



## MODULE

# EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMPETENCE

### Unit 1 | Activity 1 Building Bridges Beyond the Fields



90min



- Pen and blank paper
- Access to internet

## DESCRIPTION

By engaging in this activity, you can actively practice forming external business relations within your local community. This not only enhances their own farms' sustainability but contributes to the overall development of the agricultural sector in the region.

# THE ACTIVITY

**Identify Potential Participants:** Reach out to neighbouring smallholder farmers, local agricultural experts, representatives from agricultural agencies, and even consumers who are interested in supporting local agriculture.

**Organize a Meeting:** Arrange a meeting or informal gathering to introduce the concept of external business relations and the benefits of collaboration. Highlight the potential of a local farmer network to address common challenges and explore market opportunities.

**Discussion and Idea Sharing:** During the meeting, encourage participants to share their experiences, challenges, and innovative ideas. Discuss potential areas of collaboration, such as joint purchasing of inputs, sharing equipment, or collectively marketing produce.

**Identify Goals:** Together with the participants, define the goals of the local farmer network. It could include improving productivity, accessing new markets, adopting sustainable practices, or advocating for better policies.

**Assign Roles:** Designate roles for different participants. Someone could take on the role of a coordinator to keep communication flowing, while others could be responsible for organizing training sessions or representing the network in external events.

**Regular Meetings:** Set a schedule for regular meetings or gatherings where members can continue sharing progress, updates, and challenges. These meetings can serve as a platform for ongoing learning and collaboration.

**Collaborative Initiatives:** Encourage participants to initiate collaborative projects based on shared goals. This could involve bulk purchasing of seeds, jointly attending workshops, or collectively marketing produce to local markets or restaurants.

**Online Platform:** Consider creating an online group or forum for participants to stay connected and share information even between meetings. This can be a space to discuss best practices, ask questions, and share resources.

**Track Progress:** Regularly assess the progress of the local farmer network. Are participants benefiting from the collaboration? Have any innovative solutions been implemented? Are the goals of the network being met?

**Celebrate Achievements:** Recognize and celebrate the achievements of the local farmer network. Share success stories with the wider community to inspire others to consider collaboration for their own farms.

# THE THEORY

## External Business Relations for Smallholder Farmers: A Key to Growth and Sustainability

In the world of farming, the term "external business relations" may sound a bit unfamiliar, but its importance can't be overlooked. Simply put, external business relations involve forming connections with people and groups outside your immediate farm community. These connections can range from government officials and financial institutions to industry associations and consumer groups.

So, why is this concept significant for smallholder farmers like you? Let's break it down:

**Collaboration and Market Access:** External business relations offer a pathway to collaborate with diverse stakeholders, even those from other industries. Imagine teaming up with fellow farmers, government bodies, and experts to tackle common challenges together. By doing so, you open doors to new ideas, resources, and opportunities that can greatly benefit your farm. Moreover, forming relationships with these stakeholders can help you access larger markets like supermarket chains, expanding your reach and potential profits.

**Knowledge Sharing:** When you connect with people outside your farm, you gain access to a wealth of knowledge and expertise. Government officials can provide insights into policies and regulations that impact your operations. Financial institutions can guide you on securing loans for investments. Industry associations can keep you updated on the latest trends and best practices. This exchange of information can lead to better decision-making and improved farming practices.

**Collective Innovation:** Joining hands with others often leads to innovative solutions. Working with fellow farmers, researchers, and experts can help address environmental challenges more effectively. By sharing experiences and ideas, you can come up with new approaches to boost productivity while being mindful of sustainability.

**Amplified Voice:** Forming external relations also gives you a stronger voice. When smallholder farmers come together, they can advocate for their needs and concerns more effectively. This collective voice can influence policies and regulations that support sustainable farming practices and create a favourable environment for your business.

**Ongoing Learning:** External business relations promote continuous learning. Staying connected with experts and industry associations keeps you updated on the latest farming techniques, market trends, and sustainable practices. This knowledge empowers you to adapt and grow in an ever-changing agricultural landscape.

In essence, external business relations offer a way to build a network that goes beyond the boundaries of your farm. It's about connecting with those who can help you thrive, learn, and innovate. By cultivating these relationships, you can transform your smallholder farm into a dynamic and resilient enterprise that contributes to both your livelihood and the broader community.

Remember, it's not just about what you know, but also about who you know and how you collaborate. So, embrace the power of external business relations and watch your farm flourish in ways you never thought possible.



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