 Priority of R&I areas (based on SRIA) by survey respondents

### The meaning of alignment

Aligning funding strategies is a central objective of WP3. But what does alignment mean? Possible explanations of the term as such are „to bring to agreement/ to join/ to cooperate/ to ally“. Across all WP3 activities, various aspects related to alignment were brought up and discussed, including the development of a joint understanding, joint views, agreeing to shared objectives and priorities, working on synergies, networking as such, partnering etc.

The following aspects gained attention in various discussions around alignment of funding strategies (sources: individual interviews with funders, Funders Forum discussions):

- Need to align the expectations for R&I (transdisciplinary, systems approach) and the way funders and ministries do the funding
- Funding segmentation needs to be overcome by better alignment of funding between different types of funders, letting different kinds of funders work together
- Funders from different sectors need to work together and align (e.g. health and agro-food oriented funders in one call, or regional funders and national funders in one call)
- Need to create synergies between European and national funds
- Alignment among the different PS around the area of food systems (e.g. Agroecology, Blue economy etc.)
- Aligning views on what impact means and on what levels, e.g. Impact means different things: coordinating the action well, impacting on real world challenges, moving towards a sustainable food system, benefit to citizens, local relevance etc.)
- Synergies also need to be created between member states to increase impact at supra-national level
- Integration of stakeholder participation in the funding cycle to ensure stronger societal impact (in R&I programming, SRIA development, evaluation and project implementation)

During the Budapest workshop of FutureFoodS participants were asked to name actors with whom better alignment would be needed and what barriers do exist. The following answers were given:

- Industries, small and big players (grassroots, SMES, big corporates) – not easy to reach and umbrella organisations are sometimes missing (this point was named several times)
- Retailers – due to missing connection points
- Primary producers
- Private funders
- Policy makers – not easy to find them and to get heard
- Experts on impact
- Others: Citizens, young generation, health experts, politicians, local governments, European Commission, Trade unions, Psychologists

### 3. Fostering dialogue and exchange – lessons learned from the Funders Forum events

With the Funders Forum events (task 3.2), a major aim to enable exchange among funders but also other stakeholders along the programming and funding cycle was achieved. Starting in November 2022 with a [first forum](#) online, more than 100 attendees were counted and a similar number of participants joined the [second forum](#) which was held in a hybrid format in Brussels in February 2023 (more info about the first two Funder Forum events was given in the Del. 3.1). Funders Forums 3-5 were so called “special editions” which had a certain focus (a summary can be found [online](#)). The [fourth Funders Forum](#) in May 2023 was a side event to the ERIAFF Conference in Bolzano, where 32 participants from 15 regions discussed the role of regions in transforming towards sustainable food systems. The involvement of philanthropic organizations and foundations was targeted with Funders Forum number four in September 2023 (online), attended by 22 participants, including representatives from six foundations from various European Countries. In October 2023, FOODPathS joined the Healthy Diet, Healthy Life (HDHL) Governing Boards meeting in Brussels for a dedicated Funders Forum to discuss the intersection of health and sustainability domains in food R&I. The last [Funders Forum](#) took place in April 2024 in Brussels and was attended by ~40 participants onsite (plus ~20 online) providing the opportunity for funders or potential funders of the Partnership SFS to come together and discuss, explore the role of funding in shaping future food systems, and share experiences and expertise with other stakeholders to add value to European food systems (link on website: <https://www.foodpaths.eu/news-item/foodpaths-funders-forum-in-brussels-2024/>). Figure 5 depicts all six Funders Forum events.

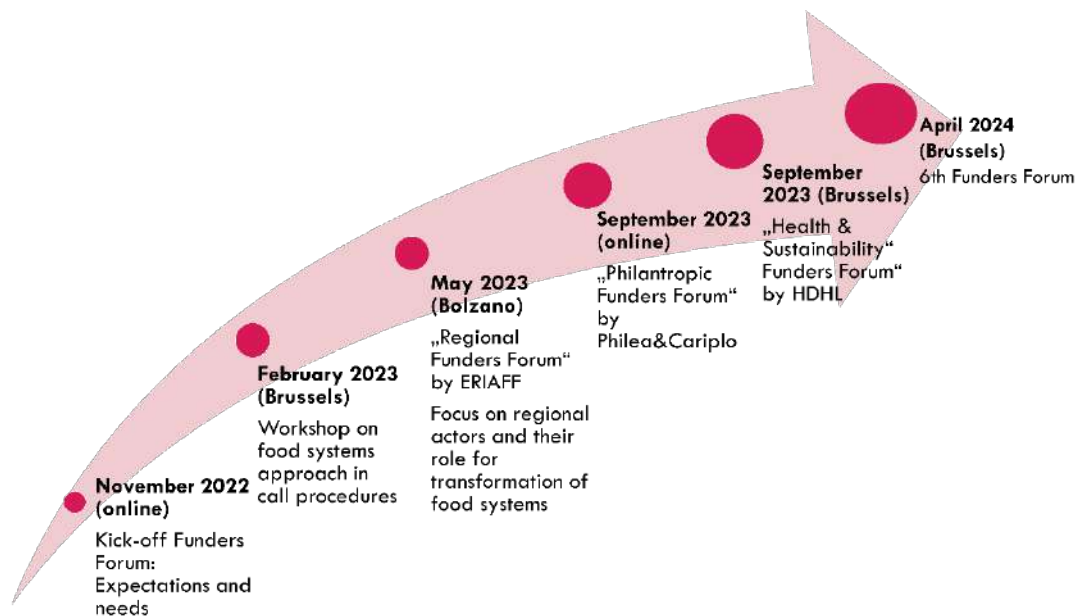


Figure 5: The six Funders Forum events undertaken (task 3.2)

All six editions of Funders Forum events followed the idea to create a place for open exchange and dialogue among participants and to make every voice heard. Presented contents were shared afterwards on the FOODPathS website and the gained insights and results feed into the overall outcomes of WP3, such as methods for future funding, sharing of best practices and strategies towards food systems approaches and funding of such approaches. Another important role of the Funders Forum events was the testing and validating of ideas or recommendations directly with actors and target groups with regard to practicability, usefulness and relevance.

Some major and overarching aspects to take along from the Funders Fora number 3-6 are summarized below (Fora 1-2 have been reported under Del. 3.1).

- Regional actors can be changemakers for the food system transformation in Europe and many good practices exist waiting to be shared more prominently
- Regional food systems have specific characteristics (links to tourism, local and high quality production, small farmers)
- Ways to support regional actors include investments (for start-ups, education, tech implementation, upscaling of innovations), capacity building and enabling of cooperation, support for sustainable business models
- Philanthropic actors are increasingly interested in food systems transformation but knowledge about European Programmes, such as PS need to be shared and possible ways of collaboration should be comprehensive and should respect the needs and different functioning of foundations
- Health and sustainability are often not combined and nutrition is underrepresented in food system research
- Foster collaboration/ synergies and invest time for this: among funded projects, with stakeholders (and as early as possible), involve more nutritionists, psychologists
- Transdisciplinary approaches are key
- Recognize and work on the challenges, such as:
  - need for a systemic approach versus the feasibility/size of a multi-disciplinary consortium
  - Different disciplines speak different languages – funders, academics, private sector and civil society – brokers are therefore needed
  - Longer time horizons are needed
- Need for better sharing of knowledge and outcomes in general (provide coordinated structure, use the power of several projects being funded =portfolio)
- Systems approach is lacking in society at large, especially in education which is very siloed (already from elementary onwards)
- Stakeholders should be involved in decision steps (e.g. topic identification and prioritization, consultations, panels/ boards), but this must be well planned and validation with field experts necessary

- Involve young people /early career researchers
- Make use of Artificial Intelligence
- Evaluators (both stakeholders and scientific experts) need to be trained in Food Systems approaches and panels should be inter- or transdisciplinary as well
- R&I can function as a catalyst for food system transformation
- Two important challenges for system transformation are: dealing with power dynamics and the phenomenon of projectification
- 

## 4. Inputs to the Research Programming and Funding cycle

All tasks of WP3 feed into the different parts of the research programming and funding cycle, yet some aspects received increased attention, also due to the need to allocate resources and time. Hereunder a summary is provided of the main results with regard to three major focus areas:

- Focus A: Programming and alignment of actors, priorities and objectives
- Focus B: Funding
- Focus C: Funded projects

### 4.1. Focus A: Programming and alignment of actors, priorities and objectives

For the alignment of actors, priorities and objectives with regard to programming and funding following the idea of a systems approach, a common understanding of what food systems approach means is crucial. The FOODPathS WP2 dedicated work to the food systems approach (e.g. Del. 2.2 “Food systems approach and observatories”) and an active exchange was established between WP2 and WP3 teams. Information and inspiration was also shared during several Funders Forum events and food systems approach was explained and discussed, which was highly valued by the participants. These discussions also revealed that funding bodies need to align priorities more to move towards Food Systems funding approaches, while also researchers need to be able to implement such ideas in real-life projects. The FS definition will guide research partners when preparing their project proposals, therefore the definition should be tailored to the vision of the sustainable food system. Next to terminology and understanding some further reflections should be made, such as: what are possible trade-offs of the transition? What/ or who are drivers of change (is it economy, finance etc.)? What makes a change desirable or undesirable? Noteworthy, FoodPathS WP7’s work on [inclusiveness](#) can be exploited to support ministries and funding organisations in this regard. It was also proposed in the Funders Forum events to prioritise areas with the greatest potential for impact and change, and programme in this direction. For instance, innovative proteins could be a high-impact focus due to emerging market needs and sector shifts. Thus, the SFS partnership should not be afraid to set targets and ask big questions related to f.e. plant-based proteins or food waste.

It was also mentioned in several events that there are powerful actors, who don’t necessarily want change. This also needs to be taken into account when programming and identifying focus of calls.

In the European networks, the added value of mutual learning also applies to funding organisations and thereby, some ministries and countries can share good practices, e.g. with regard to participatory approaches during the programming and funding cycle or with regard to the implementation of a Theory of Change framework within calls. Collaboration on EU level can lead to changes in the funding practices or the adoption of central elements (like a systems approach) in the regional/ national strategies.

The Partnership instrument under Horizon Europe with an extended runtime of 10 years give the opportunity for more stringent portfolio thinking and following of long-term perspectives. Discussions during the FOODPathS Budapest workshop in December 2024 brought up the need to ensure synergy between funding cycles but at the same time allow flexibility to respond to new challenges or focus areas. With regard to the portfolio of funded projects, an overarching vision for such a portfolio is important and coherence between

funded projects should be ensured (e.g. via a portfolio manager). Considerations should be made about how to turn KPIs in projects into long-term impacts at large.

## 4.2. Focus B: Funding

The work with the Funders Network and the fruitful exchanges during the Funders Forum events brought up interesting examples of already existing funding activities. In order to learn from existing good examples, a systematic analysis of calls was undertaken to screen the landscape and analyse how and to what extent food systems approaches have already been integrated in former and current funding activities.

### 4.2.1. Systematic analysis of calls

To dive deeper into good practice examples, WP3 performed an analysis of existing funding programs and their transnational calls (under task 3.3 “Aligning transnational call procedures and funding strategies in a systems approach” with FZJ as WP leader and AU-ICROFS as task leader with contribution from Cariplo, IRWIR PAN, Philea, FZJ, SeAMK, and ZonMw). The analysis was presented and discussed during the 6<sup>th</sup> Funders Forum in April 2024 and the full report published on the FOODPathS website in June 2024 (<https://www.foodpaths.eu/resource/how-is-the-food-systems-approach-implemented-in-call-for-funding-read-the-foodpaths-analysis/>) and promoted.

#### Methodology and selected calls

The overall aim of the present analysis was to develop recommendations on how to implement a food systems approach in future calls. Thereby, the knowledge and information produced over two decades of implementation of transnational Research and Innovation (R&I) calls supported the WP3 team in the selection of cases and the analytical framework setting the basis for the systematic analysis performed.

21 calls were selected as good or interesting examples and these calls represent various funding programmes and topics (stemming primarily from Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe Framework Programme periods, widely ranging from ERA-NET Cofunds, Art.185 initiatives, regional, national and European Partnership funding schemes). The selected calls involve a diverse range of funders ranging from national and regional public funders, private sector actors, foundations and philanthropic organisations, and the European Commission as co-funder in some instances. This diversity enables the assessment of potential variations in approaches based on the type of call mechanism.

Calls with transnational character were prioritised in the selection process in order to enable direct links and relevance for the targeted transnational programme of the co-funded Partnership ‘FutureFoodS’ under Horizon Europe.

No	Call abbreviation	Call full title	Type of call
1	<b>ERA-NET Circularity Call 2021</b>	2021 JOINT CALL ERA-NET Cofund SusAn, FACCE ERA-GAS, ICT-AGRI-FOOD and SusCrop	ERA-Net schemes (with or without co-funding)
2	<b>ERA-NET CO 2021</b>	CORE Organic Cofund Third Call 2021	ERA-Net schemes (with or without co-funding)
3	<b>ERA-NET HDHL Knowledge Hub 2019</b>	ERA-HDHL Call: Knowledge Hub on Food and Nutrition Security	ERA-Net schemes (with or without co-funding)
4	<b>ERA-NET SF-CO 2019</b>	SUSFOOD2-CORE Organic Joint Call 2019	ERA-Net schemes (with or without co-funding)
5	<b>ERA-NET SF-FOSC 2021</b>	SUSFOOD2-FOSC joint call 2021	ERA-Net schemes (with or without co-funding)
6	<b>ERA-NET SINO-EUROPEAN CALL 2022</b>	Europe-China Joint Call, Joint Programming Initiative (JPI) Urban Europe	ERA-Net schemes (with or without co-funding)
7	<b>Food-Water-Energy Nexus 2017</b>	Sustainable Urbanisation Global Initiative (SuGi) – Food-Water-Energy Nexus, Belmont Forum and the Joint Programming Initiative (JPI) Urban Europe	ERA-Net schemes (with or without co-funding)



8	<b>HEU Citizens' science</b>	Citizens' science as an opportunity to foster the transition to sustainable food systems	HEU Framework Programme
9	<b>HEU Environmental impacts</b>	Environmental impacts of food systems	HEU Framework Programme
10	<b>HEU FOODITY 2023</b>	FOODITY – Open Call #1	HEU Framework Programme
11	<b>HEU TITAN 2023</b>	TITAN Open Call	HEU Framework Programme
12	<b>Interreg Aurora</b>	(Interreg VI-A) Sweden-Finland-Norway (AURORA)	Regional focus
13	<b>Interreg Baltic Sea</b>	Interreg Baltic Sea Region	Regional focus
14	<b>JPI Water 2018</b>	Water JPI 2018 Joint Call	ERA-Net schemes (co-funded and free)
15	<b>NATIONAL Agropolis 2020</b>	Agropolis Foundation 2020 Call for Proposals	Foundations
16	<b>NATIONAL Foody Zero Sprechi 2021</b>	Foody Zero Sprechi 2021	Foundations
17	<b>PS BioDivMon 2022</b>	Biodiversa+ Partnership Call 2022	PS schemes, co-funded
18	<b>PS CBE JU 2023</b>	Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking Call	PS schemes, old formats (co-programmed)
19	<b>PS DUT 2023</b>	Driving Urban Transitions Call 2023	PS schemes, co-funded
20	<b>PS PRIMA 2023</b>	PRIMA Call 2023 Section 1	PS schemes, old formats (co-programmed)
21	<b>PS SBEP 2023</b>	2023 First Joint Transnational Co-Funded Call	PS schemes, co-funded

Table 2 list of analysed calls

To ensure a systematic approach of the analysis, a set of categories developed, based on the PS FutureFoodS definition of a food systems approach. Thereby, three overarching themes emerged:

The **first theme on elements relevant to a systems approach** included sub-categories such as multi-actor approach, cross-disciplinarity, theory of change, synergies, and trade-offs. The sub-categories may indicate whether a systems approach is being utilised as well as what systems approach elements are prioritised in a given call.

The **second theme regarding implementation of a systems approach**, addresses how the calls are encouraging applicants to implement a systems approach in projects. This theme can be considered to cover different methodologies that may help projects to implement a systems approach. Sub-categories include stakeholder engagement, networking activities, and dissemination, exploitation, and communication (DEC).

The **third theme on research call-specific features** includes sub-categories on evaluation criteria, uploading additional documents related to a systems approach, supportive actions for applicants and activities aligned with future HEU partnerships. Information about evaluation criteria is especially important to understand how if at all, the systems approach elements are included as mandatory criteria.

### Recommendations

This approach to the analysis provided a structured framework for analysing call mechanisms through the lens of a systems approach. By systematically analysing various calls, the following targeted recommendations were formulated to steer the design of future funding activities in the HEU FutureFoodS partnership.

- 1) Provide a definition of systems approach or a clear explanation of what is meant;
- 2) Be mindful and consistent with terminology, e.g. when using typical elements of a systems approach such as multi-/inter-/transdisciplinarity;



- 3) Cross-disciplinarity, stakeholder engagement, and multi-actor approach are highly de-manded and also of great relevance for a systems approach call; think about where and how to ask for these aspects and consider the differences between the concepts;
- 4) When applying a systems approach it is important to consider both synergies and trade-offs;
- 5) Think about how impact shall be achieved by the projects, how the food systems approach contributes to impact and provides guidance and support towards applicants;
- 6) What additions to the proposals are sensible and what shall they contain (e.g. impact plan, Dissemination Exploitation and Communication plan, stakeholder engagement plan, implementation/valorisation plan etc.); adapt to the systems approach and consider also follow-up and adjustments over time (revisiting the plan);
- 7) Networking activities facilitated at programme level can be valuable to align and/or collaborate with other projects or programmes but they need to be backed up with dedicated resources (they might even be a necessity for co-design and co-creation);
- 8) Be open to new funding instruments beyond classical projects (e.g. knowledge hubs) to create mechanisms for fostering connectivity, co-creation and inclusiveness.

We strongly invite all readers to have a look at the [full report](#).

## 4.2.2. Funding instruments

The external calls in the SFS PS are co-funded calls following a transnational funding scheme. This means that every researcher is supported by her/his own regional/ national funding organisation. There is little flexibility with regard to choice of funding instrument. Nevertheless, discussions at Funders Forum events pointed at important aspects to consider for funding in light of a systems approach and when thinking about an ideal way of supporting R&I:

### Overarching aspects/ funding schemes

- Longer funding horizons would be beneficial (multiple times mentioned!)
- Longer post-project monitoring and follow-up is needed and clear impact frameworks
- Better sharing and using of developed knowledge
- More flexibility in funding mechanisms is needed
- Better connection with EU Cohesion Funds
- Better alignment and connection with local agenda goals
- Funders from different sectors (e.g. health and sustainability) need to be involved in the agenda setting and call writing
- Many organisation types are left out since funding agencies cannot fund them (e.g. NGOs, municipalities)
- Test co-design and co-creation (participatory) approaches to agenda and priority setting

### Call types/ funding practices

- Living and policy labs, knowledge hubs
- Involving practical expertise
- Need for funding of co-creative research
- work with joint approaches from the beginning (e.g. mixed boards, cohorts, stakeholder involvement)
- Call guidelines should be clear and easy for researchers
- need to have different types of calls and scales: big and small instruments, local to global, high and lower funding amounts
- support mobility of skills or exchange programmes
- need to involve capacity building more strongly
- give more freedom to researchers working along an “agile research process”
- have an extra funding pot reserved to fund impact at the end of a project
- Change the rule > promote rotating positions > growth of knowledge
- Rethink the importance of TRL vs. other factors like societal impact, more systemic applied/practice-oriented research
- Make use of overarching structures to connect projects (hub/ satellite projects)

An interesting example was the UK Transforming food systems program:

- Funding very large consortia
- PhD training school
- All projects have to be co-designed
- Knowledge transfer fellow
- Coordinating director
- Projects can also apply to funding in other projects – cross-project
- Policy impacts are coming out because policy structures are involved

### 4.2.3. Evaluation

#### Evaluation in the systematic analysis of calls

The systematic analysis of calls, performed under task 3.3 (see section xy) put emphasis on the evaluation of the calls since evaluation criteria are commonly used in order to assess the quality of proposals and for comparison and selection of projects to be funded. Thus, evaluation criteria have a guiding role and are of high importance for both funders and researchers. Elements which were considered as mandatory for some of the analysed calls were most commonly also part of the evaluation criteria.

The evaluation criteria relevant to SA appear in multiple criterion types, e.g. on general criteria, and criteria on excellence, quality of implementation and impact. Most often they are found under the impact criterion (see Figure 6). However, seven of the 21 calls use general criteria, meaning that those are not using the typical categories of excellence, quality of implementation and impact.

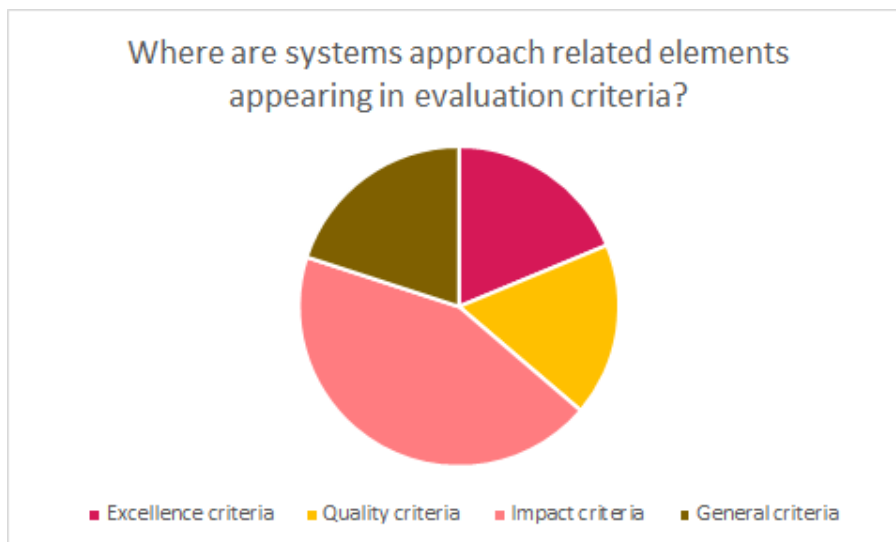


Figure 6 Systems approach-related evaluation criteria

Some of the analysed calls use the systems approach very prominently in their evaluation and five calls use the wording “systems approach“ or “systemic“ directly in their evaluation criteria (see figure 7). All of these five calls use the impact criterion when referring to the systems approach. The remaining 16 calls which were analysed also take SA criteria into account, but they refer to single elements that are related to a SA, such as multi-actor approach, synergies, stakeholder engagement etc.

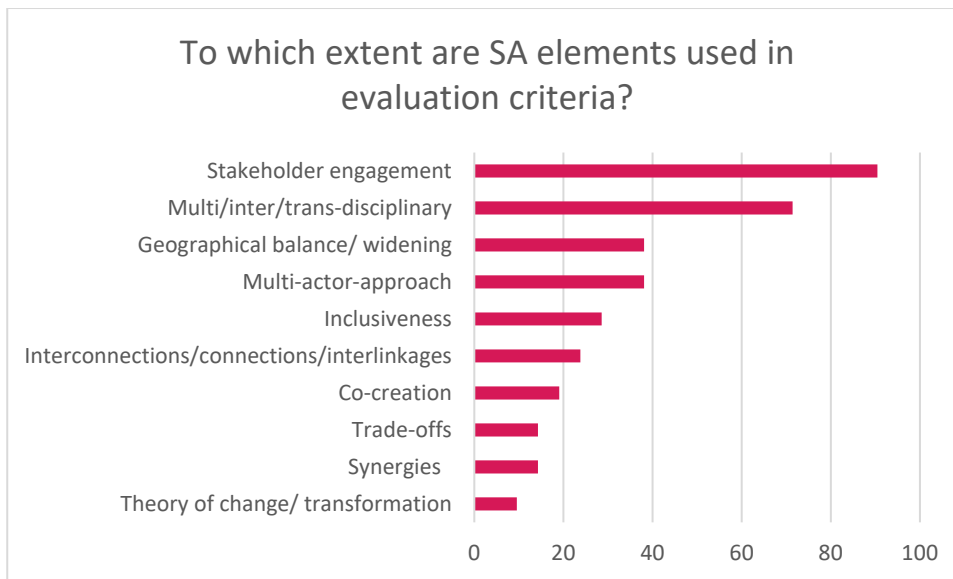


Figure 7 Frequency of SA elements in evaluation criteria

The element of stakeholder engagement is most often used in the evaluation criteria and in the analysed calls it is found to be integrated into criteria such as impact, general criteria, and excellence (in the order of magnitude).

Also strongly present in the evaluation criteria is cross-disciplinarity, which is used mainly under the excellence criteria. In some cases, it is used in more than one criterion, namely under excellence and quality. Surprisingly it is not commonly found under the impact criterion. This picture is similar to the multi-actor approach, which appears in about 40% of call cases as a relevant criterion for the evaluation of excellence and quality. Interestingly, the multi-actor approach is very often applied in calls which use general criteria.

Evaluation of the elements Theory of change, interconnections, synergies, and trade-offs do only appear in the impact criterion and are used to a lower extent i.e. in less than 20% of the analysed calls.

### Evaluation discussed during Funders Forum events

During the **second Funders Forum in early 2023 in Brussels**, a workshop was dedicated to the main question: "How to evaluate whether the FS is covered to the best extent possible to reach the call objectives". Participants discussed in smaller groups and agreed that specific evaluation criteria for food systems approach are needed and there should be a minimum level of food systems approach necessary. The question was raised on how to rate the level/ ambition/ coverage of food systems approach of a proposal and under which criterium would this approach be best covered (impact or another). There were two different ways of evaluating the food system approach suggested by the participants: *the additional food systems specialist panel vs food systems experts involved in one overarching panel*. Groups discussed various benefits and drawback with the two methods for evaluation, but most participants seemed to favour to have one overarching panel for the evaluation, which would mean an integrated model (more in line with FS/system thinking). Potential drawbacks mentioned were big differences of profiles, e.g. very specific field expertise vs. systems thinkers.

Participants discussed the need for very clear FS criteria, based on a clear, precise and universal definition of the FS. FOOD SYSTEMS APPROACH should be used to differentiate between proposals, so that a proposal with a better (or higher degree of) food systems approach should be funded before an otherwise good proposal with less focus on FOOD SYSTEMS APPROACH.

Participants discussed that evaluation criteria are very important, especially for the proposal phase of a call, and they would like clear guidelines for these as well as FOOD SYSTEMS APPROACH.

Participants discussed the importance of scale both in the criteria used, and the way the programming is formulated within the partnership, to allow for projects at different scales:

- Involvement of stakeholders. In order to facilitate this, there needs to be funding allocated for this. It was indicated by some participants that the most challenging is to involve stakeholders from the policy domain, although this is key for systems change.

- Level of change/impact. Suggestions were made to consider having a co-coordinator of a project from a professional field rather than an academic field, who could support bringing outcomes towards uptake and implementation (implementation facilitator)
- Level of research (basic to implementation)
- Number of cross cutting issues taken into account.

Participants talked about a way to engrain criteria in a list of developing goals/ achievements (i.e. potential for transformation) or pathways for impact/ change, that the proposal should respond to. This would need to be fairly simple, and there should be an easy way to score the projects based on this. It could also be a matrix that gives structure both for applicants as well as evaluators/ funders.

The importance of social involvement in building impact was also raised. However, demonstrating its effectiveness is challenging. This needs clear metrics and justifications for how social involvement contributes to measurable outcomes and can thus be evaluated.

Finally, participants discussed the need for weighing of criteria, and the potential for using SCOPE as a way to embed the criteria in the proposal process.

A few different criteria were mentioned, and quickly discussed:

- Showing where the project will change the system (leverage points)
- Sustainability impacts → these would need to be quantified somehow.
- Timescales (for impact) here with a preference towards shorter timescales

Also during other Funders Forum discussions, the topic of evaluation was brought up and some findings can be summarized as follows:

- Need to include qualitative and quantitative criteria.
- Alignment of methodology and impact pathways (complex methodology can be difficult for evaluators during the evaluation process)
- Challenge: finding both systemic experts and stakeholders (or generalists?) to evaluate Food Systems call proposals – in academics generalists need to be appreciated more
- Think about not selecting the top 10 best (excellent) proposals but the top 10 which had the highest potential for synergy and cooperation
- Evaluation needs to be adaptable and agile in order to facilitate an agile research process – more freedom needs to be facilitated, also for stakeholder participation
- Training for evaluators is necessary
- An interdisciplinary approach of application also requires interdisciplinary evaluators/ evaluation
- The classical scoring systems (ex. of researcher's CV) might distract from what is really important
- Mandate thinking about: Systems, multi-actor, multi-disciplinary
- Evaluating a systems approach is a very much a qualitative exercise, that's why it is important to have the right experts. Important questions are: how to assure that projects contribute the change to sustainable food system? We need also transformative knowledge; systems approach is not enough.

During the **FoodPathS Budapest workshop in December 2024**, a break-out session was held on the theme "Evaluation of Food Systems proposals" following the statement "We need a diverse evaluation panel"

In a first round, the group reverse-brainstormed on why this has NOT worked/ or will NOT work and the input was clustered:

- Different quality criteria in different disciplines
- Too narrow focus on experienced researchers/experts
- People based on their previous experience
- The length and complexity of the proposal
- Conflict of interest
- Food System Science is new field, few literate people
- Not knowing how to evaluate, what is required (process, time, skills)
- We are as scientists not skilled and trained to look at research in a holistic fashion
- Not seeing the benefit of participating on such a panel
- The pool of experts might not be diverse because experts from industry do not join evaluation easily
- Lack of availability, resources, reasons to motivate some experts
- Lack of cooperation with practitioners

- Need big committees – research, food practice

As a second task, the group discussed how to mitigate these challenges and came up with the following list of solutions. Finally, each person received two votes to choose their two favourite solutions. The result list is presented in order of most voted result at the top.

- 1) Incentives / benefits for actors / stakeholders to be involved in the evaluation
- 2) Guiding evaluators beforehand (f.e. emphasise other criteria etc)
- 3) Evaluate the evaluators
- 4) Building capacity and training of evaluators
- 5) Iteration is key in a food systems concept (f.e. multi-stage application, co-creation of application)
- 6) Setting the rules of engagement – setting ground rules and creating space for true engagement (this is directly linked to number 1)
- 7) Get feedback from evaluators
- 8) Purpose of research project should be understandable for everyone
- 9) Help from existing databases and AI
- 10) Telling the story, what is the value (examples) – no votes
- 11) Use existing platforms, networks of intermediaries (clusters of living labs and interprofessional groups) – no votes

## 4.3. Focus C: The funded projects

The main aim of a funding activity is to create knowledge, e.g. by supporting R&I projects. Therefore, the funded projects are of high importance and bring the strategic priorities, objectives and goals defined in underlying strategies, plans and programmes to life. Of course, projects are bound to the objectives, expectations and criteria of a call and thus, are shaped by the underlying programme and way a call is designed. WP3 aimed to get insights into first, how systems approaches and especially cross-disciplinarity is experienced by project leaders and secondly, WP3 also aimed to investigate how projects should ideally be supported (task 3.4). Here, the aim was to work towards a catalogue of support measures with regard to food systems approach and community building.

### 4.3.1. Focus groups with project leaders

What do leaders of food projects think about food research that is interdisciplinary and systems oriented? With this guiding question, a collaboration between WP2, 3 and 6 started off. FoodPathS partner ISEKI thereby supported with their expertise in performing focus groups. Taking the systematic analysis of WP3 as starting point, more than 40 project coordinators, stemming from the analysed 21 calls, were addressed. A number of 27 researchers could take part during the given timeframe and overall interest from researchers was high. Specifically, we have aimed to ensure that experiences from leading scientists as regards interdisciplinary and systems approaches in projects funded under the mentioned calls give a reality check on the possibilities for responding constructively in project proposals to the inclusion of requirements for systems approaches in open calls under the partnership.

#### Insights and experiences on systems approach implementation and cross-disciplinarity

To get insight into the options and possible challenges for demanding a systems perspective to project proposals we invited scientists – including project coordinators – involved in projects under the reviewed transnational calls to reflect on their experiences and FoodPathS ideas for Food Systems approach. A qualitative data recording method, specifically “focus group methodology” was chosen to allow deep insights from a limited sample chosen from the selected calls as illustrated in figure 8.

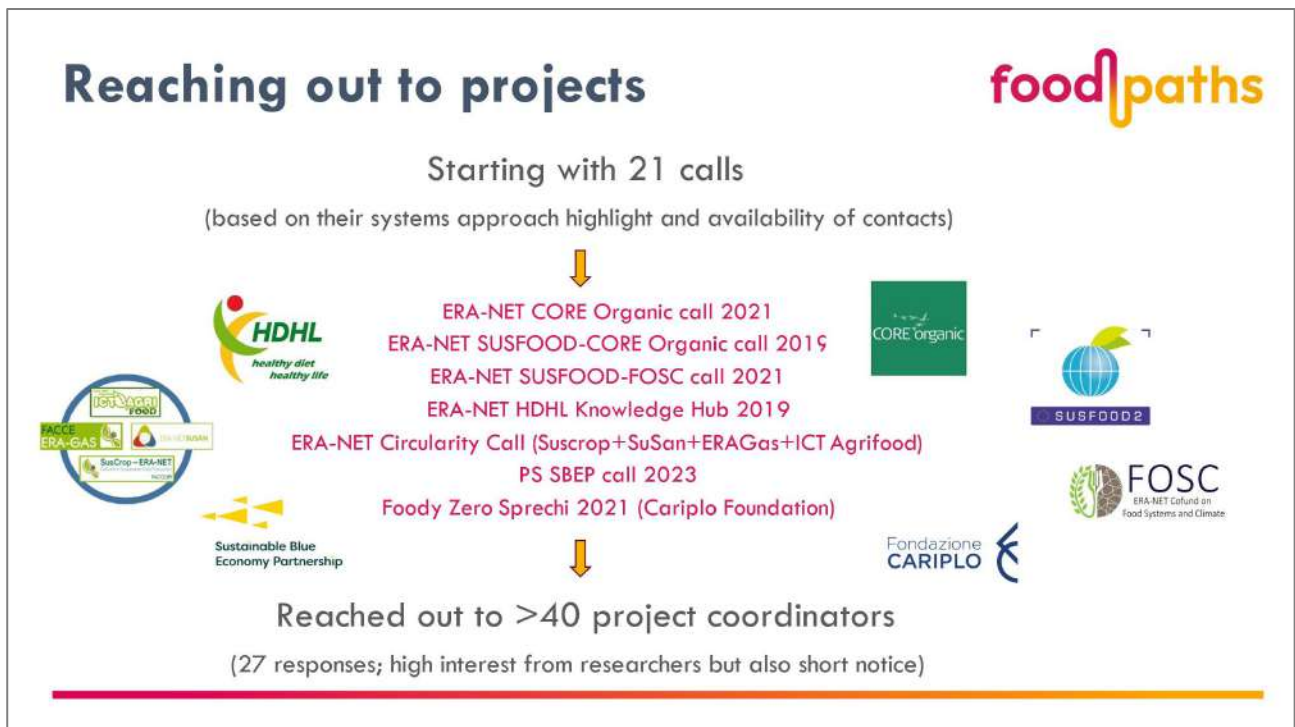


Figure 8 Relation between calls identified and analyzed in WP3 and the leading scientists invited for focus groups

The overall GOAL OF FOCUS GROUPS was to learn what leaders of the invited projects think about food/agriculture research that is interdisciplinary and systems oriented. The expected outcomes of the effort were to synthesize a set of experiences including identifying options, challenges and barriers for using a Food Systems approach in funding.

Based on a synthesis across the three focus groups responses the FoodPaths team defined the following recommendations: Scientists -at least a significant group - may understand and support the needs and rationale for a Food Systems approach and may possibly apply this in proposals and when carrying out R&I in consortia.

**Thus, a FOOD SYSTEM APPROACH may be applied in a Four-step procedure:**

- 1) **Depicting a Food System from an overall perspective.**
- 2) **Defining the relevant sub-system, which the project will address in its activities.**
- 3) **Defining the scientific disciplines required to cover the R&I aspects of the sub-system and ensure they work in inter-disciplinary collaboration across the nodes of the sub-system – according to the aim of the call topic.**
- 4) **Identifying the stakeholder types relevant for the sub-system and ensure representation in consortium.**

**Additional recommendations based on learnings from the focus groups:**

- 1) Consider including a facilitator for inter- and trans-disciplinary working nodes (a professional knowledge broker).
- 2) Consider incentives to involve actors that are not researchers. Collaboration should be deeply integrated into all project activities rather than treated as a checklist item. The objective is meaningful inclusion rather than superficial involvement.
- 3) Consider long term projects.

It was also indicated that a balance needs to be struck between allowing research flexibility and meeting the project objectives. Encourage innovation while ensuring that work remains goal-oriented.

The learnings and conclusions from the focus groups in combination with the theoretical considerations for a Food Systems approach and the conclusions given were presented to the FOODPathS funders forum at a workshop 23/24 April 2024 in Brussels (see website [link](#)). The results were received with interest by the funders, who found them consistent with the recommendations given based on the previous analysis of the 21 calls. On this basis WP2 continued to refine the recommendations for explicit requirements of an FS approach in project proposals in open calls under the partnership (see Del. 2.2).



### 4.3.2. Support measures

Foodpaths aimed to prepare the ground for the Future Partnership on Sustainable Food Systems and the funded projects resulting from the joint transnational calls. And discussions within WP 3 (being responsible for "Building a Food System co-funding network and aligning funding strategies") clearly showed the importance of supporting those funded projects in their efforts to implement a systems approach and to achieve impactful results. The aim of task 3.4 therefore was to set up a catalogue of support measures (e.g. trainings, webinars, networking events, and policy activities) emphasising systems approaches and fostering desired community building, capacity building and creating commitment to the FutureFoodS Partnership.

With the help of a survey, the following points should be examined and recommendations for future projects derived/summarized:

- What knowledge and skills are needed?
- What measures and supporting actions could/should be offered?
- What themes and which tools should get special attention?

#### Online survey

The online survey was open for around two months (begin February until 5 April) and targeted stakeholders involved in or around R&I projects - project partners (researchers) and managers of support measures. In the end, 50 participants from more than 21 countries (Europe and outside Europe) took part in the survey. Most of them belonged to one of the following groups: „primary sector“, „Processing/Engineering/Product design“, „Health and food safety“ and „Research Funding/ Research management/ management“. The survey was composed of 17 questions (open and closed-ended questions) which were grouped in four blocks „General Information“, „Area of work and experiences“, „Learning from past experiences“ and „Making wishes“. The aim of the first and second block was i. a. to actually find out more about those who filled out the questionnaire – in order to being better able to classify and judge their answers: 34 of the participants classified themselves as seniors, 23 of the respondents rated their knowledge about the food system as medium and 23 as high – so presenting a good balanced mix of participants.

#### Questions and results:

When being asked to choose three support measures being especially useful for capacity building, the participants decided for: „Networking/partnering events“ (40), „Training events“ (32) and „Study events“ (26). The top-3 skills and capacities needing the most attention according to the participants were: „Co-design, -creation, implementation“ (score 1,9 out of 3), „Multi-actor approach“ (score 1,9 out of 3) and „Multi-, Inter-, Transdisciplinarity“ (score 2,3 out of 3) .

The participants showed great commitment when filling out the questionnaire. Some of the open questions were answered in great detail, often with additional information, which resulted in overlaps between the individual open questions and made it possible to create a detailed list of practical DO's and DON'Ts. Surprisingly, many/most of these points can be considered as well known and yet they are not applied most of the time. This makes it all the more important to remember them regularly and then implement them deliberately.

#### Clustered recommendations for events and projects

- 1) Invite qualified experts (presenting novelties)
- 2) Ensure good quality of speakers/facilitators
- 3) Foster peer to peer learning
- 4) Be aware of language and cultural barriers → and work on good solutions (Translation)
- 5) Ensure stakeholder motivation → „Passive participation does not achieve the goal“
- 6) Foster collaboration/involvement (of stakeholders) → stakeholder have to feel engaged and respected
- 7) Well prepared projects /events demand a lot of work; clear guidelines are very important, but this pays off

- 8) Build up trust → and invest in relationships and follow up
- 9) Ensure transparency and honesty (in project and event)
- 10) Ensure time for networking, coffee breaks and social settings
- 11) Enable networking possibilities
- 12) Schedule site visits and field trips -> to foster long-term networking and engagement of participants
- 13) Arrange upskilling activities and hands on exercises → have impact → foster motivation, interest, engagement
- 14) Provide settings for equality (equality of participants / stakeholders)
- 15) Give every participant/stakeholder the possibility to speak up
- 16) Don't turn capacity building into a lecture → Foster knowledge exchange instead of one-sided knowledge transfer

The participants also provided many examples of well-designed capacity building events and also cited methods, tools and gimmicks making events more lively – which together with other survey results were presented during the 6<sup>th</sup> Funders Forum on April 23/24, 2024 (see website [Link](#)).

### Work in progress

The creation of a leaflet with the most important results and recommendations coming out of the survey is momentarily projected.

## 5. Conclusions and follow-up work for FutureFoodS

Since the beginning of FOODPathS WP3 has worked on aligning people and strategies for co-funding in light of a systems approach. Sharing of information, ideas, concepts was important, but more than that, promoting an active exchange among all actors involved in the funding cycle revealed to be an essential ingredient. Looking at good examples and practices helped to understand what needs to be changed and how to transform our way of funding R&I using a food systems approach.

The following main conclusions can be drawn for the 3 focus areas used to cluster results of WP3:

### Focus A: Programming and alignment of actors, priorities and objectives

Aligning actors, priorities, and objectives through a shared food systems approach is key to effective programming and funding. Ongoing collaboration between funding bodies, researchers, and stakeholders highlights the need to adjust funding priorities for real-world implementation, focusing on high-impact areas. However, resistance must be considered also when implementing changes to the R&I funding cycle. Mutual learning at the European level can help reshape funding strategies, and Horizon Europe's 10-year Partnership instrument offers a valuable opportunity to ensure long-term impact through coherent and flexible portfolio management, focusing on sustainable outcomes and inclusiveness.

### Focus B: Funding

By systematically analysing various calls, the following targeted recommendations were formulated to steer the design of future funding activities in the HEU FutureFoodS partnership.

- 1) Provide a definition of systems approach or a clear explanation of what is meant;
- 2) Be mindful and consistent with terminology, e.g. when using typical elements of a systems approach such as multi-/inter-/transdisciplinarity;
- 3) Cross-disciplinarity, stakeholder engagement, and multi-actor approach are highly de-manded and also of great relevance for a systems approach call; think about where and how to ask for these aspects and consider the differences between the concepts;
- 4) When applying a systems approach it is important to consider both synergies and trade-offs;



- 5) Think about how impact shall be achieved by the projects, how the food systems approach contributes to impact and provides guidance and support towards applicants;
- 6) What additions to the proposals are sensible and what shall they contain (e.g. impact plan, Dissemination Exploitation and Communication plan, stakeholder engagement plan, implementation/valorisation plan etc.); adapt to the systems approach and consider also follow-up and adjustments over time (revisiting the plan);
- 7) Networking activities facilitated at programme level can be valuable to align and/or collaborate with other projects or programmes but they need to be backed up with dedicated resources (they might even be a necessity for co-design and co-creation);
- 8) Be open to new funding instruments beyond classical projects (e.g. knowledge hubs) to create mechanisms for fostering connectivity, co-creation and inclusiveness.

Besides the co-fund instrument (transnational funding scheme), there are other funding instruments and call types which should be kept in mind in order to find an ideal way of supporting food systems R&I.

Evaluation of proposals is a critical step in a funding scheme and therefore, many discussions were held around the topic. Essentially, the evaluation, both in the constitution of the expert panel as well as in the criteria setting, needs to be aligned with the objectives that are specific for a systems approach. Thereby, inter- and transdisciplinary research will need to be evaluated by inter- and transdisciplinary expert panels. Combining scientific excellence of experts, understanding of systems thinking and transformation and at the same time having a diversity of actors, from academia, industry and other relevant stakeholder groups involved, is an extensive exercise. Clearly, the evaluators need to be guided and trained to come up to the challenge as well.

### Focus C: Funded projects

The main goal of funding activities is to generate knowledge through R&I projects, which bring strategic priorities and objectives to life. WP3 focused on understanding how project leaders experience systems approaches and cross-disciplinarity, as well as investigating how projects should ideally be supported.

A 4-step recommendation towards how to tackle food systems approach when designing a R&I project was established in co-creation with project leaders:

- 1) Depicting a Food System from an overall perspective.
- 2) Defining the relevant sub-system, which the project will address in its activities.
- 3) Defining the scientific disciplines required to cover the R&I aspects of the sub-system and ensure they work in inter-disciplinary collaboration across the nodes of the sub-system – according to the aim of the call topic.
- 4) Identifying the stakeholder types relevant for the sub-system and ensure representation in consortium.

A survey with researchers and research managers identified support measures for capacity and community building with a focus on systems approaches. The top 3 skills that need to be strengthened were: *Co-design, -creation, implementation*, *„Multi-actor approach“* and *„Multi-, Inter-, Transdisciplinarity“*. A catalogue of support measures will be made available in form of a leaflet.

# Annex I – Summary of the systematic analysis of calls

The full report with all Annexes is available on the FOODPathS website: xxx.

## SUMMARY of the SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS OF CALLS

### Content:

Introduction and aim of analysis

Methodology

Selection of calls

Analytical Framework

Quantitative overview

Highlighted findings (qualitative reflections)

- a) Descriptions of SA
- b) Cross-disciplinary approach
- c) Inclusiveness
- d) Multi-actor approach
- e) Geographical scale and widening
- f) Synergies and trade-offs
- g) Theory of Change/Transformation
- h) Stakeholder engagement
- i) Networking activities
- j) Dissemination, Exploitation and Communication
- k) Evaluation of SA

Takeaways for future calls

### Introduction and aim of analysis

The report was a first step aiming to document a larger research and analysis activity on the integration of the food systems approach in the HEU Partnership call mechanism, with a particular view towards the HEU FutureFoodS Partnership. Seven partners from seven countries were involved in the analysis and they represent the networks of:

- Eastern European network (BIOEAST; partner IRWIR PAN),
- ERA-Nets (CORE Organic and SUSFOOD2; partners AU-ICROFS and FZJ),
- Joint Programming Initiative a Healthy Diet for a Healthy Life (HDHL; partner ZonMW),
- Philanthropic organisations (Cariplo Foundation and Philea; partners Cariplo and Philea),
- Regional actors (ERIAFF network of regions; partner SeAMK).

### Methodology

The overall aim of the present analysis was to develop recommendations on how to implement a food systems approach in future calls. To do so, the analysis was conducted by looking at good examples and lessons learned from European Joint Programming with established transnational calls in ERA-NETs, JPIs and other types of funding mechanisms. Thereby, the knowledge and information produced over two decades of implementation of transnational Research and Innovation (R&I) calls supported the WP3 team in the selection of cases and the analytical framework setting the basis for the systematic analysis performed.



The analysis aligns with the definitions of food systems used in the Sustainable Food Systems Partnership for People, Planet and Climate's SRIA<sup>1</sup>. In the SRIA, the food system is defined as:

*"(...) a system that embraces all elements (environment, people, inputs, processes, infrastructure, institutions, and power relations, markets and trade) and activities that relate to production, processing, distribution and marketing, preparation and consumption of food. A systems approach acknowledges the interactions between natural resources/ecosystems services, primary food production (farming, aquaculture and fishery), food processing, packaging, logistics, marketing, retail, food services, food consumption and waste management/recycling and the many feedback loops between them, which together defines the degree of complexity" (Sustainable Food Systems Partnership for People, Planet and Climate's SRIA, p. 14).*

## Selection of calls

21 calls were selected as good or interesting examples and these calls represent various funding programmes and topics. The selected calls primarily cover Horizon 2020 and Horizon Europe Framework Programme periods, widely ranging from ERA-NET Cofunds, Art.185 initiatives, regional, national and European Partnership funding schemes. The selected calls involve a diverse range of funders ranging from national and regional public funders, private sector actors, foundations and philanthropic organisations, and the European Commission as co-funder in some instances. This diversity enables the assessment of potential variations in approaches based on the type of call mechanism.

Calls with transnational character were prioritised in the selection process in order to enable direct links and relevance for the targeted transnational programme of the co-funded Partnership 'FutureFoodS' under Horizon Europe. The majority of the selected calls focus on food and farming systems, however, some calls with topics on water issues (JPI Water 2018 and PS Sustainable Blue Economy) and urban studies (PS DUT 2023 and ERA-NET SINO-EUROPEAN CALL 2022) were also included. While these calls do not directly focus on food and farming, they still utilise systemic features that are relevant to the analysis.

See Annex 1 of full report for detailed information about the different funding and geographical scales of the selected calls.

List of analysed calls and their basic typologies:

No	Call abbreviation	Call full title	Type of call
1	<b>ERA-NET Circularity Call 2021</b>	2021 JOINT CALL ERA-NET Cofund SusAn, FACCE ERA-GAS, ICT-AGRI-FOOD and SusCrop	ERA-Net schemes (with or without co-funding)
2	<b>ERA-NET CO 2021</b>	CORE Organic Cofund Third Call 2021	ERA-Net schemes (with or without co-funding)
3	<b>ERA-NET HDHL Knowledge Hub 2019</b>	ERA-HDHL Call: Knowledge Hub on Food and Nutrition Security	ERA-Net schemes (with or without co-funding)
4	<b>ERA-NET SF-CO 2019</b>	SUSFOOD2-CORE Organic Joint Call 2019	ERA-Net schemes (with or without co-funding)
5	<b>ERA-NET SF-FOSC 2021</b>	SUSFOOD2-FOSC joint call 2021	ERA-Net schemes (with or without co-funding)
6	<b>ERA-NET SINO-EUROPEAN CALL 2022</b>	Europe-China Joint Call, Joint Programming Initiative (JPI) Urban Europe	ERA-Net schemes (with or without co-funding)
7	<b>Food-Water-Energy Nexus 2017</b>	Sustainable Urbanisation Global Initiative (SuGi) – Food-Water-Energy Nexus, Belmont Forum and the Joint Programming Initiative (JPI) Urban Europe	ERA-Net schemes (with or without co-funding)

<sup>1</sup> [https://scar-europe.org/images/FOOD/Main\\_actions/SFS\\_Partnership\\_SRIA\\_31012023.pdf](https://scar-europe.org/images/FOOD/Main_actions/SFS_Partnership_SRIA_31012023.pdf)

8	<b>HEU Citizens' science</b>	Citizens' science as an opportunity to foster the transition to sustainable food systems	HEU Framework Programme
9	<b>HEU Environmental impacts</b>	Environmental impacts of food systems	HEU Framework Programme
10	<b>HEU FOODITY 2023</b>	FOODITY – Open Call #1	HEU Framework Programme
11	<b>HEU TITAN 2023</b>	TITAN Open Call	HEU Framework Programme
12	<b>Interreg Aurora</b>	(Interreg VI-A) Sweden-Finland-Norway (AURORA)	Regional focus
13	<b>Interreg Baltic Sea</b>	Interreg Baltic Sea Region	Regional focus
14	<b>JPI Water 2018</b>	Water JPI 2018 Joint Call	ERA-Net schemes (co-funded and free)
15	<b>NATIONAL Agropolis 2020</b>	Agropolis Foundation 2020 Call for Proposals	Foundations
16	<b>NATIONAL Foody Zero Sprechi 2021</b>	Foody Zero Sprechi 2021	Foundations
17	<b>PS BioDivMon 2022</b>	Biodiversa+ Partnership Call 2022	PS schemes, co-funded
18	<b>PS CBE JU 2023</b>	Circular Bio-based Europe Joint Undertaking Call	PS schemes, old formats (co-programmed)
19	<b>PS DUT 2023</b>	Driving Urban Transitions Call 2023	PS schemes, co-funded
20	<b>PS PRIMA 2023</b>	PRIMA Call 2023 Section 1	PS schemes, old formats (co-programmed)
21	<b>PS SBEP 2023</b>	2023 First Joint Transnational Co-Funded Call	PS schemes, co-funded

**Table 2:** Analysed calls and their basic typologies

## Analytical framework

A template was developed and used for the analysis of all 21 calls in order to ensure a systematic approach. The template includes systems approach-related categories that were developed based on the FutureFoodS partnerships' definition of a food system approach<sup>2</sup> as well as typical features used in societal impact-driven R&I programming and funding schemes. The template (Annex 1 of full report) was used to analyse call texts and ensured easy comparisons and alignment across the analytical output of each call.

The categories were developed by the working group through collaborative brainstorming sessions to identify characteristics relevant to a systems approach. During this process, three overarching themes emerged: 1) elements relevant to a systems approach, 2) implementation, and 3) call-specific features. The overarching themes and sub-categories for each theme were refined through consultation with the working group.

The **first theme** on elements relevant to a systems approach included sub-categories such as multi-actor approach, cross-disciplinarity, theory of change, synergies, and trade-offs. The sub-categories may indicate whether a systems approach is being utilised as well as what systems approach elements are prioritised in a given call.

The **second theme** regarding implementation of a systems approach, addresses how the calls are encouraging applicants to implement a systems approach in projects. This theme can be considered to cover different methodologies that may help projects to implement a systems approach. Sub-categories include stakeholder engagement, networking activities, and dissemination, exploitation, and communication (DEC).

The **third theme** on call-specific features includes sub-categories on evaluation criteria, uploading additional documents related to a systems approach, supportive actions for applicants and activities aligned with future

<sup>2</sup> Sustainable Food Systems Partnership for People, Planet and Climate ([scar-europe.org](https://scar-europe.org))

HEU partnerships. Information about evaluation criteria is especially important to understand how if at all, the systems approach elements are included as mandatory criteria.

This approach to the analysis provided a structured framework for analysing call mechanisms through the lens of a systems approach. By systematically analysing various calls, targeted recommendations can be formulated to steer the design of future funding activities in the HEU FutureFoodS partnership.

### Quantitative overview

All calls have been analysed using the template (Annex 2 of full report) and based on the findings, a quantitative overview of the occurrence of all categories was made.

Initially, it was observed, that 18 of the 21 calls mention specific objectives related to a SA. However, only in one-third of cases (8 of 21), SA was defined or explained. When a definition of SA was presented, it also had a mandatory character for applicants.

The following rough patterns were found:

- **Cross-disciplinarity** was the element with the highest incidence, occurring in all calls analysed and showing the strongest obligation, as cross-disciplinarity was mandatory in 19 of the analysed calls.
- **Inclusiveness, Synergies, Geographical balance/widening and multi-actor approach** occurred in 16 of the analysed calls. Among those, the multi-actor approach stood out as it was also frequently a mandatory criterion as it was mandatory in 14 of the analysed calls.
- **Co-creation, Theory of change/transformation and Trade-offs** occurred in more than half of the analysed calls.
- **Synergies and Trade-offs** are often used in combination as strongly interlinked aspects, however, it is obvious that synergy was much more commonly used than trade-offs. Synergies were mandatory in 11 calls and trade-offs were only mandatory in 6 calls.
- **Interconnections/connections/interlinkages** had the lowest occurrence and were identified in 11 of the analysed calls.
- **Stakeholder engagement** holds the “top position”, meaning it appears in all the analysed calls, where it was also mandatory in all cases (Figure 2).
- **Dissemination, Exploitation and Communication** were identified in 19 of the analysed calls and were also found to be highly mandatory.
- The need for **multiple levels or scales** occurs in a high number of cases but is less obligatory.
- Interestingly **Networking activities** are mentioned only in about half of the calls analysed and mostly do not have a mandatory character.

Calls	Definition of SA	Multi-actor-approach	Cross-disciplinarity	Geographical balance/widening	Inclusiveness	Theory of change/transformation	Interconnections/co-connections/interlinkages	Synergies	Trade-offs	Co-creation	Stakeholder engagement
ERA-NET SF-FOSC 2021	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mentioned	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mentioned	Mandatory
ERA-NET Circularity Call 2021	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mentioned	Mandatory	Mandatory
ERA-NET HDHL Knowledge Hub 2019	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mentioned	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mentioned	Mandatory	Mandatory
ERA-NET SINO-EUROPEAN CALL 2022	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
JPI Water 2018	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mentioned	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
ERA-NET SF-CO 2019	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mentioned	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
Food-Water-Energy Nexus 2017	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mentioned	Mentioned	Mandatory	Mandatory
ERA-NET CO 2021	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
Foody Zero Sprechi 2021	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mentioned	Mentioned	Mentioned	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
Agropolis 2020	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
HEU FOODITY 2023	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
HEU TITAN 2023	Mentioned	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
HEU Environmental impacts	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
HEU Citizens' science	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
PS SBEP 2023	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mentioned	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
PS BioDivMon 2022	Mandatory	Mentioned	Mandatory	Mentioned	Mentioned	Mandatory	Mentioned	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
PS DUT 2023	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory
PS PRIMA 2023	Mentioned	Mentioned	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mentioned	Mentioned	Mentioned	Mentioned	Mentioned	Mandatory
PS CBE JU 2023	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mentioned	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mentioned	Mentioned	Mandatory	Mandatory
Interreg Aurora	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mentioned	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mentioned	Mentioned	Mentioned	Mandatory
Interreg Baltic Sea	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mentioned	Mandatory	Mandatory	Mentioned	Mentioned	Mandatory	Mentioned	Mentioned	Mandatory

Mandatory
Mentioned
Not mentioned

Figure 1: Heatmap with overview of mentioned and mandatory categories

### Highlighted findings (qualitative reflections)

#### a) Descriptions of SA

In 18 of the 21 analysed calls, specific objectives relevant to a systems approach were identified, however, only in six of the analysed calls the systems approach was clearly explained/defined.

#### Calls with a definition of System Approach

Analysis of the call texts revealed that in fact detailed definitions (like the definition from the FutureFoodS<sup>3</sup> or the one mentioned in box 1) were not used in any of the calls analysed – but six call texts did include explanations of the concept "systems approach" or "systemic". The most relevant explanations for each call can be found in the filled-in templates (Annex 3 of full report).

<sup>3</sup> [https://scar-europe.org/images/FOOD/Main\\_actions/SFS\\_Partnership\\_SRIA\\_31012023.pdf](https://scar-europe.org/images/FOOD/Main_actions/SFS_Partnership_SRIA_31012023.pdf)



“A **systems approach** is understood as viewing a specific aspect (e.g. requiring more biofuel as energy source) as a component of a larger whole, having direct and indirect interactions with other, sometimes seemingly unrelated, aspects (e.g. land available for food production). This means that solving an issue in a particular sub-system should be approached with a ‘holistic’ perspective, taking account of possible trade-offs and feedback loops on other interconnected sub-systems”.<sup>4</sup>

**Box 1:** Example of detailed definition of "systems approach"

In the **ERA-NET SF-FOSC 2021** call text, applicants can read that with regard to the **systems approach** they should “(...) Consider interconnections, synergies or trade-offs between different aspects or actors that directly or indirectly affect your field of research on a systems level, considering all economic, environmental, social, legislative, geographical, behavioural, business and environment dimensions” (ERA-NET SF-FOSC 2021, p. 7). The **ERA-NET HDHL Knowledge Hub 2019 call** mentions a systemic approach and refers to Food 2030: „(...) The European Commission aims to tackle food and nutrition security (FNS) with research and innovation policies designed to future-proof food systems through a systemic approach referred to as FOOD2030.“ (ERA-NET HDHL Knowledge Hub 2019, p. 2). By referring to FOOD2030, the call equates the systems approach with that of FOOD2030 - without directly providing a concrete definition. The call text from **ERA-NET SF-CO 2019** contains several explanations concerning “food systems“, which is described as dealing with sustainability, challenges and involving parties/stakeholders. Overall, this helps the applicants to understand what is meant by “systems approach“. HEU TITAN 2023 and HEU Citizens' Science also provide definitions of what is considered to be a food system approach.

The call texts that do provide explanations of what a system approach is, give an impression of what the authors of the call text understand by a systems approach, which supports the applicants in developing strong proposals that utilise a systems approach.

**Calls with no description of food systems approach**

Seven of the analysed calls referred to or encouraged the applicants to utilise a systems approach or food systems approach without providing a clear description of a systems approach. However, when reading the calls texts, it is clear that the calls indeed do refer to elements that imply a systems approach.

In several calls, the applicants must address food systems, however, the call text does not describe the scope of food systems. Other calls mentioned that they align with the FOOD2030 priorities, which do offer more details about food systems on the FOOD2030 website. One call highlights that there is growing consensus that a food systems approach is needed to address the complexities of production and consumption, while there is still not included a definition of how this approach is understood.

The Food-Water-Energy nexus does not define what a systems approach is, however, the call’s nexus approach does offer a framework and tools for the analysis of complex systems in an urban context and acknowledges the importance of inter- and transdisciplinary approaches and the involvement of all relevant stakeholders. Applicants are also asked to consider possible risks, synergies and trade-offs associated with new innovative solutions.

All of the above-mentioned calls do mention elements associated with a systems approach in the call texts, such as multi-actor approach, cross-disciplinarity or synergies. This will be further elaborated on in the following sections.

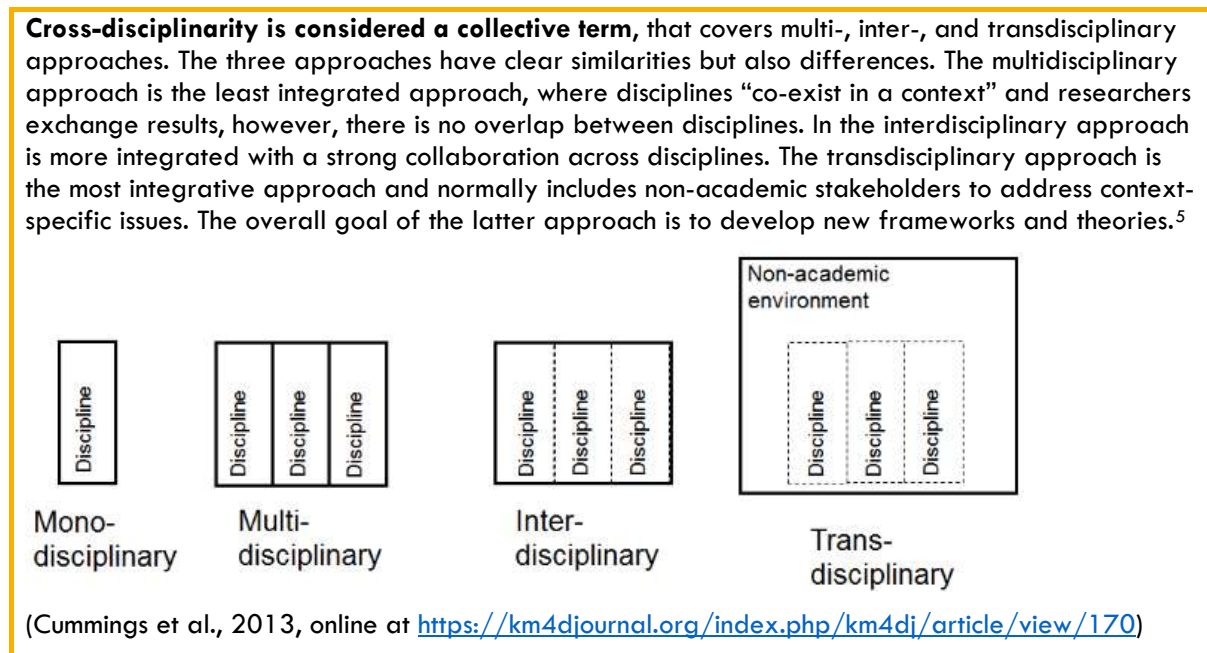
**No mention of food system or systems approach (9 calls)**

In nine of the analysed calls, a systems approach is never explicitly referred to or described, however, several characteristics and elements indicative of a systems approach are present in all the analysed calls. Some of the strong indicators of using systems thinking may include the use of a multi-actor approach, cross-disciplinarity, and stakeholder engagement. Even though these calls do not explicitly use a systems approach, they still implicitly use elements relevant to a systems approach or approaches that are similar to a systems approach. Therefore, the use of a systems approach may not be explicitly articulated, however, the calls might still demonstrate a commitment to use systems approach characteristics, such as interdisciplinary collaboration, interconnected dynamics, multi-actor approach and stakeholder engagement. These elements and their use are further elaborated in the following chapters.

**b) Cross-disciplinary approach**

<sup>4</sup> Towards a Sustainable Food System“, Group of Chief Scientific Advisors, Scientific Opinion No.8, Mar 2020

Cross-disciplinarity was identified in all analysed calls and it was mandatory in 19 of the calls that have been analysed (figure 2). Despite the high occurrence, the nature and importance of a cross-disciplinary approach varied across the analysed calls. The present analysis aligns with the definition in box 2.



Box 2: Definition of cross-disciplinarity

The **multi-disciplinary approach** is integrated into eight of the analysed calls. Overall, the need for a multi-disciplinary approach tends to be mentioned throughout the call text including e.g. introductory sections, scope, eligibility and thematic areas. It may also be highlighted as an element the applicants must consider in their project description.

Nine calls emphasise the need for an **inter-disciplinary approach**. In one example, all single-discipline projects are considered to be beyond the scope of the call and the applicant must address how an inter-disciplinary approach is used. However, no further description of what an inter-disciplinary approach is offered in the call text. Other cases also encourage the use of inter-disciplinary approaches but only elaborate to a limited extent on the reasons why this is important. The Food-Water-Energy Nexus 2017 call encourages the use of both inter- and trans-disciplinary approaches, which leaves some flexibility to the applicants to choose the most appropriate approach for the project.

Four of the analysed calls encourage applicants to do **trans-disciplinary research**. When trans-disciplinary research is encouraged, the calls generally also encourage strong collaboration with stakeholder and/or end-user groups. In the PS DUT 2023 call the need for trans-disciplinary research is highlighted in the scope of the call and in this regard, it is mentioned that co-production of knowledge in collaboration with relevant stakeholders is preferred.

Only one call used the collective term **cross-disciplinarity**, which was mentioned in a section on cross-cutting elements. By using the term cross-disciplinarity, the call leaves flexibility for the applicants to use the approach that they consider the most appropriate for their specific research topic.

### c) Inclusiveness

The concept of inclusiveness is integrated into the calls in various ways. The term inclusiveness can address a wide range of things and therefore the mention of inclusiveness in the analysed calls covers **gender balance, data sovereignty, stakeholder engagement and geographical inclusion**.

<sup>5</sup> Stock, P.; Burton, R.J.F. Defining Terms for Integrated (Multi-Inter-Trans-Disciplinary) Sustainability Research. Sustainability 2011, 3, 1090-1113. <https://doi.org/10.3390/su3081090>.



Several of the analysed calls emphasise that all project proposals must consider the **gender balance in the project**. Most of the calls that mention gender balance have integrated the gender balance into the evaluation criteria.

Some calls also have a specific emphasis on the inclusion of different geographical scales. This aspect is especially important in the regional programme calls.

A large range of calls also addresses the need for **inclusion of all relevant stakeholders** in various stages of the funded projects. Stakeholder engagement will be further addressed in section h on implementation of SA.

#### d) **Multi-actor approach**

Multi-actor approach (MAA) is a frequently identified SA element and was mentioned in 16 calls and was mandatory in 14 calls.

In the ERA-NET SF-FOSC 2021, ERA-NET SF-CO 2019 and ERA-NET CO 2021 calls, MAA is implemented in the description of the **scope and thematic focuses** of the calls, where MAA is highlighted as a central aim for the calls. In these cases, the MAA is also integrated into the project description, which the applicants must fill in. In the impact section of the proposal, the applicants must address the expected impact based on cross-cutting issues, which entails the use of a multi-actor, multi-disciplinary and systems approach, hence the applicants are prompted to address MAA when preparing the application.

Another approach to implementing the MAA in the call is to use MAA as part of the **eligibility criteria**, where some calls clearly define that projects without an MAA are ineligible for funding. In one case the applicants must describe their MAA in the methodology section of the proposal.

In several other calls, the MAA is integrated into the description of thematic areas or highlights the need for a diverse or multidisciplinary consortium.

#### e) **Geographical scale and widening**

Geographical scale and widening are mandatory in 13 of the 21 analysed calls, and it is also mentioned in a further three calls. However, all the calls that have been selected for analysis have a transnational character and all applications must therefore consider the geographical coverage of their projects. In several calls, the need for a transnational consortium is mentioned and encouraged, without further elaborating on the need or reasons to consider various geographies, territorialities, and scales. However, other calls do indeed ask the applicants to consider the project's geographical scales and contexts and widening efforts, in which case, the applicants must explicitly address the **added value of the transnational collaboration and/or geographical relevance** in the project description.

Other calls encourage applicants to consider issues that can be **upscaled or adjusted to other territorialities and broader contexts**.

The Interreg Aurora call and the Interreg Baltic Sea call both focus on specific regional contexts and the applicants must therefore work within a specific geographical context and address context-dependent issues to be successful.

#### f) **Synergies and trade-offs**

In food systems, the various parts of the systems are interconnected and interdependent, meaning that actions in one part of the system may result in synergies or trade-offs in other parts of the system. Therefore, it can be beneficial to consider potential synergies and trade-offs before initiating system changes. In the analysed call texts, synergies and trade-offs were often mentioned in conjunction with one another and were for instance mentioned in the overall scope and objective of the call or in suggested research areas. These calls encourage the applicants to consider how the projects affect and are affected by various synergies and trade-offs within the system. Other calls ask the applicants to consider synergy and trade-offs regarding specific thematic areas, however, by placing the concepts in relation to a specific thematic area, they play a less significant role in the call as some applicants may then decide not to pay strong attention to synergies and trade-offs.

In multiple cases, synergies were mentioned independently. When mentioned independently, the calls most often encourage synergy with existing initiatives, such as monitoring systems, research programmes and

projects or EU Missions. By specifying which initiatives the projects are expected to have synergy with, the call text nudges the applicant to develop projects based on certain frameworks or knowledge and thus ensures that projects are in line with specific desired methodologies and objectives. This also ensures that projects build upon existing knowledge, ultimately contributing to more comprehensive and impactful solutions within the broader landscape of food systems research.

### g) Theory of Change/Transformation

All the analysed calls are focusing on creating impactful research; therefore, all calls are intrinsically looking to create transformation and impact. In the analysis, calls with notable approaches or special focuses on transformative actions were highlighted. Two of the analysed calls used a theory of change approach in the application process. However, other interesting approaches and rationales also appeared in relation to the transformation.

In two of the analysed calls, the Theory of Change was the proposed framework to define and plan the impact pathway of the project. In both calls, applicants must upload an annex to the application about their theory of change, that consists of a problem analysis and includes a description of the problem and information on whose problem it is. Hereafter, the applicants must develop an impact pathway, which outlines the pathway from research to real-life impact. Both calls highlight, how the theory of change will be based on a myriad of assumptions, however, it does prompt the applicants to reflect on how the project will contribute to transforming existing systems.

Some drivers of transformation identified in other calls include consideration of transition pathways, UN sustainable development goals, the three dimensions of sustainability, transnational collaboration, innovations, consumer demands and addressing cross-cutting issues. In these cases, the applicants are expected to contribute to transformation based on the abovementioned principles.

### h) Stakeholder engagement

Stakeholder engagement is mandatory in all analysed calls, which makes stakeholder engagement the most frequent mandatory category. The stakeholder engagement tends to be presented in connection with other concepts or frameworks, e.g. cross-disciplinarity, multi-actor approach or communication and dissemination plans.

In some calls, stakeholder engagement plays a particularly strong role in the call text, where it has a prominent role from the onset of the call text and is included in e.g. the sections on scope, objectives, themes, proposal requirements, and project consortium. In some of the analysed calls, the applicants must or are encouraged to develop a stakeholder engagement plan as part of a communication and dissemination plan. By doing so, it is acknowledged, that it is vital that results are strongly communicated and disseminated to relevant stakeholder groups.

The BioDiverSa+ partnership, which has launched the PS BioDivMon 2022 call, has published a **stakeholder engagement handbook**<sup>6</sup>, which provides detailed information and guidelines on the importance of stakeholder engagement, identification of stakeholders when to engage with stakeholders, methods, planning, management of conflicts and monitoring/evaluation of stakeholder engagement. The handbook is a strong support mechanism which applicants can use to find resources and information on how to carry out robust stakeholder engagement.

In a few other calls, the need for stakeholder involvement is mentioned in connection to the call's requirement for a **multi-actor approach**, however, without specifying the differences between the multi-actor approach and stakeholder engagements. It can be favourable to consider differences between these two concepts in future call mechanisms.

### i) Networking activities

Networking activities were one of the lesser common categories identified in the calls, as networking activities are mandatory in only four calls and mentioned in another seven calls. However, despite being a less prevalent category, some calls do have good practices when it comes to networking activities. In the cases

<sup>6</sup> [stakeholder-engagement-handbook.pdf \(biodiversa.eu\)](https://stakeholder-engagement-handbook.pdf (biodiversa.eu))

where networking activities are mandatory, the time and budget for participation in networking activities must be integrated into the project proposal, hence the projects' participation will be financially supported. In some calls, the applicants are expected to carry out activities in collaboration with the specified funding programmes, networks or projects. A few other call texts also encourage **networking or training** although in a more sporadic and undefined way.

When incorporating networking activities in the call text, it nudges the applicants to consider synergies with programmes, projects, or other relevant initiatives. By implementing the networking activities in the call texts, the applicants are therefore guided to consider certain themes, perspectives, or approaches in order to be relevant to the programmes, projects or initiatives mentioned in the call text.

#### j) Dissemination, Exploitation and Communication

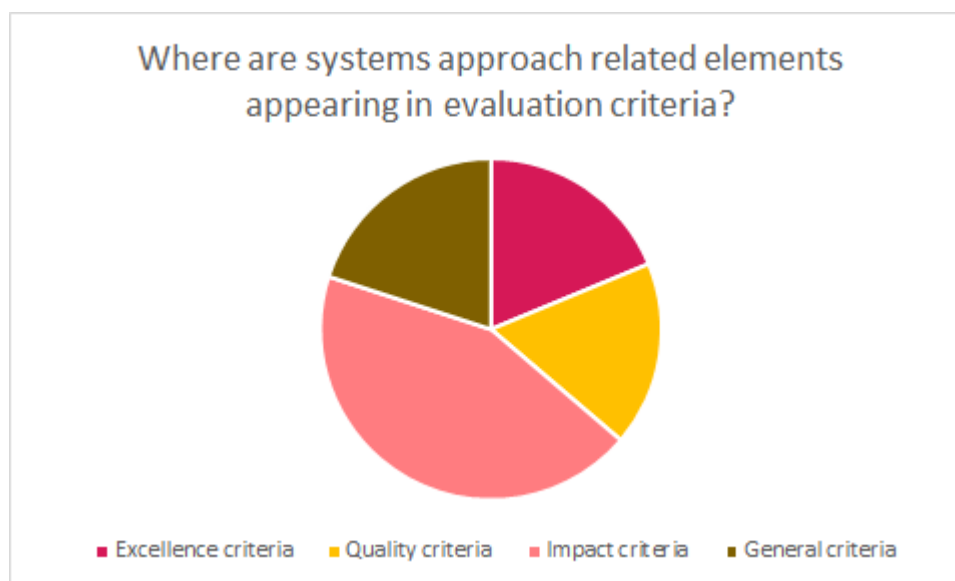
Dissemination, Exploitation, and Communication (DEC) are mentioned in 19 out of 21 calls and are mandatory in 15 calls, so overall, the DEC of project results are very well integrated into the current call mechanisms, however, there are slight differences in the characteristics and focus of the DEC.

In some of the calls, the DEC aspects are mentioned in relation to **impact**, e.g. where the DEC must be explicitly addressed and targeted to society and relevant stakeholders to ease the implementation, outreach and/or **transfer of results to end users**. Two of the analysed calls utilise a theory of change approach as part of their impact framework for applicants. In these two cases, the applicants must include a communication strategy in their impact pathway, that addresses which **engagement dialogues** are foreseen, how **results will be presented** and **whose responsibility** it is. In two other cases, it is required to integrate a business plan, which outlines the projects' target groups for its DEC plan. Other calls indicate that the DEC of the project must happen in **synergy and coordination with existing initiatives** such as knowledge platforms and joint events in order to exchange results and foster collaboration across projects and relevant initiatives.

#### k) Evaluation of SA

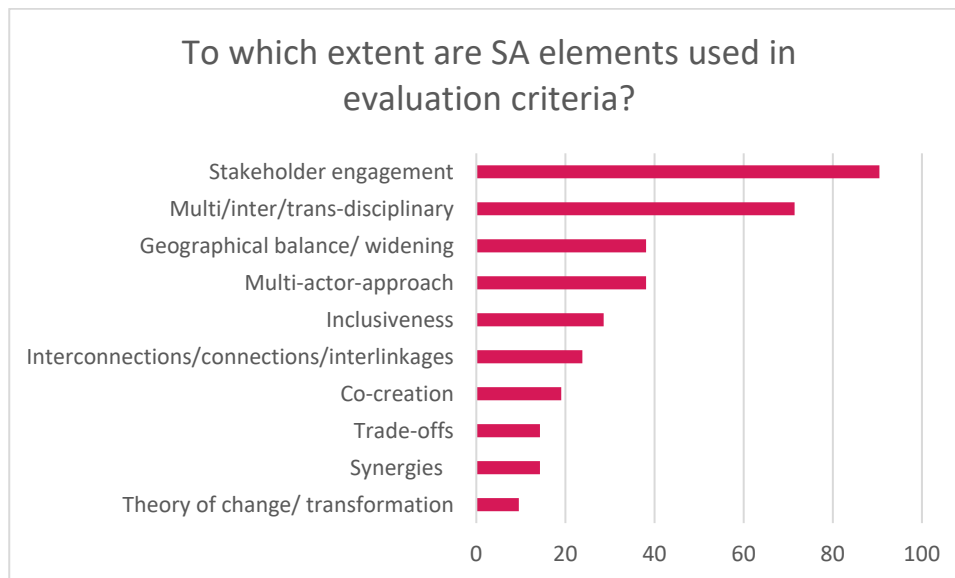
All the analysed calls use evaluation criteria in order to assess the quality of proposals and for comparison and selection of projects to be funded. Thus, evaluation criteria have a guiding role and are of high importance for both funders and researchers. In the quantitative overview (above) it is highlighted which elements were mandatory, which means that in those cases they were often part of the evaluation criteria.

The evaluation criteria relevant to SA appear in multiple criterion types, e.g. on general criteria, and criteria on excellence, quality of implementation and impact. Most often they are found under the impact criterion (see Figure 3). However, seven of the 21 calls use general criteria, meaning that those are not using the typical categories of excellence, quality of implementation and impact.



**Figure 2:** Systems approach-related evaluation criteria

Some of the analysed calls use the systems approach very prominently in their evaluation and five calls use the wording “systems approach“ or “systemic“ directly in their evaluation criteria. All of these five calls use the impact criterion when referring to the systems approach. The remaining 16 calls which were analysed also take SA criteria into account, but they refer to single elements that are related to a SA, such as multi-actor approach, synergies, stakeholder engagement etc.



**Figure 3:** Frequency of SA elements in evaluation criteria

The element of stakeholder engagement is most often used in the evaluation criteria and in the analysed calls it is found to be integrated into criteria such as impact, general criteria, and excellence (in the order of magnitude).

Also strongly present in the evaluation criteria is cross-disciplinarity, which is used mainly under the excellence criteria. In some cases, it is used in more than one criterion, namely under excellence and quality. Surprisingly it is not commonly found under the impact criterion. This picture is similar to the multi-actor approach, which appears in about 40% of call cases as a relevant criterion for the evaluation of excellence and quality. Interestingly, the multi-actor approach is very often applied in calls which use general criteria.

Evaluation of the elements Theory of change, interconnections, synergies, and trade-offs do only appear in the impact criterion and are used to a lower extent i.e. in less than 20% of the analysed calls.

### Takeaways for future calls

Based on the present analysis, future calls take the following recommendations into account when preparing calls for applications that use a food systems approach.

**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. Provide a definition of systems approach or a clear explanation of what is meant;
2. Be mindful and consistent with terminology, e.g. when using typical elements of a systems approach such as multi-/inter-/transdisciplinarity;
3. Cross-disciplinarity, stakeholder engagement, and multi-actor approach are highly demanded and also of great relevance for a systems approach call; think about where and how to ask for these aspects and consider the differences between the concepts;
4. When applying a systems approach it is important to consider both synergies and trade-offs;
5. Think about how impact shall be achieved by the projects, how the food systems approach contributes to impact and provides guidance and support towards applicants;
6. What additions to the proposals are sensible and what shall they contain (e.g. impact plan, DEC plan, stakeholder engagement plan, implementation/valorisation plan etc.); adapt to the systems approach and consider also follow-up and adjustments over time (revisiting the plan);
7. Networking activities facilitated at programme level can be valuable to align and/or collaborate with other projects or programmes but they need to be backed up with dedicated resources (they might even be a necessity for co-design and co-creation);
8. Be open to new funding instruments beyond classical projects (e.g. knowledge hubs) to create mechanisms for fostering connectivity, co-creation and inclusiveness.



## Annex II – Programmes of Funders Forum events (N°3-6)



**ERIAFF Food System – Working Group meeting**  
**in co-operation with**  
**FOODPathS Horizon EU project**

22<sup>nd</sup> of May 2023, 16 – 18.30 CET, Bolzano, Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, Universitätsplatz 1

**“How regional expertise and needs could influence to  
 the future of sustainable food systems in Europe”**

**Preliminary agenda:**

Time	Description
16	Welcome
16.15	Introduction to workshop: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regions as changemakers for the food system transformation in Europe, <i>guest speaker Wouter Spek, Director, EuroBioForum Foundation, T.I.B development</i></li> </ul>
16.45	Workshops <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Small pre-task will be given to registered participants</li> <li>Finger food &amp; drinks served during workshop</li> </ul>
17.45	Feedback from workshops & discussion
18.30	Conclusions

Registration by 7<sup>th</sup> of May, link: <https://link.webropolsurveys.com/EP/EB2EF7513A57102A>

Note! Participation can be reimbursed for one participant/region, max 500 €. For further information, please, contact: [terhi.junkkari@seamk.fi](mailto:terhi.junkkari@seamk.fi)




Funded by  
the European Union

**Our partners**



**Our networks**



**FOODPathS** is a project funded by the European Commission that aims to offer a concrete pathway and necessary tools to support the establishment of the European Partnership for Sustainable Food Systems for People, Planet & Climate, to be launched in 2024 based on the experience gained during the project's lifetime. To ensure all voices are heard, the project engages actors from across the food system to create the framework in which the Partnership will operate.

## FoodPathS Funders Forum

12<sup>th</sup> of September 2023, 09:30 – 12:00 CET,  
Brussels

Online webinar

### Objectives

- Get an overview from different actors (i.e. European Commission Directorate General for Research, FOODPathS coordinator and partners) of the objectives, process towards the Sustainable Food Systems Partnership (SFSP) and the impact foreseen.
- Explore the options and for a foundation to being part of the process and potentially the SFS Partnership.
- Share info on FOODPathS activities and results and how foundations can get involved.

### What can we offer you as a participant?

- Update about the Sustainable Food Systems Partnership as an emerging instrument aimed at accelerating the transition preparations.
- Discuss with FOODPathS partners and EC representatives how the philanthropic sector could contribute and benefit from this new instrument.
- Interactive Q&A session.

### Link to join the webinar

<https://us06web.zoom.us/j/87523261218>

Meeting ID: 875 2326 1218

Please note that the webinar will be recorded to provide an opportunity for those philanthropic funders unable to attend on the day of the event.



## Agenda

Time	Description	Facilitator/presenter
09:30	<b>Opening and introduction</b>	Ilaria D'Auria, Head of Programmes, Philea  Carlo Mango, Director of the Scientific Research Department of Fondazione Cariplo;  Nikola Hassan, Scientific Officer, Project management Juelich
09:45	<b>Getting to know each other: who is on the call?</b>	Giulia Lombardi, Senior Programme manager, Philea
10:00	<b>Interrelation between FOODPathS and the Sustainable Food Systems Partnership (SFSP)</b>	Hugo de Vries, Research Director, French National Research Institute (INRAE)
10:20	<b>Questions for clarification</b>	
10:30	<b>The Sustainable Food Systems Partnership (SFSP)</b>	Daniela Lüth, Policy Officer, DG Research and Innovation, Unit 'Bioeconomy & Food Systems'
10:50	<b>Questions for clarification</b>	
11:00	<b>Break</b>	
11:10	<b>Zoom -in: Sustainable Food Systems Partnership Consortium</b>	Gilles Feron, Scientific Officer, French National Research Agency (ANR)  Jasmina van Driel, The Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development
11:30	<b>Questions for clarification</b>	
11:40	<b>Discussion round</b>	Valentina Amorese, Programme officer, Research Department, Fondazione Cariplo
11:55	<b>Closing session</b>	Jasmina van Driel, Programme Manager, The Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development  Giulia Lombardi, Programme manager at Philea
12:00	<b>End of the webinar</b>	

## About FOODPathS

The Coordination and Support Action (CSA) FOODPathS (Co-creating the prototype 'Safe and Sustainable FOOD Systems PARtnersHip'), executed by a consortium of 17 organizations under the coordination of INRAE, aims to prepare the ground for the future European Partnership on Sustainable Food Systems (SFS). More concretely, FOODPathS aims at working on the prototype of the future Partnership, including the co-design of a European Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda – SRIA, its governance model, modus operandi, research-innovation-policy-education interfaces, etc.

More information is available at: <https://www.foodpaths.eu/about/#project>

## About the Partnership for Sustainable Food Systems (SFS)

The 'Partnership for Sustainable Food Systems (SFS) for people, planet, and climate,' which will be launched in 2024 and will receive an estimated €175 million of funding from the European Commission. The Partnership is meant to undertake challenges via co-funded R&I projects and strategies promoting systemic approaches in collaboration with private and public partners. Activities foreseen are: joint funding of R&I for food systems transformation/ Pooling R&I resources and programming; the launch of a food systems observatory; the establishment of a food systems knowledge hub while supporting knowledge sharing and scaling, adapting knowledge systems, innovations platforms and science policy interfaces; competence building/education, including scientific advice for policymaking.

## Participants List (in order of registration, last update 11.09.2023)

Name	Surname	Position	Organisation
Hugo	de Vries	Research director	French national research institute (INRAE) *
Daniela	Lüth	Policy Officer	European Commission
Gilles	Feron	Scientific Officer in charge of the in charge of the coordination of FutureFoodS	French National Research Agency (ANR) *
Jasmina	van Driel	Program Manager / Deputy Coordinator	The Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development (ZonMw) *
Bernadette	Conrads	Program Officer	The Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development (ZonMw) *

Carine	Karailiev	Director	Agropolis Foundation
Ilaria	D'Auria	Head of Programmes	Philanthropy Europe Association – Philea
Alina	Shenfeldt	Membership & Foresight	Philanthropy Europe Association – Philea
Daniele	Messina	Head of Programs	Fondazione Monte dei Paschi di Siena
Julia	Hug	Programme Manager	IKEA Foundation
Mette Damgaard	Nielsen	Scientific Manager	Novo Nordisk Foundation
Valentina	Amorese	Research Officer	Fondazione Cariplo
Carlo	Mango	Director of the Scientific Research Department	Fondazione Cariplo
Sandra	Khusrawi	Grant management and networks Europe	Famtaistisch Foundation
Mine Silje	Sanddal Lindemann		International Center for Research in Organic Food Systems *
Michal	Hetmanski	CEO & Co-founder	Instrat
Maria Teresa	Buco	Public Affairs Manager	Novo Nordisk Foundation
Antonella	Piccolella	Institutional Affairs Officer	Fondazione CON IL SUD
Frank	Hensgen	Project Manager	Project management Juelich *
Benedikt	Haerlin	Director Berlin Office	Foundation on Future Farming
Nikola	Hassan	Scientific Officer	Project management Juelich *
Marco	Cuce	Programme Officer- Climate Collaborations	Philanthropy Europe Association – Philea
Giulia	Lombardi	Senior Programme Manager – Climate Collaborations	Philanthropy Europe Association - Philea

\* Not a foundation, members of the FOODPathS work package 3

## Who are “we”?

We are the FOODPathS Work Package 3 team. Through the engagement of stakeholders across food systems, the FOODPathS project will create a “Prototype” of how the future Sustainable Food Systems Partnership could operate. Specifically Work Package 3 is focused on co-creating future funding mechanisms and strategies that can maximise the impact of Research and Innovation towards SFS by gathering experiences and expertise of a diverse group of funders. The following organisations and networks are represented in Work Package 3:

Name	Representatives	Type of Organisation	Country
Aarhus University - International Centre for Research in Organic Food Systems (AU-ICROFS) / representing CORE Organic network	Ivana Trkulja Merete Studnitz	Research Organisation	Denmark
Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio Delle Province Lombardie (Cariplo)	Valentina Amorese	Philanthropic Organisation	Italy
Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IRWIR PAN) / representing BIOEAST	Barbara Wieliczko Aleksandra Pawłowska Pawel Chmielinski	Research Organisation	Poland
Philanthropy Europe Association (Philea)	Giulia Lombardi Marco Cuce'	Philanthropic Organisation	Belgium
Research Center Jülich (FZJ)/ representing SUSFOOD2 network	Nikola Hassan Frank Hensgen	Research Organisation	Germany
Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences (SeAMK) / representing ERIAFF network of regions	Terhi Junkkari Karri Kallio	Higher Education	Finland
The Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development (ZonMw) / representing Joint Programming Initiative a Healthy Diet for a Healthy Life (JPI HDHL)	Jasmina van Driel Bernadette Conrads	Funding Organisation	Netherlands

# Programme Special edition FOODPathS Funders and Stakeholders Forum

10<sup>th</sup> of October 2023, 14:00 – 16:45 CEST, Brussels

Location: Graaf de Ferraris building, Koning Albert II Laan 20, 1000 Brussels

Participants from national funding agencies, Ministries of Health, Ministries of Food and Agriculture, HDHL Scientific Advisory Board members and HDHL Stakeholder Advisory Board members

## Objectives

- To obtain input from funders, academia and stakeholders from the health sector for improving funding approaches to better address food systems challenges
- To “test” and explore funding approaches for food systems topics that combine health and sustainability

## What can we offer you as a participant?

- Inspiring exchanges with different stakeholders (funding, academic and health sector organisations) on funding approaches and on changing the funding landscape towards better supporting food systems oriented research trajectories
- Co-creating future Food Systems oriented funding modes, that combine health and sustainability
- A way to provide ideas and input for the future SFS Partnership through FOODPathS

## What do we need from you as a participant?

- Your expertise and experience with regard to R&I programming, funding practices, systems oriented research projects and stakeholder participation
- Willingness and openness to exchange and explore out-of-the-box approaches and ideas

Item no.	Time	Description
1	14:00 – 14:05	<b>Setting the scene – Why are we here?</b>
2	14:05 – 14:10	<b>Energiser – Complexity of a System and its moving parts</b>
3	14:10 - 14:15	<b>The relation between FOODPathS and the SFS Partnership/FutureFoodS</b>
4	14:15 - 14:25	<b>Zooming into the work of WP3 of FOODPathS – Funders Network, FS approach and Funders Fora</b>
5	14:25 - 14:35	<b>Questions for clarification</b>
6	14:35 - 16:00 15:20 – 15:30 break	<p><b>Interactive group work</b></p> <p>Imagine we are in 2033 (future in 10 years). The Partnership SFS has been a great success and R&amp;I played an important role to enable the transformation of our Food Systems to be sustainable, healthy, fair and resilient and supporting a healthy and thriving European population.</p> <p><b>Question to be addressed during the group work:</b></p> <p><b>What should research funding approaches look like to address real life food systems challenges – keeping in mind the overarching framework of a food systems approach and thinking about:</b></p> <p>1) The research approach level (what kind of research approaches do we need i.e. “classic research” projects, knowledge hubs, working groups, living/policy labs) – combining health and sustainability</p> <p>2) the impact of the project in science, policy and practice/society/real life as well as in the health and sustainable food domains</p> <p>In order to make the discussion more practical and clear, participants are asked to bring examples from their work or life related to food systems and in which health and sustainability come together (or should and do not yet perhaps).</p> <p>Step out of your comfort zone, envisage the ideal world, let your creativity flow and take the opportunity to co-create the future Sustainable Food Systems Partnership</p>
6	16:00 - 16:30	<b>Groups sharing outcomes of their group work (5 minutes each) and room for questions and discussion</b>
7	16:30 - 16:45	<b>Rounding up and next steps</b>

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<b>Institute of Rural and Agricultural Development of the Polish Academy of Sciences (IRWIR PAN) / representing BIOEAST</b>	Barbara Wieliczko Aleksandra Pawłowska Pawel Chmielinski	Research Organisation	Poland
<b>Philanthropy Europe Association (Philea)</b>	Giulia Lombardi	Philanthropic Organisation	Belgium
<b>Research Center Jülich (FZJ)/ representing SUSFOOD2 network</b>	Nikola Hassan Frank Hensgen	Research Organisation	Germany
<b>Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences (SeAMK) / representing ERIAFF network of regions</b>	Terhi Junkkari Karri Kallio	Higher Education	Finland
<b>The Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development (ZonMw) / representing Joint Programming Initiative a Healthy Diet for a Healthy Life (JPI HDHL)</b>	Jasmina van Driel Bernadette Conrads	Funding Organisation	Netherlands

## Programme 6<sup>th</sup> Funders Forum

**23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of April 2024, lunch-to-lunch, Brussels\***

**Location:** Representation of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia to the European Union,  
[Rue Montoyer 47, 1000 Bruxelles](#), Belgium

### Registration link:

[https://de.surveymonkey.com/r/Registration\\_Funder\\_Forum\\_23\\_24\\_April\\_2024\\_FOODPathS](https://de.surveymonkey.com/r/Registration_Funder_Forum_23_24_April_2024_FOODPathS)

\*The plenary parts of the programme will be livestreamed (marked in green are interactive sessions with no streaming) through the following link:

<https://zomnw.zoom.us/j/97436941197?pwd=U090V04xT3VGaTNQNIJ3ZIRUL1MxZz09>

Meeting-ID: 974 3694 1197

Password: 20Gs=Vwr

## Objectives

- To explore and co-create practical mechanisms for implementing Food Systems Approaches in the funding cycle (from call to project and back)
- To help shape the future calls of the Horizon Europe Sustainable Food Systems Partnership "FutureFoodS"

## What can we offer you as a participant?

- Updates from the FutureFoodS Partnership preparations, FOODPathS and the EC
- Learning and insights from past R&I calls and projects regarding a Food Systems Approach
- Inspiring interactions and co-creating future Food Systems oriented funding modes

## What do we need from you as a participant?

- Your expertise and experience with regard to funding and implementation practices and Food Systems approaches
- Examples (from all scales: regional/national/EU/international) of how Food Systems transition can be supported through transnational R&I funding
- Willingness and openness to exchange on what worked and also what did not work

Please note that reimbursement of travel costs is possible for [partners of FOODPathS associated networks!](#)



<b>TUESDAY, 23 April</b>		
<b>12:30-13:30</b>	<b>Welcome and light lunch</b>	
<b>13:30-14:30</b>	<b>SESSION 1: Introductions and updates</b>	
13:30-13:40	Welcome and introduction to the event	Nikola Hassan, FZJ
13:40- 13:45	Update from FoodPathS project	Hugo de Vries, coordinator FOODPathS, INRAE
13:45-13:55	Update from Partnership FutureFoodS	Claude Yven, FutureFoodS coordination, ANR
13:55-14:05	Update from the European Commission	Daniela Lüth, DG RTD
14:05-14:20	Q&A	
<b>14:20-15:00</b>	<b>SESSION 2: SETTING THE SCENE TOWARDS A FOOD SYSTEMS APPROACH</b>	
14:20-14:35	Intro: What is a food systems approach?	Jasmina van Driel, HDHL/ZonMw
14:35-14:50	Keynote: “Transdisciplinary R&I for food systems transformation”	Jacqueline Broerse, VU
14:50-15:00	Q&A	
<b>15:00-15:30</b>	<b>COFFEE and TEA</b>	
<b>15:30-17:30</b>	<b>SESSION 3: SYSTEMS APPROACH IN R&amp;I FUNDING (Call perspective)</b>	
15:30-15:40	Presenting FoodPathS work on systems approach in funding (WP3)	Nikola Hassan, FZJ
15:40-16:00	FOODPathS analysis of transnational calls: insights and lessons on systems approach integration	Mine Lindemann, AU/ICROFS
16:00-16:15	Q&A	
16:15-17:30	INTERACTIVE SESSION with smaller groups focusing on the call level to discuss findings, test and validate, participants to bring in their own experiences	Participants present in person, there will be no online group
17:30-17:45	Short wrap up (group-wise)	
<b>17:45-19:00</b>	<b>Networking Dinner at the venue + playful scoping (“scope for food”)</b>	

marked in green are interactive sessions with no streaming

<b>WEDNESDAY, 24 April</b>		
09:00-09:15	Welcome, recap and intro to the second day	
<b>09:15-10:30</b>	<b>SESSION 4: SYSTEMS APPROACH IN R&amp;I PROJECTS (Project perspective)</b>	
09:15-09:35	FOODPathS Focus groups: insights and experiences on systems approach implementation and cross-disciplinarity	Sofia Reis, ISEKI
09:35-09:45	Q&A	
09:45-10:15	INTERACTIVE SESSION with smaller groups focusing on the project level	Participants present in person, there will be no online group
10:15-10:30	Wrap up (group-wise)	
<b>10:30-11:00</b>	<b>COFFEE and TEA</b>	
<b>11:00-12:00</b>	<b>SESSION 5: TOWARDS AN IDEAL SYSTEMS APPROACH CALL FOR THE FUTURE PARTNERSHIP</b>	
11:00-11:20	FutureFoodS scoping process: reflections and exchange on guiding ideas	Alex Dubois, FutureFoodS, FORMAS
11:20-12:00	OPEN DISCUSSION	All
<b>12:00-12:45</b>	<b>SESSION 6: SYSTEMS APPROACH SUPPORT MEASURES</b>	
12:00-12:20	FOODPathS Survey on support measures: presentation of first results on capacity and community building in light of a systems approach	Emilie Gätje, FZJ
12:20-12:30	Q&A	
12:30-12:45	Final discussion and wrap up of event	
<b>12:45-13:30</b>	<b>Goodbye sandwiches</b>	

marked in green are interactive sessions with no streaming

## Who are “we”?

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<b>The Netherlands Organisation for Health Research and Development (ZonMw) / representing Joint Programming Initiative a Healthy Diet for a Healthy Life (JPI HDHL)</b>	Jasmina van Driel Larissa van der Bent	Funding Organisation	Netherlands

## Annex III – Survey on support measures



## FOODPathS Survey: how to support systems approach in funded R&I projects

### Welcome

The Coordination and Support Action (CSA) **FOODPathS** aims to prepare the ground for the future Partnership on Sustainable Food Systems (SFS). This Partnership (with an estimated co-funding by the European Commission of ~175 Mio Euro) will play a crucial role in reaching the sustainability ambitions stated in the Farm-to-Fork Strategy and its overarching Green Deal. In order to achieve such ambitious goals, funding of R&I projects via joint transnational calls will be an important cornerstone. Yet, the Partnership should also support the funded projects in their endeavor to implement a **systems approach\*** and to achieve impactful results. What measures and supporting actions could the future Partnership offer towards its funded projects? What knowledge and skills are needed? What themes and which tools should get special attention? To identify these relevant measures fostering a **systems approach\***, **FOODPathS** is setting up a survey. We are reaching out to everyone who is involved in or around R&I projects to give their input. Are you a project partner, a researcher, an organisator or manager or in any other way connected to systems approaches? Please share your experiences with us! Our goal is to set up a catalogue of support measures (e.g. trainings, webinars, networking events, and policy activities) emphasizing systems approaches and fostering desired community building, capacity building and creating commitment to the FutureFoodS Partnership.

**Deadline: April 5, 2024**

**\*A systems approach incorporates all elements related to the attainment of a goal / product / result. This represents a movement from a linear conception and thinking to a complex system thinking. Translated to the food system this means that „a food system can be defined as a system that embraces all elements (environment, people, inputs, processes, infrastructure, institutions, and power relations, markets and trade) and activities that relate to production, processing, distribution and marketing, preparation and consumption of food. A systems approach acknowledges the interactions between natural resources/ecosystems services, primary food production (farming, aquaculture and fishery), food processing, packaging, logistics, marketing, retail, food services, food consumption and waste management/recycling and the many feedback loops between them, which together defines the degree of complexity“ (Halberg and Westhoek, 2019).**

**FOODPathS Privacy policy: By submitting this form, you agree to share your data**

**with the FOODPathS project consortium members. Your data will only be used to contact you in case we require more information about the case study you've suggested, and it will not be shared with any external entities outside the FOODPathS consortium. In case you have any question about how your data will be managed, please, contact: [info@foodpaths.eu](mailto:info@foodpaths.eu). FOODPathS Privacy Policy is available here: <https://www.foodpaths.eu/privacy-policy/>**

# General Information

## 1. Contact details

First name (optional)

Family name (optional)

Email address (optional)

## \* 2. Contact details - country

## \* 3. What kind of organisation are you working for?

- Academic institution
- Research organisation
- Research managing organisation
- Ministry/Authority
- Industry
- Association
- NGO
- Logal/regional administration/municipality
- Other, please specify

# Area of work and experiences

\* 4. Which level of work experience do you have in your current position?

- student/trainee
- early career (~up to 5 years after graduation)
- experienced
- senior (>10 years experience)

\* 5. Please indicate the main area/sector that your work is focusing on [multiple answers possible]

- Primary production
- Manufacturing
- Retail
- Processing/Engineering/Product design
- Health/food safety
- Law
- Economics/marketing
- Education
- Other, please specify.

\* 6. My food system expertise - please rate yourself.

low medium high

My food system expertise

\* 7. Your involvement in capacity building measures: Please state your personal involvement in the last 5 years (mostly/often/occasionally/rarely/never)

	never	rarely	occasionally	often
Planning and design	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Facilitator	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Trainer/coach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Invited expert/speaker/lecturer	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Participant	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other, please specify below	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

other, please specify

# Learning from past experiences

\* 8. Types of support measures: Choose 3 which you find especially useful for capacity building with regard to systems approach.

- Information events
- Networking/partnering events
- Events with focus on young professionals,
- Training events
- Study visits
- I don't know
- Other, please specify below

Other

9. Remember the most valuable capacity building event or measure that you took part in. What was it and why did it work so well? Please provide examples. [Open question]





**Communication** (e. g. project promotion via social media, video creation, podcasts etc., knowledge exchange), ...

Please add and specify

**Project management** (e. g. exploitation and valorization of results, RRI, Installing a multi-actor approach), ...

Please add and specify

**Basic knowledge/background information** (e. g. complex systems theory, theory of change), ...

Please add and specify

**Networking** (e. g. fostering collaboration, widening), ...

Please add and specify

**Strategic steering/programming/agenda setting**, ...

Please add and specify

**Co-Creation** (e.g. facilitation, moderation), ...

Please add and specify

**Sustainability** (e.g. indicators and dimensions),...

Please add and specify

**Stress factors** for systems & capacity of systems to adapt, ...

Please add and specify

**Other** - please specify

Please add and specify

\* 15. R&I projects are often asked to integrate the following aspects. Where do you see the need to support skills and capacities to come up to the challenge? Please indicate at a glance where you see high/medium/low need to support skills and capacities.

	low support	medium support	high support	I'm not sure
Multi-actor approach	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Multi-, inter-, transdisciplinarity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inclusiveness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Theory of change	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Synergies and trade offs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Co-design, -creation, -implementation	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Widening	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other - please specify below	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other, please specify

16. Community building: What do you think could help to create a community and commitment to a European Partnership? Which supportive measures or actions do you remember from your own experience? Why? [Open question]

17. Tools: Out of the box: Did you come across methods/tools/ gimmicks during events that helped to make the event more lively; helped to better memorise and understand the content, made the working process more smoothly – please add an example [Open question]

Thank you very much for taking the time to fill out this questionnaire.

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