

What do stakeholders really want from a Sustainable Food Systems Partnership?

Thanks to an online survey (Jun-Sep 2024, 60 replies) FOODPathS collected the stakeholders' interests in working in R&I partnerships, their motivations and barriers in doing this and, finally, on their willingness to join the SFS Partnership (and in which role). Here are some key findings!



The Persona

The average respondent was a researcher, working at national/EU level, and that has been involved in 2-4 partnerships operating at EU level, where they contribute to the definition of their long term strategies and /or influencing the decisions/advocate for the stakeholders they represent. In partnerships, they work with a huge variety of actors.

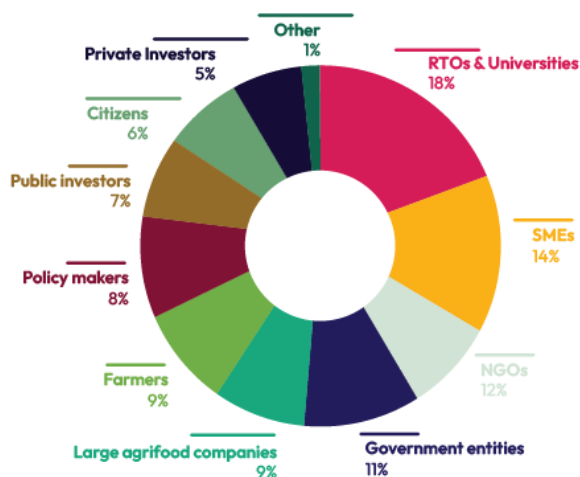


Figure 1 - Which other actors are involved in your partnership(s)?

"Must have" ingredients for building a partnership

- Funding mechanism
- Clear and transparent governance
- Democratic and inclusive decision process
- Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA)
- Involvement of public and private



Key words emerging from the survey: broad partnerships, collaboration, working together, open & inclusive environment

Lessons learned by FOODPathS:

- **A broader definition of 'Partnership':** many stakeholders view partnerships beyond the EC's R&I focus, including in this definition also living labs, policy councils, and projects, that are initiatives in which they are already working on. FOODPathS can help bridging these initiatives with EC's R&I partnerships for a more coherent food systems transformation.
- **Collaboration is the most relevant benefit of a partnership**, but it requires an adequate environment that, together with the provision of a funding mechanism, prioritise the openness of participation.
- **Public and private investors were seen as the last prominent actors in partnerships**, despite the funding is considered a major need and the request of the openness of participation. More investigation on this perception and on how to address them are needed.
- **A wide range of stakeholders are willing to support with their (different) expertise:** the majority of respondents are interested in being part of an SFS Partnership through supportive roles, such as consultations and advisory board membership.

Call to actions & Recommendations for FutureFoodS and other partnerships

- **Ensure transparency and openness to boost participation**, also by improving communication on the partnership's goals, activities, funding mechanisms, ways to get involved, etc.
- **Increase stakeholder engagement**, by clarifying how to share feedback and ideas, as well as establishing a structured and permanent dialogue
- **Reduce the burden for participation**, by exploring alternative ways to collaborate with food system actors, thus addressing the scarcity of resources they could have
- **Raise awareness of FutureFoodS**, by boosting communication activities to increase its outreach and give more visibility to its activities and results.

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