

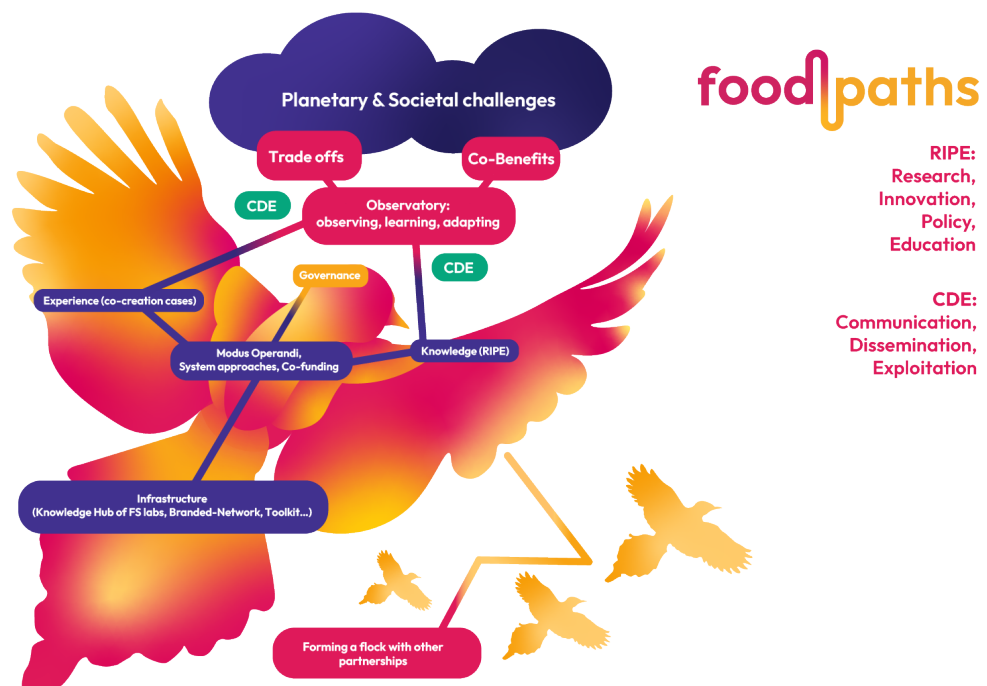
# A Strategic Guideline to Establish a Partnership on Sustainable Food Systems

Collaboration is essential for addressing the challenges of food systems sustainability. However, how can you establish a partnership—essentially any form of collaboration—in food systems?

**This raises several other questions:**

- Which complex societal challenges would your partnership collectively tackle?
- How do you monitor these challenges and translate them into joint actions?
- What approaches would you like to adopt?
- What shared principles will guide you?
- How do you leverage existing and emerging knowledge and experiences?
- How can you avoid trade-offs and pursue co-benefits?

A partnership that will successfully address such challenges can adopt the strategic guideline elaborated by FOODPathS, which consists of 8 elements. To make things easier and more understandable, imagine that each of these elements represents parts of the body of a bird (the partnership). Even more flying in a flock (symbolizing other partnerships and large-scale initiatives) allows jointly confronting challenges and accelerating the transition towards sustainable food systems.



Source: Modified from H. Schepers and H. de Vries,  
<https://hal.inrae.fr/hal-02934667/document>

## The 8 key elements of the FOODPathS “bird” concept are:

1. **Observe the challenges and articulate the vision**, addressing sustainability indicators through three dimensions: environmental, social, and economic, and taking care of **co-benefits and trade-offs via mirror groups**.
2. **Define an appropriate governance model**, including balanced bottom-up and top-down decision-making processes, interactions among scales, and collective intelligence approaches of multi-stakeholder groups respecting boundaries.
3. **Clarify the modus operandi: prioritizing co-funding strategies and systemic approaches** across all operations, including human resources, financing, communication, and more.
4. **Link research and innovation (R&I) with policy and education programs (RIPE) in the knowledge areas of the partnership**: Emphasize the connection between different topics through a Food Systems Lens.
5. **Get experience on co-creating sustainable value** in case studies with a variety of food system actors in different geographic areas.
6. **Leverage infrastructures** such as food system labs and branded university networks with a sustainability chart to support these efforts.
7. **Develop a consistent communication, dissemination, and exploitation (CDE) plan**, aiming to create a snowball effect, encouraging various food system actors to unite for achieving sustainability outcomes.
8. **Collaborate with other partnerships and large initiatives**, while realizing that outcomes cannot be achieved by a single partnership due to the complexity of the issues.

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