

VOICE OF CIRDAP

Empowering The Rural Communities

ISSUE 5, JANUARY 2025



Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP)

An Intergovernmental & Autonomous Organization Working For
Strengthening Integrated Rural Development Systems for 15
Asia and The Pacific Countries.



www.cirdap.org

CIRDAP – Voice of Rural Communities

The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) is an Intergovernmental, Regional, and Autonomous organization. It was established on 6 July 1979 at the initiative of the countries of the Asia-Pacific region and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations with support from several other UN bodies and donors. The Centre came into being to meet the felt needs of the developing countries at that time as an institution for promoting Integrated Rural Development in the region.

The United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) declared the date of 6 July as the World Rural Development Day, which is also the foundation day of Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP), as a recognition of the organizations significant role in sustainable rural development endeavors in its member states in the Asia-Pacific region. The World Rural Development Day will be celebrated every 6 July as to inform and to remind everyone on his/her role and responsibility for collaborative actions on integrated rural development to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

From the original six members, CIRDAP has now grown up as a Centre of 15 member countries. The member-countries are Afghanistan, Bangladesh (Host Country), Fiji, India, Indonesia, IR Iran, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

The main objectives of CIRDAP are to:

- ❖ Assist National Action;
- ❖ Promote Regional Cooperation; and
- ❖ Act as a servicing institution for its member countries for promotion: Integrated Rural Development (IRD) through Research, Action Research, Pilot Project, Training, and Information Dissemination. Amelioration of Rural Poverty in the Asia-Pacific region has been the prime concern of CIRDAP.

The programme priorities of CIRDAP are set under four Areas of Concern:

- ❖ Agrarian Development;
- ❖ Institutional/ Infrastructural;
- ❖ Resource development including human resources; and
- ❖ Employment.

Within these Areas of Concern, the thematic areas identified are: Poverty alleviation through participatory approaches with emphasis on social sector development (e.g. Health, Education and Nutrition); Employment generation through Microcredit support, Infrastructure Development and Local resource mobilisation; Gender issues; Governance issues; and Environmental concerns for Sustainable Rural Development.

Operating through designated Contact Ministries and Link Institutions in member countries, CIRDAP promotes Technical Cooperation among nations of the region. It plays a supplementary and reinforcing role in supporting and furthering the effectiveness of Integrated Rural Development Programmes in the Asia-Pacific region.

Voice of CIRDAP – Monthly e-Bulletin of CIRDAP

Voice of CIRDAP (VoC) is a monthly newsletter published by CIRDAP. The purpose of the VoC is to highlight various facets of IRD in the Asia-Pacific region and activities of CIRDAP with stakeholders.

The designations employed and the presentation of materials in VoC do not imply the expression of any opinion whatsoever on the part of CIRDAP concerning the legal status of any country, city or area, or of its authorities or boundaries. News items, viewpoints on IRD and related issues are welcome. All correspondence should be addressed to the Editor.

RURAL HEARTBEAT-5 : 2025-Year of Collectives, Technology and Partnerships

I would like to wish all the CIRDAP family, a Prosperous, Peaceful and **Happy New Year**. Let us hope that this year gives an opportunity to work collectively to bring smiles on the face of Rural Communities across the region.

One of the biggest recognition to contributions of CIRDAP came from United Nations which declared 6th July of every year as **World Rural Development Day** which is Foundation Day of CIRDAP. CIRDAP takes this recognition humbly and leverages for attracting attention of the member countries and the Globe on the challenges faced by Rural Development sector and



to garner support for collective action. A **Signature campaign** launched by CIRDAP on 1st January, 2025 attracted the support of several professionals working for Rural Development. Several other initiatives will be rolled out in the days to come. Esteemed partners are requested to organize programmes in support of World Rural Development Day and share in the **dedicated website** of CIRDAP.

United Nations also declared 2025 as **International Year of Cooperatives** signifying the role of cooperatives in Development. CIRDAP is in the process of finalizing the Capacity Building plan for Agri-Cooperatives, Planning for an International Training Programme on Startups, Technology, Entrepreneurship and Partnerships for vibrant Agri-Cooperatives and aligning with global organizations namely World Cooperation Economic Forum and Network for the Development of Agri-Cooperatives in Asia and Pacific (NEDAC). CIRDAP expects Agri-cooperatives to impact multi-dimensional Rural Development positively.

Technology plays very important role in reaching the unreached in the region through cost and time effectiveness. CIRDAP is working on **linking knowledge institutions in the region on digital platform** for facilitating knowledge dissemination on real time basis. Besides, working on **multi-dimensional digital tools** for reaching all stake holders in the CIRDAP member countries which is expected to be functional in the months to come. CIRDAP is working on **CIRDAP KNOWLEDGE CIRCUIT** aiming at capacity building of Knowledge Institutions in member countries through webinars and Exposure visits.

All the above efforts require Resources, Technology and most importantly Partnerships. Grateful to all partners who are actively associated with CIRDAP for benefitting Rural Communities.

Let us be Together for Rural cause.

With Warm Wishes

Dr. P. Chandra Shekara
Director General, CIRDAP

CIRDAP initiates Signature Campaign to support the World Rural Development Day

In a significant step towards promoting Integrated Rural Development, CIRDAP officially launched a signature campaign to support World Rural Development Day. The signature campaign, initiated by CIRDAP aims to garner widespread support and recognition for rural communities. This move is a part of CIRDAP's broader mission to advocate and support for rural development through innovative programs, policy advocacy, and partnerships across Asia and the Pacific region. The signature campaign aims to create a unified voice for rural development, encouraging stakeholders at all levels to contribute to the well-being of rural areas. A dedicated website for the event <https://worldruraldevelopmentday.org/> has been reactivated.



This Signature Campaign will run throughout the year of 2025; prestigious organizations are pledging for the celebration of the World Rural Development Day:

<https://worldruraldevelopmentday.org/signature-campaign/>



CIRDAP Celebrates New Year 2025 at the beautiful Chameli House Garden

CIRDAP celebrated the New Year in a vibrant manner, hosting a special program at the scenic Chameli House Garden. The event was inaugurated by the Honorable Director General, HE Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, who delivered an insightful speech and symbolically cut the cake to mark the occasion. All CIRDAP staff members expressed their personal commitment to strengthening the organization and the mandate to serve the Rural Communities.



Strengthening Lao PDR-CIRDAP Bondage: DG CIRDAP Meeting with the Honorable Deputy Minister of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Lao PDR



HE DG of CIRDAP Dr. P. Chandra Shekara met Deputy Minister of Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Lao PDR HE Kikeo Singnavong at Ministry in Vientiane, Lao PDR on January 15, 2025 and discussed about strengthening bondage between CIRDAP and Lao PDR in the area of Rural Development. The discussion focused on good practices, Celebration of World Rural Development Day and additional support to Lao PDR. The senior officials of Ministry took part in the discussion.



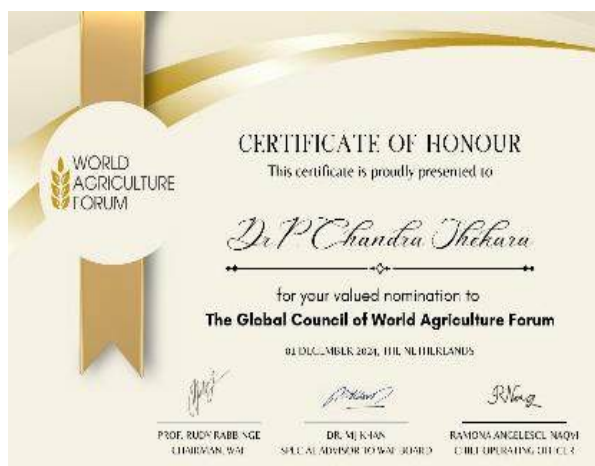
Hon'ble Bouahong KHAMHA

During the visit to Lao PDR, the DG of CIRDAP also had a fruitful and productive meetings with Hon'ble Bouahong KHAMHA, the Director General, Department of Rural Development of Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Lao PDR and, Hon'ble Phommy INTCHACK, Deputy Director General, International Cooperation, Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry, Lao PDR in Vientiane.



Hon'ble Phommy INTCHACK

DG CIRDAP, Nominated as Member of Global Council of World Agriculture Forum



CIRDAP is honored to announce that Director General, HE. Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, has been nominated as Member to the prestigious Global Council of the World Agriculture Forum (WAF). This recognition highlights his leadership and dedication to transforming global agriculture and empowering smallholder farmers. At WAF, DG CIRDAP will work alongside a distinguished group of leaders to drive sustainable development, foster innovative partnerships, and advocate for policies that ensure food and nutrition security worldwide. His insights will play a critical role in shaping the Forum's initiatives, with a focus on addressing the challenges in Agriculture, Trade, and Agribusiness.

CIRDAP-AHKNCRD COLLABORATIVE INTERNATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMME ON 'DISASTER MANAGEMENT AND CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION', 12-19 JANUARY ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN



CIRDAP-AHKNCRD collaborative International Training Program was successfully held at the Akhtar Hameed Khan National Centre for Rural Development (AHKNCRD) Campus, in Islamabad, Pakistan during January 12-19, 2025. Jointly organized by CIRDAP and AHKNCRD, the training was

participated by 18 participants from 9 CIRDAP member countries: Fiji, IR Iran, Indonesia, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, and Thailand. The program aimed to address the growing challenges of disaster management and climate change adaptation through knowledge exchange and international collaboration. On January 13, the program was inaugurated with the opening remarks by Mr. Israr Mohammad Khan, the Director General of AHKNCRD and Mr. FAM Zakirul Huq, OIC LKMD CIRDAP. On January 18, 2025, the programme was wrapped up with a Valedictory Session where participants shared their experiences with the country paper presentations. The concluding remarks were given by Mr. Israr Mohammad Khan Director General (DG), NCRD and Mr. FAM Zakirul Huq, Officer in Charge Learning and Knowledge Management Department, CIRDAP.



Important Visits and Field Sessions of the training programme

The aim of the field visits of the training programme is to gather practical knowledge's on early warnings and projections of future disasters highlighting the likelihood of hazardous events, time of impact, potential losses, and alerts for vulnerable audiences. Executives visited the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), National Emergencies Operation Center (NEOC), Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) in Lahore, and Punjab Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD). They explored the Multi-Hazard Early Warning System, Weather Forecasting Centre, and Glacier Monitoring Centre, and especially PDMA's crucial role in disaster mitigation, preparedness, and response, in line with the National Disaster Management Act (NDMA) of 2010. To study integrated Watershed Management for Disaster Risk Reduction, the executives visited the forest range office, Muree, Punjab on January 16, 2025. Executives also participated in a classroom session as a part of the field visit on Community Resilience and Climate Change Adaptation on January 17, 2025.



IRD MODEL-5: THE DIGITAL VILLAGE OF VIETNAM – YEN HAO COMMUNE

Yen Hoa is a mountainous commune in Yen Mo district (Ninh Binh province) in Vietnam with a population of 7500 people and 2300 households. This community mainly engaged in Agriculture (including Rice, Vegetables, and Bananas) as well as fisheries (cartilaginous fish). The commune is one of the 12 pilot communes designated for “smart village” pilot developed under the guidance of the Ministry of Information and Communications, Vietnam. The pilot digital transformation is part of the “National Digital Transformation Programme to 2025, with an orientation to 2030” approved in 2020. The initiative also aligns with the national target programme for New Rural Development, which provides direction, guidelines and a budget to upgrade infrastructure and develop smart villages.



The Yen Hoa commune has stable wireless connections and internet access. Mobile phone ownership in the commune is high, with 90 percent of people owning smartphones. All government administrative offices also use the internet regularly, and Wi-Fi hotspots and affordable internet packages are readily available from telecommunication companies operating in the region. The commune has implemented a new local intelligent monitoring and operating system covering five areas, including the economy and society, documents processing and operating status, public administration, health sector and education sector.

Several digital initiatives are being developed at the commune level:

1. Postmart.vn and Voso.vn (E-commerce platforms): launched with online payments available for selling agricultural products on websites. The commune has coordinated with Ninh Binh Provincial Post Office and Viettel (one of the largest telecommunications companies in Viet Nam) to support cooperatives and farmers in selling products on these platforms.

2. The Medici app (by Tele Medici) and a social media group called “Yen Hoa Asks, Doctors Reply”: Residents of the commune have access to applications like the Medici app (by Tele Medici) and a social media group called “Yen Hoa Asks, Doctors Reply”. The Medici app has been downloaded close to 1 600 times, and the social media group has more than 1 500 members.

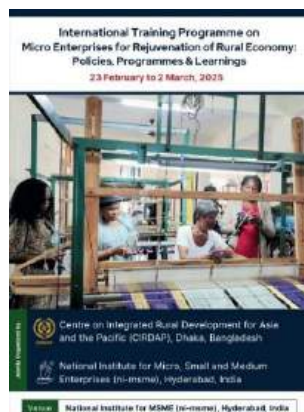
3. Online health treatment: is also available through the Tele health app deployed by Viettel. The app integrates modern image transmission technology, connects IoT with high-speed transmission and allows medical staff to look up medical history, film pictures and test results, thereby assessing, diagnosing and treating patients at lower-level health facilities. According to a survey carried out in 2022, by the end of 2021, more than 2 500 consultations had been carried out via the Tele health app in Yen Hoa commune.

4. In the education sector, the commune supported schools in deploying platforms and applications for online learning, such as electronic portals, SMAS, mobile school management applications and a library management system.

Significant progress on digitalization at the commune has been achieved, but more is needed. The databases are not yet fully integrated and do not have sufficient accuracy for decision-making, analysis and forecasting. Cybersecurity is still not fully understood, and the commune’s systems may be prone to cybercrime attacks and threats. There is also a lack of skilled human resources with adequate digital literacy, which slows down the pace of digitalization. In agriculture, digital solutions require significant up-front investments, while access to rural credit for smallholder farmers remains constrained. Also, small-scale farmers lack digital literacy and thus cannot fully grasp the potential benefits of digitization.

Sources: <https://www.fao.org/digital-villages-initiative/asia-pacific/digital-villages-list/en>

Upcoming Training Programme on 'Micro Enterprises for Rejuvenation of Rural Economy' at nimsme, Hyderabad, India during 23 February to 2 March, 2025



CIRDAP-ni-msme International Training Programme on 'Micro Enterprises for Rejuvenation of Rural Economy: Policies, Programmes & Learnings' will be held on 23 Feb to 2 March, 2025 at nimsme, Hyderabad, India. This program is designed for policymakers, administrators, rural development professionals, entrepreneurs, academicians, and NGOs, offering valuable insights and strategies to boost micro-enterprises as a key driver of sustainable rural economic growth. Gain practical knowledge, Learn best practices and Connect with international delegates: are three important activities of this training programme.

For more details and to register, check out the full brochure: <https://cirdap.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/CIRDAP-ni-msme-Training-Brochure.pdf>

CIRDAP Knowledge Series: 37 on Food Security, Nutrition and the Policies



CIRDAP organized a webinar on its flagship publication the Rural Development Report (RDR) titled 'Assessing the Role of Food and Nutrition Security Policies of the CMCs in Helping the Poor and Attaining the Relevant SDGs'. Professor Mohammed Helal Uddin, PhD, Executive Vice Chairman, Microcredit Regulatory Authority, Bangladesh & Professor, Economics, Dhaka University; Former Director (Research)/CIRDAP presented major findings and policy implications of the report. The study aimed to assess the adequacy of CIRDAP Member Countries food and nutrition security policies to help the rural poor and the likely impact of such interventions on the SDG targets in context. After the presentation by the speaker, there was interaction at the end.

DG CIRDAP joined Myanmar's 77th Independence Day Celebration

DG CIRDAP HE Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, attended in the celebration of the 77th Anniversary of the Independence Day of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar in Dhaka on January 05, 2025. Myanmar is one of the esteemed member country of CIRDAP. The event was hosted by the Honorable Ambassador of Myanmar to Bangladesh, H.E. Mr. KyawSoe Moe and Mrs. Moe Kyaw Thaung at the Renaissance Hotel, Dhaka. The celebration brought together distinguished guests from diplomatic circles, government officials, and other dignitaries. The reception served as an important occasion for fostering bilateral relations and promoting cooperation between Myanmar and Bangladesh.



CIRDAP's Coordination Meeting on Women, Youth, and Rural Development Projects

CIRDAP hosted the Coordination Meeting on its Women, Youth and Rural Development Programme (WYRDP) on January 9, 2025. The meeting brought together representatives from CIRDAP's member countries, including India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, and the Islamic Republic of Iran to discuss the ongoing development activities of four key projects under the program. The meeting focused on discussing the progress of four key projects: India's 'Livelihood for Rural Transgender', Nepal's 'Gender Responsive Budget', Sri Lanka's 'Women and Youth Empowerment for Rural Development', and IR Iran's 'Rural Women Empowerment in Sericulture Value Chain'. Through these discussions, CIRDAP continues to support sustainable development and gender equality across its member countries. The meeting was chaired by DG, CIRDAP and attended by CIRDAP faculty and officers.

Krishi Vigyan Kendra's Impact Acceleration Series – An Indian initiative for cross learning of good practices in Agriculture.



On January 3, 2025, DG CIRDAP Dr. P. Chandra Shekhar attended an online meeting organized by Krishi Vigyan Kendra, India as the chief guest. ICAR-ATARI Zone X launched its "KVK Impact Acceleration Series" to showcase impactful interventions by Krishi Vigyan Kendras (KVKs). The weekly online sessions featured presentations by KVKs on their work with farmers, covering central and sponsored projects. It created a best cross learning platforms for all stakeholders. The program was coordinated by Dr. Sheikh N. Meera, Director, ATARI, Zone X, India.

CIRDAP and World Cooperation Economic Forum partnership for strengthening Agri Cooperatives

CIRDAP and World Cooperation Economic Forum signed a MoU for strengthening Agri Cooperatives in CIRDAP member countries during Global ESG Conclave-2025 held at Sri Balaji University, Pune, India on 24 January, 2025 in presence of Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, Government of India Hon'ble Ramdas Athawale and galaxy of renowned experts. The MoU is expected to boost Cooperative Extension activities in the region. The MoU was signed by DG, CIRDAP HE Dr. P. Chandra Shekara and Executive President of WCEF Sri. Binod Anand.



Before the MoU signing event, HE. Dr. P. Chandra Shekara DG CIRDAP joined in the inaugural session of the Global ESG Conclave 2025 on January 23, 2025 at Sri Balaji University, Pune, India. He delivered keynote on the global outlook for bio-based solutions, contributing valuable insights to the ongoing dialogue focusing on Environmental Sustainability for Bio-Economy, the conclave explores the vital role of bio-economy in driving sustainability, advancing circular economies, and fostering inclusive growth.



CIRDAP'S IMPACT

212
Research

255
Training

54
Partners

7848
Executive's Trained

ATTENTION OF THE CIRDAP EXPERTS

CIRDAP would like to seek the support of the CIRDAP Experts for their greater involvement in enriching the lives of rural communities on CIRDAP platform.

Experts are invited to contribute in the following ways:

1. Provide updated information as indicated below. *This reply will be treated as Experts renewed interest in CIRDAP Activities.*

- i. Name, Designation, Office, Contact details
- ii. Photo
- iii. Country
- iv. No of years of Experience
- v. Areas of Expertise in Integrated Rural Development (Mention only FIVE important areas)
- vi. Complete CV

2. CIRDAP knowledge series (the Webinar series) involves the Experts Covering Member Countries as audiences. It is a great opportunity to share your Expertise with member countries. Hence, please indicate

- * A Topic for Webinar – Any topic of your Expertise in Rural Development and related subject.
- * Convenient month and date (please provide during 2025 and preferably on any Tuesday to Thursday of a week)

3. A monthly e-bulletin 'Voice of CIRDAP' has been started by CIRDAP which is reaching 1.28 lakh stakeholders covering member countries every month. Experts are requested to give at least one Innovation on Rural Development with good photos in not more than 2-3 pages.

4. Please provide 2-3 minutes **video on any innovation, experience in Rural Development** which would be added to newly created CIRDAP YouTube Channel.

5. CIRDAP will be very happy to process/forward any of your national/International projects on Rural Development to funding agencies through **Project Facilitation Centre** of CIRDAP. If approved, the project will be led by the expert who prepare the project.

6. CIRDAP is planning to bring out **Four International Publications** on 'Innovation in Rural Development', 'Disaster Management and Climate Change Adaptation in Asia and Pacific', 'Rural Tourism' and 'Agriculture Value Chain in Asia and the Pacific'. Experts are requested to give an article of around 10 pages. The authorship will be appropriately acknowledged.

You are requested to send all the above information to Ms. Hurain Jannat, Communication Officer, CIRDAP Email: communication_officer@cirdap.org with copy to chandradgcirdap@cirdap.org.



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Chameli House
The Headquarter of CIRDAP



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