

LIKE wolves hunting in packs, more Singapore companies are taking the cue from the animal kingdom in their overseas forays for opportunities.

Yesterday, 13 companies from different parts of the industrial food chain formalised their partnerships with one another through IE Singapore's iPartners (International Partners) programme. Together, they aim to scour China, setting their sights on a total of \$69 million in sales over a three-year period.

The three anchor companies leading the quest in the China market are CET Technologies, **IPACS e-Solutions**, and Food Junction - all recognised in their respective fields of on-train communications, e-logistics, and F&B. Each of them are joined by another three to four auxiliary partners in their consortium.

'It's a jungle out there,' said IPACS director Karen Tan. 'We hope we can bring the made-in-Singapore branding overseas, and together we can grow and succeed in overseas markets, starting with China.'

Her company is joining hands with Logipolis, Silk Technologies, and SC Fulfil. The auxiliary firms have expertise in container management, retail and distribution, as well as warehousing solutions. They will pre-integrate their solutions with Ipacs' core e-logistics software suite. The target is to achieve sales revenue of \$15 million in three years.

'We have good track records working in Singapore, but we have the passion of going into overseas market to grow together and internationalise from there,' said Ms Tan. 'So we chose China as the key focus to start with. And if we have a proven, tested model, we want to replicate this partnership model in other parts of the world.'

Another anchor firm, CET Technologies, will be leading RUSC Systems Engineering, iFocus and Applied Systems. The three have various niches in digital surveillance, public address and emergency systems. The consortium is already eyeing projects in Guangzhou, Shanghai and Beijing and aims to hit at least \$30 million worth of deals over the next three years.

'As the anchor company, CET which is a subsidiary of ST Electronics, will be leading in the sales, marketing and business development aspect as well as the overall system architecture,' said ST Electronics deputy president Ng Chong Khim. 'We are also responsible for project management and systems integration and will ensure the quality of the solutions provided.'

Also eyeing China is the Singapore Food Court Alliance (SFCA). Led by Food Junction, the group has already secured a 17,000 sq ft site in downtown Beijing for a food court, set to open in June next year. Food Junction is joined by four other stall operators: Carona Holdings, Katrina, Express Teppan-yaki and Food Junction Enterprises. As anchor company, Food Junction will be helping SFCA partners with their initial operations, localising their food offerings to suit the Chinese palate and housing them in its future food courts.

'We aim to open at least one more every year (after 2006),' said Food Junction financial controller Ariana Lim. 'From there (2006) onwards, we hope to generate about \$24 million in sales (collection from all stalls) in three years.'

The addition of the three new alliance groups brings the number of iPartners consortia to eight. These iPartners projects involving 42 Singapore-based companies aims to achieve over \$300 million in overseas sales.