



# **Shaping the new network: DDRN as a key agent of change or service provider?**

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# Introduction to the workshop

Practical issues

Presentations: name and organisation

Agenda

Objectives

Ground rules



# Agenda

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| 9.30-9.45     | Welcome and introduction to workshop by DDRN board member   |
| 9.45-10.30    | Presentation on 'Understanding Networks – The Functions of Research Policy Networks', by Enrique Mendizabal<br>Discussion – Do we agree with the approach and categories? |
| 10.30- 11.30  | Group work: The right balance of the network's Roles and ideal Functions<br>Presentation and discussion   |
| 11.30-11.45   | Coffee  |
| 11.45-12.15   | Presentation and discussion   |
| 12.15-13.00   | Networks organisational characteristics and Stages of network development   |
| 13.00-14.00   | Lunch   |
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# Knowledge and learning aims

- Understand the different functions of networks, and compare your own existing or proposed networks' practical realities with “ideal” situations
- Understand the distinct stages of development for knowledge and learning networks, and use this to analyse the network in terms of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
- Share experiences, methods and approaches with other participants, and receive peer support in thinking through how the network might take forward these ideas.



# The ODI approach

- Experiential mutual learning
- Balance of presenting and facilitating
- Relaxed, informal & fun



# Networks: More than the Latest Buzzword?

*“Power does not reside in institutions, not even the state or large corporations. It is located in the networks that structure society.”* (Manuel Castells, 2004)

*“We are some way from being able to structure public and organisational power in ways which really harness network potential...”* (McCarthy, Miller and Skidmore, 2004)

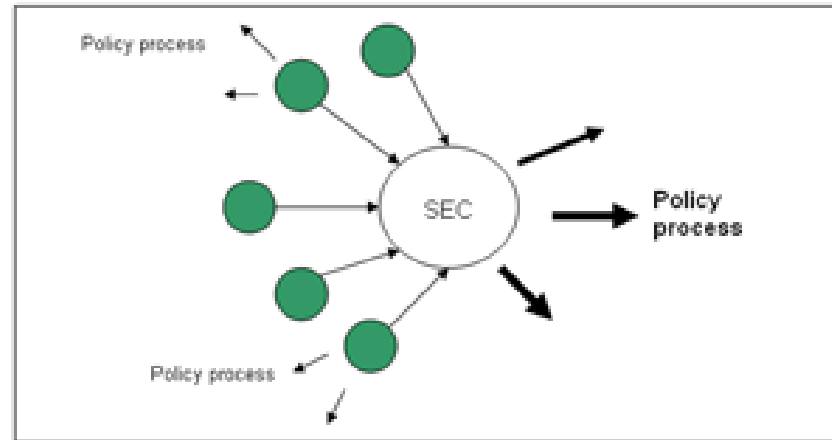
*“Africa’s strength lies in social networks which are invisible to many outsiders.”* (Commission for Africa, 2005)



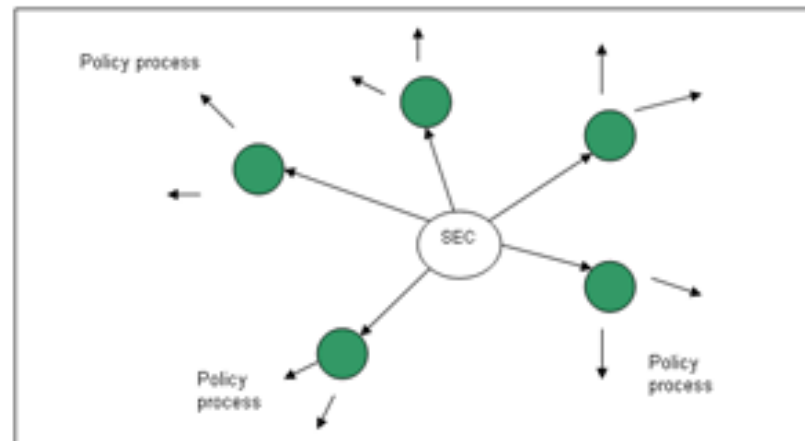
What do networks actually do?

# The Roles of networks

- Agency



- Support



# Networks: 6 Key Functions

**Community  
builders**



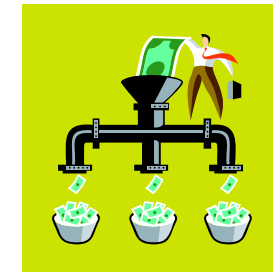
**Facilitators/  
learners**



**Filters**



**Investor/providers**



**Amplifiers**



**Convenors**



# Community building



- Community building functions promote and sustain the values and standards of a network of individuals or groups
- Some make the transition from community builders to amplifiers and conveners.
- Community building networks often develop strong links *within* the network but none / few weak links outside the network



# Example of Community Building: CIVICUS

- CIVICUS is an international alliance established to promote the foundation, growth and protection of citizen action throughout the world. It has more than 650 members in 110 countries
  - **Membership:** diverse, including networks and organisational sectors; policy and research, grant-making, youth, women, and the environment.
  - **Functions:** Community builder (through unifying events, service provision and newsletter/publications), filter (Civil Society Watch Index), investor/provider (governance capacity for CSOs), convenor (to a degree).
  - **Structure:** A hub in the developing world and regional offices in the developed world.
  - **Special characteristics:** CIVICUS headquarters and operational hub is located in Johannesburg, South Africa. It also has offices in Washington, DC and in London.
  - **More info:** <http://www.civicus.org/new/default.asp>

# Filtering



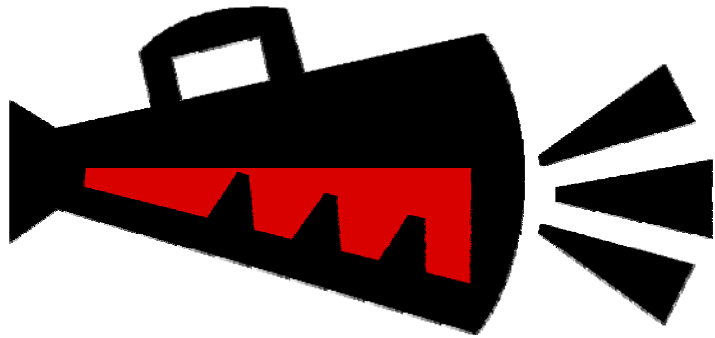
- The filtering function allows unmanageable amounts of information to be organised and used in a productive way
- Filtering networks can provide decision makers with a valuable service
- There is evidence that NGOs and think tanks can fulfil a filtering function
  - NGOs in the UK, for instance, often work to filter the evidence from several research sources



# Example of Filtering: The Development Executive Group

- The Development Executive Group is a global membership organisation which provides members with useful information on the international development “industry”, facilitating intra-network communications and access to resources e.g. experts, contracts
  - **Membership:** firms, non-profit organizations, and individual professionals working in the international development marketplace.
  - **Functions:** Filter (from outside to the inside), community building (among development workers) and facilitator (facilitates access to other members and resources), provides (acts as a broker between donors/clients and members)
  - **Structure:** Strong management hub that filters information from the outside to make it relevant and useful to its members.
  - **Special characteristics:** emphasis on communications between partner members, multiple functions
  - More Info: <http://www.developmentex.com/index.asp>

# Amplifying



- Amplifiers help take an private / complex idea or a message and transfer it to a public or simple –or understandable- one.
- Amplification can be used to disseminate a message or idea, and can also be part of a two way process of communication and feedback

## Example of Amplifying: The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance

- The Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance works through an education approach to tackle the issues of global trade and HIV/AIDS
- **Membership:** more than 85 churches and church-related organizations have joined the Alliance and bring a constituency to this common work of advocacy of more than 100 million people worldwide.
- **Functions:** Amplifying (the messages of HIV/AIDS, conflict and trade through churches), facilitating (coordination of actions among members)
- **Structure:** A small coordinating secretariat in Switzerland and a global committee. Other members are loosely attached.
- **Special characteristics:** A faith-based membership and use of institutional infrastructure of the Church provide the network with additional organisational strength. Its governance agreement does not then need to address too many non-executive issues
- **More info:** <http://www.e-alliance.ch/>

# Facilitating



- Facilitating functions help members carry out their activities more efficiently and effectively
  - Facilitator networks, like facilitators at a workshop help make things happen but do not need to be involved with the member's work.
- This function is often hard to differentiate from the others because, in theory, all networks are created to facilitate the achievement of any particular objective.



# Example of Facilitating: MediCam, Cambodia

- MediCam is a network of NGOs active in Cambodia's health sector which seeks to link all health sector stakeholders
- **Membership:** NGOs
- **Functions:** Facilitator of policy influence, community builder (of health related NGOs in Cambodia), investor/provider (broker capacity building of MediCam members), amplifier/filter (via internal communications)
- **Structure:** A hub and many members but managed mostly via the internet and virtual communications. Full members are local institutions.
- **Special characteristics:** 3 types of membership: full membership for local NGOs, associate membership for international actors, observer membership for individuals interested in health issues in Cambodia. Observers have no voting rights. A minimum participation is demanded for members to keep membership.
- **More info:** <http://www.medicam-cambodia.org/>

# Investing and Providing



- Investing networks offer a channel to provide members with the resources they need to carryout their main activities
- Broker investor/provider networks act mostly as facilitators connecting, for instance, donors and trainers with network members
- Networks can also be useful to invest or provide to third parties e.g. non-members



# Example of Investing-Providing: African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF), Zimbabwe

- The ACBF, based in Harare, is an independent, capacity-building institution
- **Membership:** 3 sponsoring agencies (AfDB, UNDP and the World Bank), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), 32 African countries and non-African countries and institutions.
- **Functions:** Investor/provider (capacity building and funding), facilitation (networking), amplifier (via publications and events), filter (of information in support of ACBF researchers)
- **Key structure:** A steering committee/secretariat that carries out the activities of the foundations.
- **Special characteristics:** It covers 2 regional organisations and 26 national focal points in 37 countries in Africa. It offers research grants as well as capacity building grants. It offers members networking activities as well as specialised workshops. It also finances workshops carried out by workshops.
- **More info:** <http://www.acbf-pact.org/>

# Convening



- Convening networks bring together individuals and groups from different nationalities, disciplines, practices, or from different areas of the aid system
- Issues of authority structures, logistical capacities, credibility and media, communication and dissemination skills require special attention.
- Convening requires that the audience be more carefully defined and must develop context and audience specific tools
- Convening networks allow the development of systematic and sustainable linkages between researchers, policymakers and practitioners
- Convening networks need to carryout systematic and elaborate assessments of audiences, and also need to filter information to respond to a highly informed and specialised demand.
- Sequence of network development may culminate in a convening network in which all other functions come together.



# Example of Convening: Coalition 2000, Bulgaria anti corruption network

- Coalition 2000 is an initiative of a number of Bulgarian non-governmental organizations aimed at combating corruption. It works at the agenda setting level drafting an Anti-Corruption Action Plan for Bulgaria, as well as implementing an awareness campaign and a monitoring system.
- **Membership:** International and governmental institutions, national NGOs and individuals
- **Functions:** Convenor (brings together various sectors and addresses their concerns), filter (information on corruption for easy access by all users), amplifier (of its work, findings of research and media), community building (help establish coalitions)
- **Structure:** A partnership network of partners from civil society, government and the private sector. Consists of a Policy Forum which sets work plans, made to determine the Coalition's work and is made up of representatives of all relevant institutions; a Steering Committee that provides direction and oversees the process; and a Secretariat that provides the management.
- **Special characteristics:** The network provides consensus and coalition building; collects information, disseminates (mostly to inform and shame) and influences policy through direct and indirect action.
- **More info:** <http://www.anticorruption.bg/eng/coalition/about.htm>

# Knowledge and Learning Networks: 6 Key Functions

**Community  
builders**



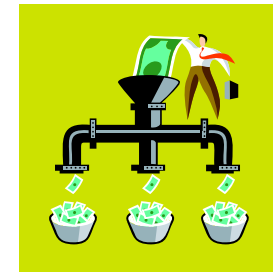
**Facilitators**



**Filters**



**Investor/providers**



**Amplifiers**



**Convenors**





# Functional focus: current and ideal

| Name of Network: <i>Outcome Mapping Learning Community</i>   |                          |                        |
|--|--------------------------|------------------------|
| Guidelines: Map the Current functional focus of the network by allocating 100 marks across the different functions. Then do the "ideal focus". In pairs, discuss why you have made the allocation in question, and what might be required to move from Current to Ideal. Report back to the group. | Current Functional Focus | Ideal Functional Focus |
| Community Builders e (like CIVICUS)  | 50                       | 10                     |
| Filtering Function (like <a href="#">DevelopmentEx</a> )   | 15                       | 15                     |
| Amplifying Function (like Ecumenical Advocacy Alliance)  | 15                       | 0                      |
| Facilitation Function (like <a href="#">MediCam</a> , Cambodia)  | 20                       | 50                     |
| Investor / providers (like the ACBF)   | 0                        | 15                     |
| Convening Function (like Coalition 2000, Bulgaria anti corruption network)   | 0                        | 10                     |

# Task: Ideal Balance

- Working in pairs then in groups of about 6:
  - In pairs (10 minutes):
    - Establish the ideal balance between Agency and Support
    - Map the ideal functional focus of the network by allocating 100 marks across the different functions
  - In groups (50 minutes):
    - Discuss why you have made the allocation in question,
    - Can we agree? (if yes, fill one template for the whole group)
    - And give some examples of activities under each
  - Selected reports back to the group



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# What do Networks Need to Do: Some Keys to Success

- 1. Clear governance agreements** – to set objectives, identify functions, define membership structures, make decisions and resolve conflicts.
- 2. Strength in numbers** – the larger the numbers involved the greater the weight given to networks.
- 3. Representativeness** – is one key source of legitimacy (and thereby influence).
- 4. Quality of information** – affects both the credibility and legitimacy of arguments.
- 5. Packaging of information** – is crucial to effective communication.

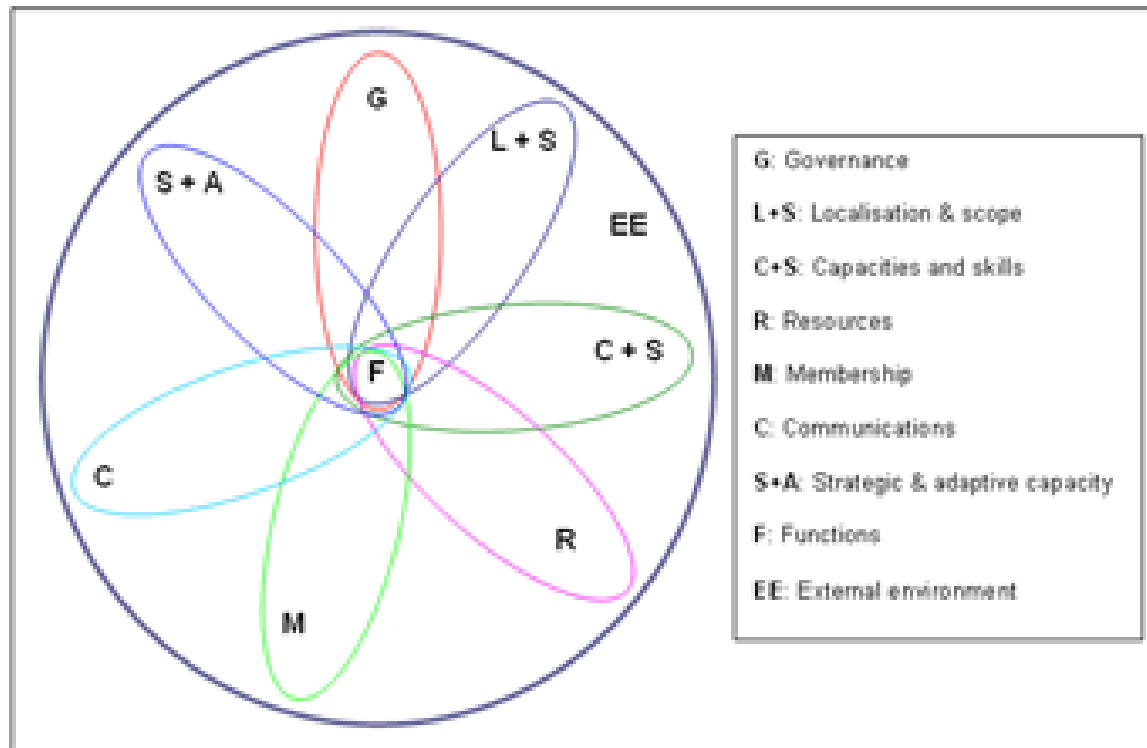


# What do Networks Need to Do: some keys to success

6. **Persistence** – change or influence often requires sustained pressure over a long period of time
7. **Membership of key individuals** – especially influential figures in the organisation / policy area
8. **Making use of informal links** – these can be critical to achieving many network objectives.
9. **Complementing official structures** – by their nature, networks add most value by complementing rather than duplicating official structures.
10. **Good use of ICTs and other networking opportunities** – ICTs are opening up great new potential for networking.

# The characteristics of the network: how can they do this?

How the form defines the functions of the network



# Governance

- **Governance:** What are the behaviours and processes in place within the network that govern its short and long term functioning? This category includes (context specific):
  - • **Governance agreement characteristics:** Is there a governance agreement in place? What does it include? (for a list of key characteristics see 12 points above)
  - • **Organisational climate and culture** including systems of incentives, leadership and management style, and organisational vision and mission.
  - • **Network Brand:** Is there a network brand that is easily recognisable by users and members? What is the reputation of the brand?
  - • **Degree of formality:** Is the governance agreement a formal document or is it informal?
  - • **Governance hub:** Is there a management/administrative/no hub?

# Localisation and scope

- **Localisation and scope:** Where are the network and its members located both physically and thematically? Some parameters include (there is no ideal situation in this case as it depends on the network's context):
  - • **Level of centralisation:** Is the network centralised around one hub; are there multiple hubs or is it completely decentralised?
  - • **Global location:** Is the network located in the developed world; in between; the developing world? Where are the hubs located within the network?
  - • **Level of action:** At what stage of the policy process does the network intervene? Agenda setting, policy formulation, policy implementation, monitoring and evaluation?
  - • **Scope:** In what area of development does the network operate, by topic or sector of interest?
  - • **Demand:** Where are the networks clients or target audience located?

# Capacity and skill

- **Capacity and skill:** Does the network and the network members have the capacity and skills necessary to carryout their functions and tasks? These include, at least the following:
  - • **Research capacity:** Does the network produce sufficient and quality research? Does it have access to research from non-members? Do they have access to relevant and useful databases and sources of primary and secondary evidence – including libraries, journals? Do research members or research staff have access to and use of necessary research methods and tools?
  - • **Networking skills:** Do key members in the network have the skills to network and link with other people, institutions and networks? Are there networking opportunities brought about by the actions of the network?
  - • **Communications skills:** Are the members or staff in charge of communications capable of developing and/or implementing a communications strategy?
  - • **Management/organisational capacities:** Is there a clear management structure? Do managers posses good and relevant management skills (not part time researchers) with sufficient resources to carryout their functions? Can they handle complex logistical processes? Can they facilitate consensus building processes?
  - • **Fundraising capacities:** Does the network have fundraisers with the necessary skills and access to the necessary information to tap into funds? As a consequence, have they secured enough resources?



# Resources

- **Resources:** Does the network have access to all the inputs necessary for its functioning? Resources include:
  - • **Staff:** Do network members and the network as a whole have sufficient and adequate staff? Are staff well trained and experienced in their responsibilities?
  - • **Infrastructure:** Do network members and the network as a whole have access to appropriate infrastructure, including ICT and the physical environment?
  - • **Financial resources:** Does the network and its members have access to a secure flow of financial resources? Are they able to develop long term business plans with financial certainty?
  - • **Research and advocacy:** Does the network have access to and command of the necessary resources for research and advocacy or communication – including, databases, ICT, access to media, networks and partnerships?



# Membership

- **Membership:** Who are the network's members and how are they related to each other? This includes the following (again, this depends on the specific context of the network):
  - • **Criteria:** Is membership voluntary; free; fee-based; means-tested; open; by invitation only?
  - • **Diversity:** How diverse are the members in relation to each other? Do they all come from the same group or are there multiple groups? Which groups?
  - • **Relations:** What are the relations between the members? Are they patron-client, teacher-pupil, colleagues? Are there any relationships with non-members or other networks or institutions?
  - • **Strategic members:** Are there any non-participant members with power in the network, such as donors or members of the steering committee?

# Communications

- **Communications:** Does the network have appropriate communication strategies to carry out its functions, thus amplifying messages outwardly or sharing messages and information within the institution:
  - • **Communications strategy:** Does the network have a clear communications strategy? Are there multiple strategies (coordinated or uncoordinated) between members?
  - • **Means:** Does the network have access to a variety of communication means such as internet, intranet, personal meetings, conferences or gatherings, phone, physically in the same space?
  - • **Responsibility:** Do network members have clear communication responsibilities both for outbound and inbound communications as well as for sharing of knowledge? Is this responsibility decentralised or centralised into specific hub according to the network's context?
  - • **Capacities and skills:** Do the network members in charge of communication have the necessary skills and capacities to carryout their function?
  - • **Network brand:** Is the communications strategy compatible with the strengthening of the network brand?

# Strategic and Adaptive capacity

- **Strategic and adaptive capacity:** Is the network capable of managing changes and shocks in both its internal and external environment? Can it manage those changes on its own or does it depend on others (partners, networks, donors)?
  - • **Changes in members:** Can the network address changes in the interests and values of its members?
  - • **Changes in external environment:** Can it respond to windows of opportunities in the policy context, catch up with technology and address changes in demand?
  - • **Sustainability:** Is the network sustainable? Has it been set up for a specific time-bound objective? Can it guarantee its sustainability in terms of time, funds, relations and processes and structure?
  - • **Flexibility:** Can the network carry out multiple functions to respond to internal and external forces? Does it have the capacity to adopt new skills and incorporate new resources?
  - • **Strategic decision making and conflict resolution:** How does the network make decisions and who make them? This is not necessarily the same as what is stated in the governance agreement.

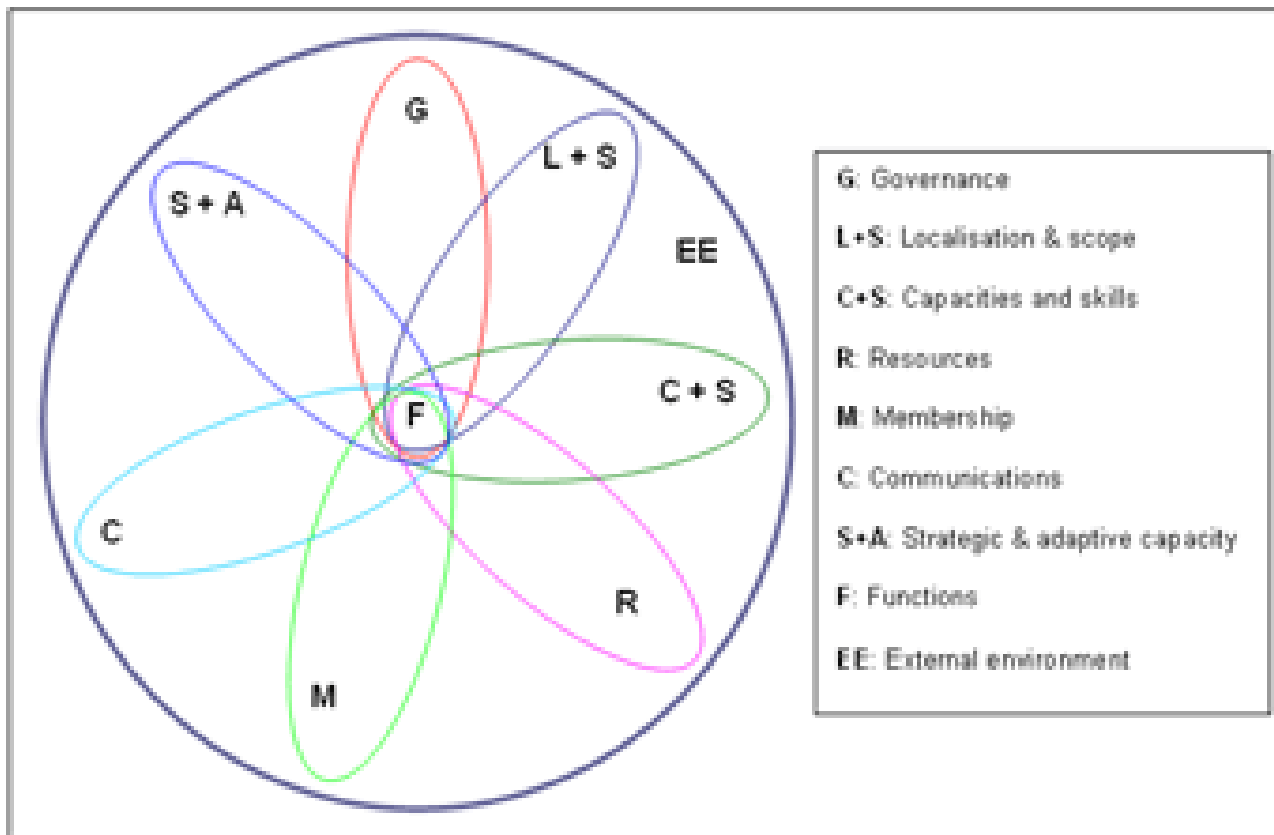


# External environment

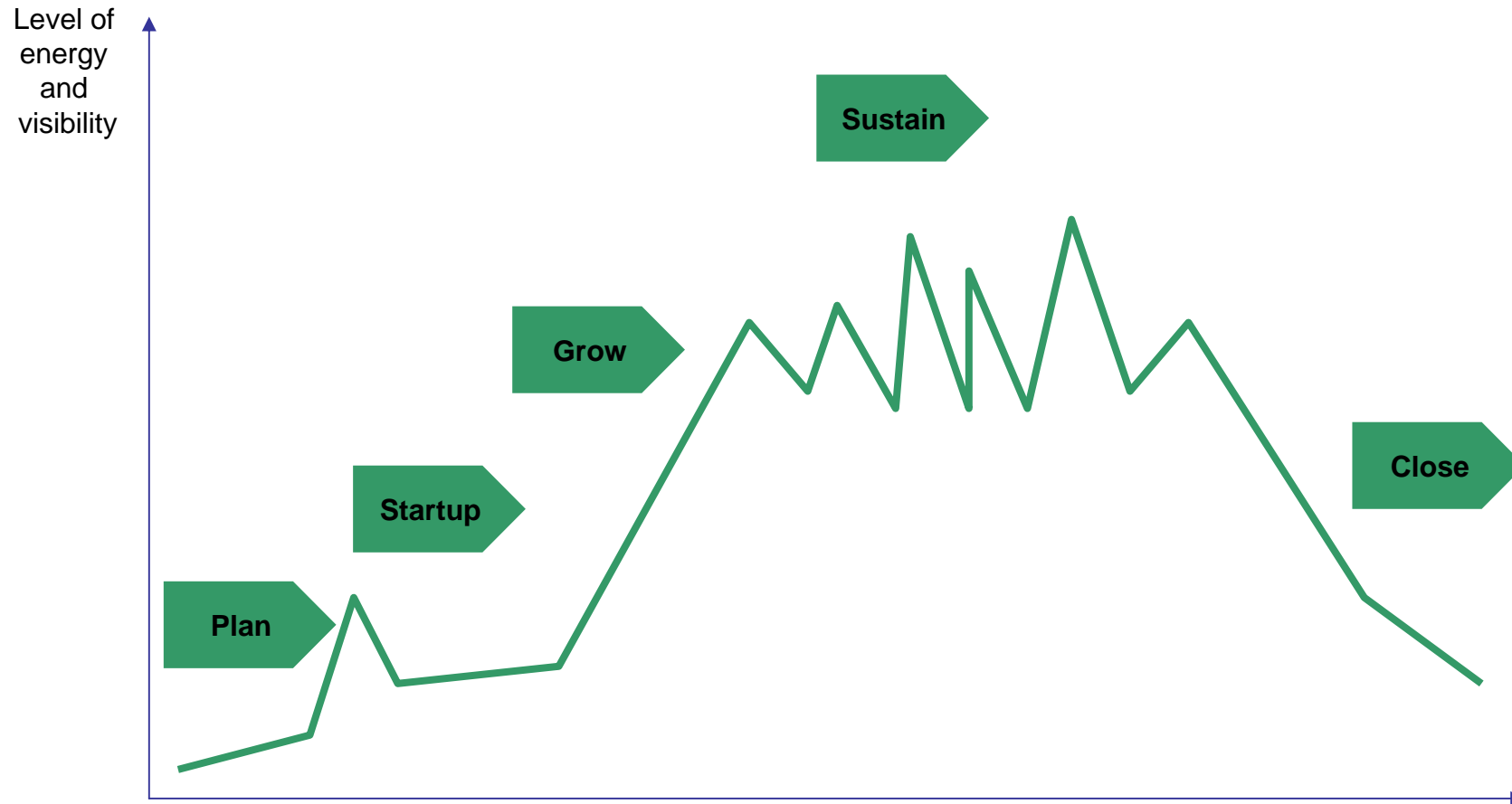
- **External environment:** What are the external influences affecting the network?
  - • **Policy context:** Who are the key policymakers and institutions? How does the policy process work, extent of civil and political freedoms, political contestation, attitudes and incentives, room for manoeuvre, local history of policies and power relations?
  - • **Social and cultural milieu:** What determines the attitudes of people inside and outside the network? Ideally they would be compatible with the network's functions.
  - • **Available technology -including ICT:** What is available in the country or accessible to the network? Ideally the network should have access to state of the art technology to allow it to carryout their functions competitively.
  - • **Demand:** Is there demand for the network's products and services? Who demands it –is it the government, civil society, donors? (Demand is crucial. Without it, the network losses legitimacy and relevance.)

# The form of the network

How the form defines the functions of the network



# Life Cycle of a Typical Network



# Plan and Start up

- Networks often emerge in an organic fashion and cannot always be managed into existence. They can, however, be fostered, by identifying areas where specific functions might be required or usefully performed
  - **What** is the purpose of the network?
  - **What** is the ideal functional focus of the network?
  - **Who** can contribute to achieving this purpose?
  - **What** are the common needs, problems and interests of potential members? What benefits?
  - **What** are the shared values and ideal ways of working?
  - **How** will it be structured and organised?
  - **How** will it obtain resources?
- Formal networks are often best launched with a meeting or workshop



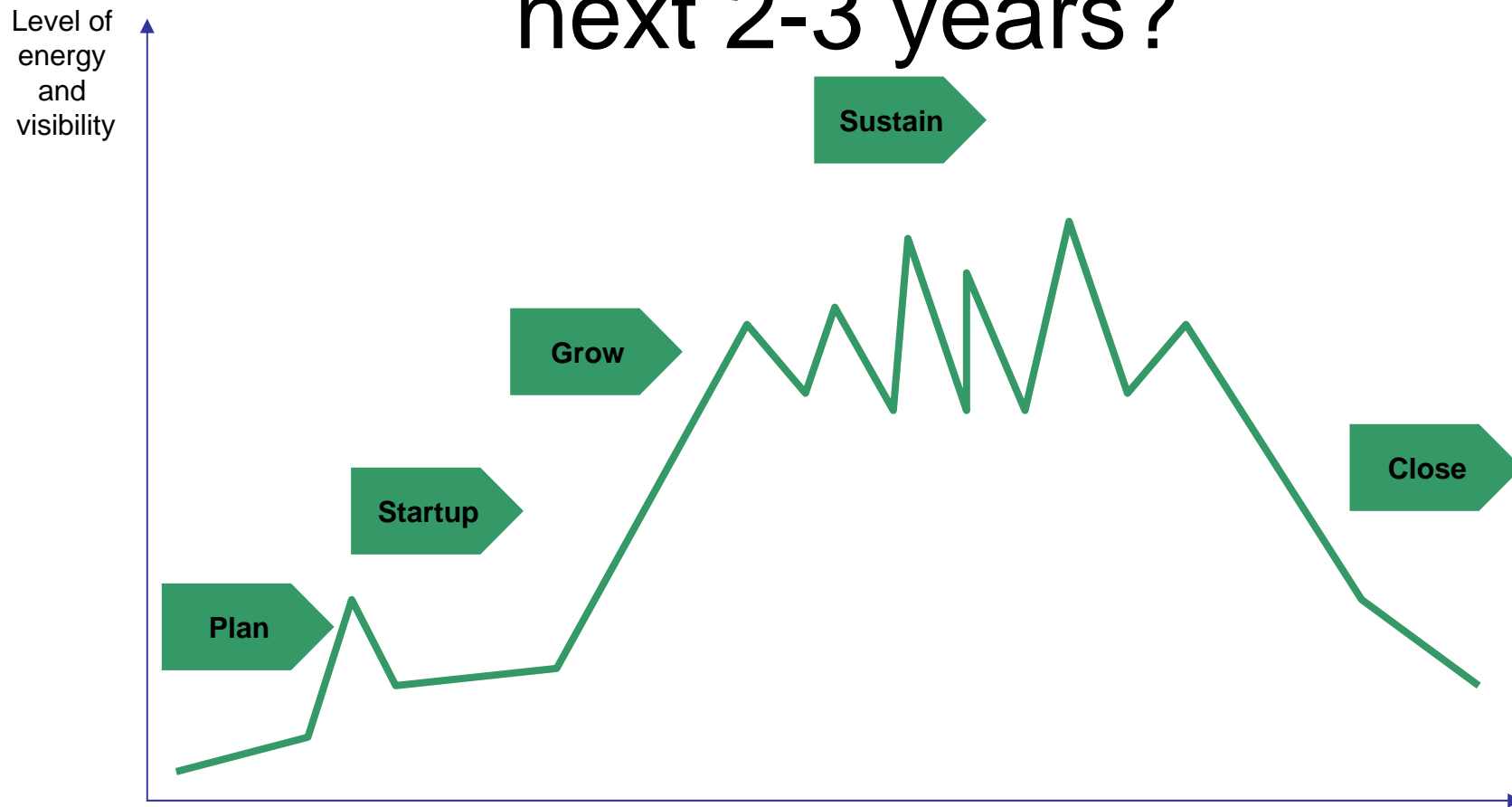
# Growth and Sustaining

- After the initial excitement, the network needs to maintain interest and build commitment
  - face-to-face meetings
  - arranging social events
  - rewarding contributions
  - introducing new and challenging perspectives
  - getting external perspectives
- Community development requires
  - Rotation of roles and responsibilities
    - coordinator (spokesperson, organises, coordinates, facilitator (facilitates interactions within the community), knowledge manager (explicit knowledge resources management)
  - External and wider support for participation in the network
    - E.g. freeing up time and recognising the contributions of the community.
  - Member turnover needs to be addressed on an ongoing basis
    - ongoing recruitment “campaign”
  - Greater role in filtering, amplifying and facilitating
  - Ensure that social relationships are not stifled by too strong a managerial imperative

# Closure

- Networks can come to an end naturally
  - members come to an end-point of the purpose
  - fragmentation into multiple smaller communities based around particular specialist subjects
- When a network ends
  - celebrate achievements
  - ensure that the relevant body of knowledge is captured and transferred

# Where is your network now? Where do you want it to be in the next 2-3 years?



Name of network :

Current stage:

Stage in \_\_\_ months:

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# Examples of Strengths / Weaknesses

- Mission statement is [not] agreed
- Internal financial support is [not] available
- [No] commitment to knowledge sharing at senior levels
- [No] reputation for innovation
- Good [Bad] country-to-country relationships

# Examples of Opportunities

- ICTs, technology
- Growing numbers of national staff
- Increasing relevance of topic (e.g. HIV-AIDS)

# Examples of Threats

- No external funding for network
- Competing networks
- Partner information overload
- Highly fragmented approach to problem (e.g. humanitarian efforts)

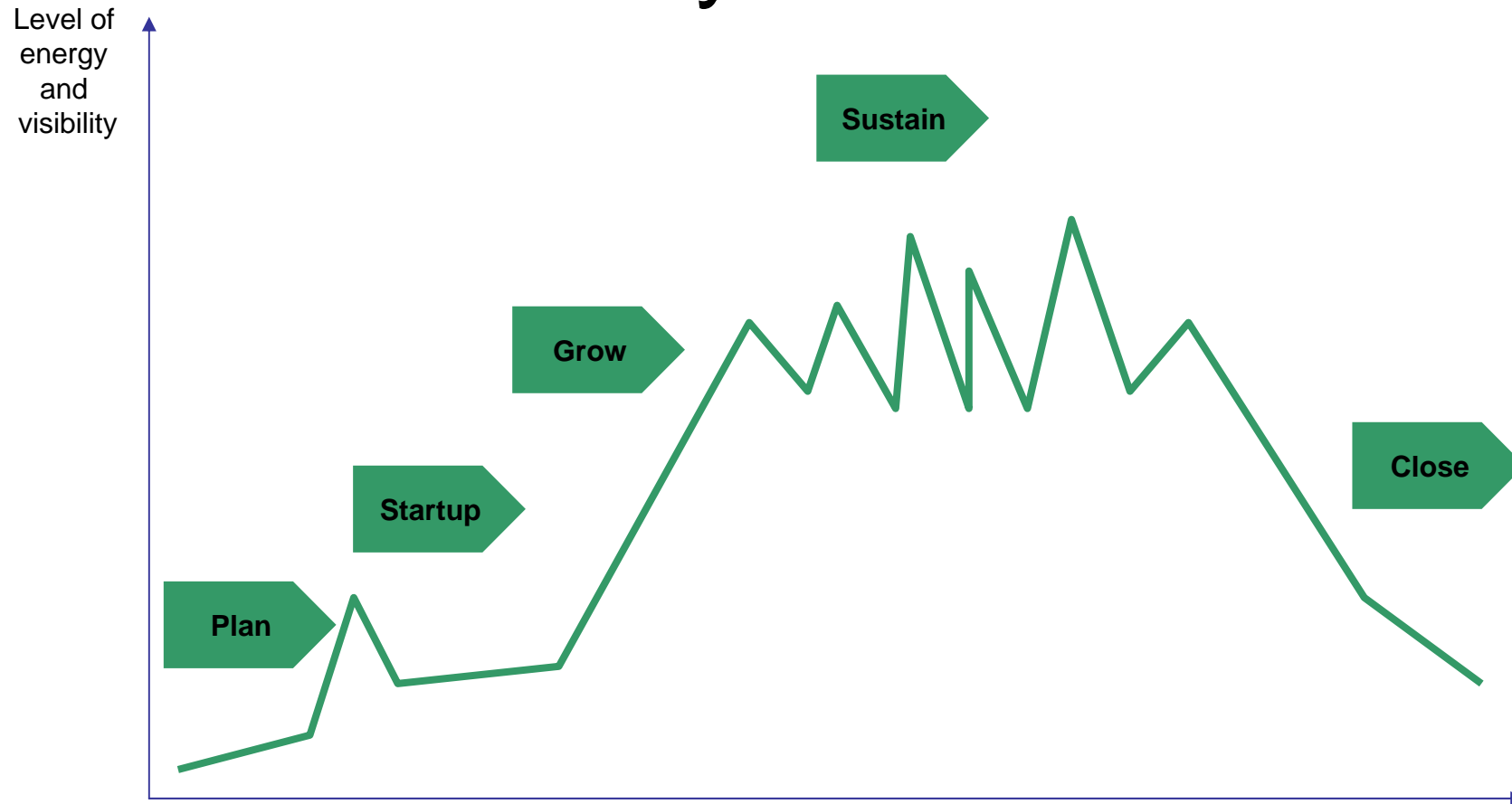
# Task: Existing Balance, Ideal Balance

- Group work (1 hour)
  - Individually, think about 3 strengths, 3 weaknesses, 3 opportunities and 3 threats. (use post-its)
  - In groups, fill out SWOTS for the network, based on where it is, and where it wants to be (based on your experience)
    - think about how to build on strengths, overcome weaknesses, capitalise on opportunities, and reduce the impact of threats
    - Capture summary on flip charts

# Task: Open discussion

- Open Discussion (guide)
  - Were there common SWOT elements within the groups? What about across the groups?
  - Based on your SWOTs, did your development plan still seem realistic? What might need to change to achieve your goals?
- Think back to the current and ideal balance
  - Does this still seem right? What might need to change to achieve the ideal functional balance?

# Where is your network now? Where do you want it to be?





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# What to do next?

- Brainstorming session:
  - Based on what we know:
    - What can we as members do next
    - What could the secretariat do (to help?)
  
  - 1. Right away
  - 2. Soon
  - 3. Sometime in the future



Tak

# Further Information / Resources

- ODI Working Papers
- Bridging Research and Policy Book
- JID Special Issue
- Meeting Reports
- Tools for Impact
- [www.odi.org.uk/cspp](http://www.odi.org.uk/cspp)
- [www.odi.org.uk/rapid](http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid)



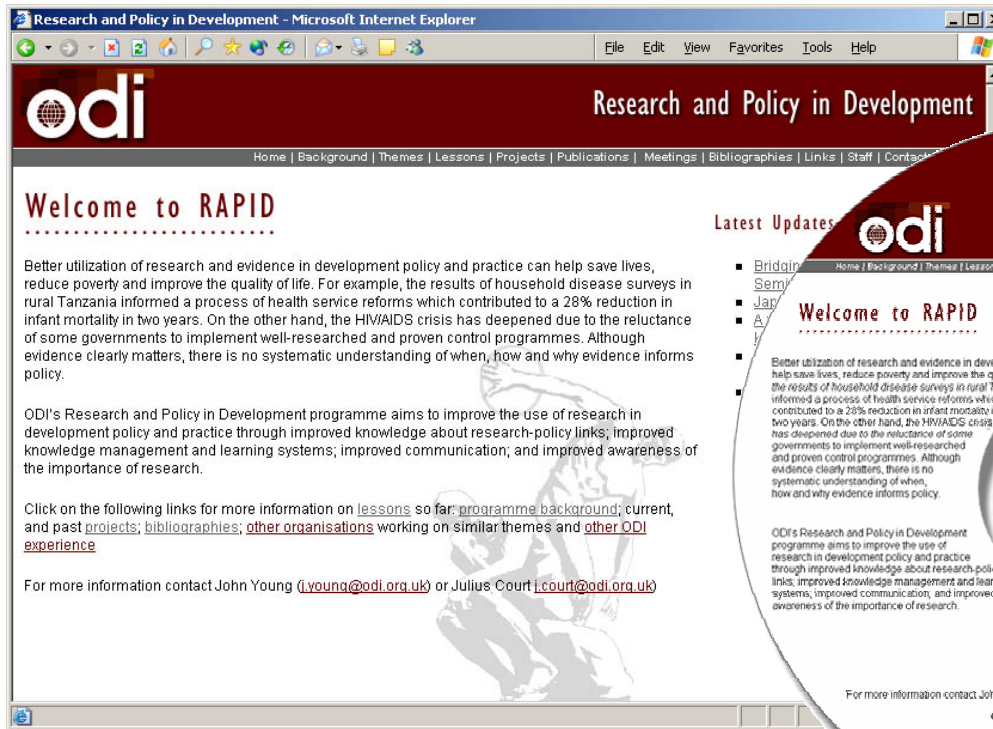


# Contact Details:

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RAPID Programme, ODI [www.odi.org.uk/rapid](http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid)

# Other sources of information:



Visit <http://www.odi.org.uk/rapid>

or e-mail [rapid@odi.org.uk](mailto:rapid@odi.org.uk) for a copy of the RAPID/CSPP CD-ROM



# Closing comments

1. Was this useful?
2. What will you do different from now on?
3. How can we help you?