Agribusiness Incubation
Component 4 – Agribusiness Networking

Suite 3
Advanced Incubator Management
Component 4

AGRIBUSINESS NETWORKING
Learning Objectives

You will be able to:

♦ Explain how agribusiness networks influence the value chain to market

♦ Identify important agribusiness ICT networking hot spots

♦ Take immediate action to strengthen your network
Think for a moment about your incubatees and the range of services they need. (1 min)

Identify one network that, if strengthened, could enable your incubator to better serve that incubatee. Make a quick note. (2 min)

When invited by trainer, be prepared to offer an example. (3 min)
Component 4: Networking

WHAT AND WHY OF A NETWORK?
WHY NETWORK AT ALL?

The why is easy to know: you cannot do things alone. The difficult part is the how to do it efficiently and effectively.

You are busy as an agribusiness leader: you may not have time to waste in lunches and meetings; you may not have money to attend all these events; and you may not see the return on these investment anyway.
Why Network?

As an agribusiness leader, with whom do you want to network?

- Technology sources (e.g., University, research centers, technology companies)
- Suppliers (inputs, intermediate products, equipment providers)
- Farmer organizations (cooperatives, associations, groups)
- Financiers (banks, venture capital)
- Government agencies that sponsor programs for SME development
- Political leaders relevant to your business in your locality or nation
- Regulators (issuing licenses, permit)
- Chamber of commerce
- Trade associations
- Professional associations
- International network
- BSD providers (accountants, management consultants, trainers,...)
- Logistics agents
- Lawyers
Some effectiveness pointers

♦ Define the priorities for your network
♦ Monitor your contacts
♦ Select the trusted contacts
♦ Keep in contact with the selected ones
♦ Cut the B.S. (sorry, I meant the not so productive) contacts
♦ Enjoy the networking experience
♦ Aim at personal contact in the network

*It is not the number of contacts in your database that counts, but their quality and trustworthiness.*
How To’s of Networking

1. Priority Networks
2. ICT Tools for Networking
3. Hot Spots for Networking
4. Networking Incubator Grads
1. Priority Networks

**Partnership is Everything**

Incubators can generate partnerships on behalf of their members, including:

- Government agencies
- International organizations
- Raw material suppliers
- Value chain membership
- Shipping companies
- Trade organizations
- International standards organizations
- Certifying agencies
- Private enterprise partners
1. Priority Networks (cont’)

Which are your priority networks?
1. Priority Networks (cont’)

Where do you spend your time now?

Where should you spend your time?

- State & National Government
- Incubator Graduates
- Logistics & Transportation
- Entrepreneurs
- Farmers & Coops
- Marketing Market Dev. Brokers
- Donors
- Fund Raising for Incubator
- Politicians & Political Parties
- Biz Dev. Services Providers
- Int’l Alliances
- Finance & Banking
- Technology & Universities
- Suppliers
- Other?
2. ICT Tools for Networking

How can you make two key network tools useful to you?

1. Information Communication Technologies
2. Communities of Practice
2. ICT Tools for Networking
3. Hot spots for Networking
What are agribusiness network hot spots?

✓ **International Food and Agribusiness**

✓ **Management Association (IFAMA)**

www.ifama.org

IFAMA's mission is achieved through providing members with multiple vehicles for information sharing, knowledge advancement, discussion and debate, networking, and career development.
What are agribusiness network hot spots?

✓ Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR)

The Vision:
To reduce poverty and hunger, improve human health and nutrition, and enhance ecosystem resilience through high-quality international agricultural research, partnership and leadership.

The Objectives:
• Food for People: Create and accelerate sustainable increases in the productivity and production of healthy food by and for the poor.
• Environment for People: Conserve, enhance and sustainably use natural resources and biodiversity to improve the livelihoods of the poor in response to climate change and other factors.
• Policies for People: Promote policy and institutional change that will stimulate agricultural growth and equity to benefit the poor, especially rural women and other disadvantaged groups.
What are agribusiness network hot spots?

✓ Community of Practice of Agribusiness Incubator (infoDev)
   http://www.idisc.net/WorkGroups/Home.aspx

✓ International Finance Corporation (IFC) Global Agribusiness Program
   www.ifc.org/ifcext/agribusiness.nsf/content/home
What are agribusiness network hot spots?

✓ Asian Association of Business Incubators (AABI)  
   [www.aabi.info](http://www.aabi.info)

✓ Trade Associations (eg New Zealand flower exporters association at [www.nzflowers.com](http://www.nzflowers.com); Farm Equipment Manufacturing Association or [www.farmequip.org](http://www.farmequip.org))

✓ Professional Associations (eg American Association of Agricultural Economics AAEA at [www.aaea.org](http://www.aaea.org))
What are agribusiness network hot spots?

**How to search efficiently?**

1. Get a young brilliant assistant (preferably < 25) to do a search for you.
2. Ask him/her to make a list of 20 hot spots. For each write one paragraph about the content
3. Browse ten of the most interesting spots. Spend no more than ten minutes on each spot.
4. Select three that look useful to you.
5. Ask your assistant to repeat the search using the 3 spots you have identified. Repeat steps 2-4.
6. Ask colleagues you respect what sites are useful to them.
7. Compare with the 6 you have identified.
8. Signal useful sites to your colleagues.
NETWORKING AND LEVERAGING YOUR INCUBATOR GRADUATES
How can you improve your network with your graduates?
Why?

♦ Your graduates are part of your branding strategy. The more successful your graduates the higher your reputation.

♦ Your graduates are an inspiring model for your new incubatees.

♦ Your graduates can be your own teacher. They can tell you what you could do better as an incubator.
4. Networking Incubator Graduates

Why?

♦ Your graduates can be a source of partnership for the incubator.
♦ Your graduates can help you to expand your network.
♦ Your graduates can be a source of profit for your incubator.
4. Networking Incubator Graduates

How?

- Establish an association of graduates
- Keep them informed: launch a Newsletter
- Start a yearly reunion event
- Monitor their performance over time (growth indicators)
- Involve them as partners in new incubator initiatives
Think about a specific, priority network connection you want to make as soon as possible. (1 min)

Write in large letters on a blank sheet of paper the connection you need. (2 min)

Circulate throughout the training room, holding up your sign and try to find the connection you need or provide the connection another trainee needs. Exchange specific information and how you will follow up. (15 min)

When invited by trainer, be prepared to offer the results of your networking. (7 min)