There are frequently research topics that are relevant to solve important agricultural production constraints in several countries within a region, or sometimes even in different regions of the world. This is where international cooperation is advisable, particularly when any single country does not have funding or other physical and human resources to thoroughly cope with the problems by themselves.

The Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR) system has provided valuable support to many networks, especially those dealing with plant breeding.

Plucknett et al. (1990b) classified the agricultural networks into four categories:

1. Information exchange networks, where information (generally a newsletter) is passively distributed from a coordinator to individuals on a mailing list.
2. Material exchange networks, e.g., where crop protocultivars or agricultural machinery designs are tested at different locations, usually utilizing the same material and screening methodologies.