

VOICE OF CIRDAP

Empowering The Rural Communities

ISSUE 8, APRIL 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 KNOWLEDGE CIRCUIT-Partnership For Learning And Development

Centre on Integrated Rural Development in Asia and Pacific(CIRDAP) is an United Nations initiated Intergovernmental organization established in 1979 to strengthen Rural Development Systems in Asia and Pacific countries. At present, there are 15 member countries namely Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Myanmar, Thailand, Vietnam, Lao PDR, Philippines, Indonesia, Malaysia, IR Iran and Fiji. One of the important objectives of CIRDAP is to create learning platforms Where member countries exchange Knowledge and learn good practices on Rural Development from each other.

Majority of the member countries of CIRDAP have their own National Institute of Rural Development to take care of Research, Training, Policy Advocacy, Documentation and Dissemination. In few member countries where National Institutes are not there, government designated Focal points to liaisoning with CIRDAP on Rural Development issues. The institutes or the Focal points are members of Policy body of CIRDAP.Hence,CIRDAP has close organic linkage with Rural Development Systems of all the member countries. This linkage is serving



as critical partnership for facilitating mutual learning between member countries. CIRDAP is happy to initiate a LEARNING and DEVELOPMENT Platform ie CIRDAP KNOWLEDGE CIRCUIT involving National Institutes and Focal Points of CIRDAP Member Countries to mutually benefit interms of learning on structures, functions, policies, programs, innovations and impacts and to establish a long lasting institutional level linkages for ensuring real time learning and sharing. The platform also focus on Institution building, designing Rural Development models and learning from international experiences.

The CIRCUIT operates on Digital and Physical mode in which national institutes selected on a rotational basis give webinar in which important activities and achievements would be discussed followed by visits of all other heads of national Institutes and Focal Points to the same institute where they spend time on learning about the structure,function,policies,programmes,innovations,experiences and impact of the institute programs and the Rural Development Programs implemented in that country.

CIRDAP KNOWLEDGE CIRCUIT is organised in all the member countries on rotation basis where the heads of the organisations would get opportunity to meet with their counterparts regularly to share and learn, establishes organic linkages between institutions which is a sustainable partnership on CIRDAP platforms. **Second stage** of the CIRCUIT is to establish CIRDAP DIGITAL LIBRARY ON RURAL DEVELOPMENT FOR ASIA AND PACIFIC where existing physical libraries of Rural Development in member countries will be digitised and linked to CIRDAP platform where not only institutions within member countries but also outside and most importantaly every professional working at grossroot level has the opportunity to update their knowledge on realtime basis at no cost. Digital Library needs wide publicity and digital literacy for effectiveness. At **third stage**, CIRDAP would encourage the institutes to exchange the faculty on rotation basis covering all member countries. **Thus**, Webinars,Exposure Visits,Digital library and Faculty exchange together called as CIRDAP KNOWLEDGE CIRCUIT which ensures a sustainable knowledge partnership among member countries facilitated by CIRDAP in Rural Development.

First in the CIRCUIT series has been started with National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj,Hyderabad,India where Director General had already given webinar and the exposure visit of Institutional Heads is schduled in June,2025.

A Small step in this long journey has been already initiated.CIRDAP Seeks the support of all member countries to make CIRDAP KNOWLEDGE CIRCUIT a grand success

With Warm Wishes

Dr. P. Chandra Shekara
Director General, CIRDAP



CIRDAP is honored to welcome Mr. Alan Johnson, Senior Operations Officer at IFC – International Finance Corporation and Lead of the Smallholder Supply Chains Agribusiness Advisory, on 21 April 2025.

Mr. Johnson had an engaging and insightful meeting with HE Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP and CIRDAP team, where they discussed ongoing projects and collaborative initiatives to uplift rural communities. As part of the World Rural Development Day (WRDD) celebrations, Mr. Johnson also participated in CIRDAP signature campaign

and took part in a symbolic sapling plantation – reaffirming our shared commitment to sustainable rural development.



CIRDAP Knowledge Circuit 1:

Webinar on “Institutional Innovations in Rural Development: Policies to Practices – Learnings”

By Dr. G. Narendra Kumar, IAS, Director General,

National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj, Hyderabad, India

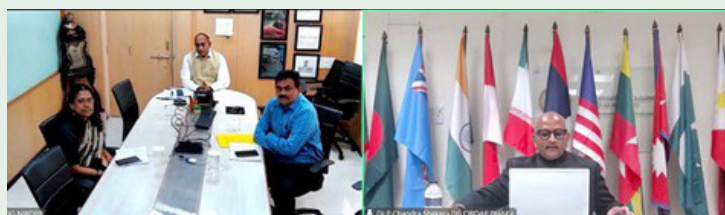


CIRDAP, in collaboration with the National Institute of Rural Development & Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR), Hyderabad, India, successfully launched the first session of the CIRDAP Knowledge Circuit with an insightful webinar on “Institutional Innovations in Rural Development: Policies to Practices – Learnings” on 24th April 2025.

The keynote speaker was Dr. G. Narendra Kumar, IAS, Director General of NIRD&PR and CIRDAP’s Link Institution Head (India), delivered an insightful presentation on the mission, structure, and pioneering initiatives of the institute, focusing on integrated rural development, capacity building, and institutional training.

The session was chaired by Director General of CIRDAP HE. Dr. P. Chandra

Shekara also attended by Link Institution Heads from IR Iran, Indonesia, Bangladesh, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Thailand, alongside CIRDAP Technical Committee members, MoU partners and experts from across CIRDAP Member Countries (CMCs). The session



emphasized collaborative learning, policy innovation, and knowledge sharing—paving the way for inclusive rural progress.

Join the CIRDAP-NEDAC
International Training Programme on
'Startups, Technology,
Entrepreneurship & Partnerships for
Vibrant Agri-Cooperatives' on 21-23
July, 2025, Bangkok, Thailand



CIRDAP – NEDAC International Collaborative
Training Programme On

**Startups, Technology, Entrepreneurship and
Partnerships for Vibrant Agri Cooperatives**



BANGKOK, THAILAND



JULY 21-23, 2025

JOINTLY ORGANISED BY CIRDAP AND NEDAC

Designed for Agri-Professionals, Cooperative Leaders, Agri Startups, and Policymakers, this immersive program covers:

- Learn from global experts & successful entrepreneurs
- Discover cutting-edge tech like AI, IoT & Blockchain in Agriculture
- Network with industry leaders & Cooperative professionals
- Empower your cooperative with innovation & strategic collaborations
- Global Case Studies & Best Practices
- Leadership & Entrepreneurial Development

Be part of the transformation. Equip yourself with the tools and insights to lead Agri-Coops into a smarter, sustainable future. 📄 For more details check out the full brochure and application form and be a part of the Agri-revolution!

<https://cirdap.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/CIRDAP-NEDAC-Collaborative-International-Training-Programme-21-23-July-2025.pdf>

<https://cirdap.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/CIRDAP-NEDAC-Application-Form-18-4-2025.pdf>

📄 **Innovation begins when Agri meets Entrepreneurship- Don't miss this transformative opportunity!**

CIRDAP is planning to bring out these two International Publications, Your esteemed contribution in the form of an article (approximately 10 pages) would be a valuable addition, enriching the content with your insights and expertise. Please submit your articles to Ms. Hurain Jannat at her email: communication_officer@cirdap.org

International Publication on 'Disaster Management and Climate change adaptation in Asia and Pacific: Policies, Programmes, Approaches and Learnings'

International Publications on 'Innovations in Rural Development in Asia and Pacific'

CIRDAP Knowledge Series 41- Webinar on Financing for Nutrition in Asia by Dr. Lalita Bhattacharjee, Nutrition Expert



Webinar
'Financing Nutrition in Asia: Current Trends and Way Forward'

INTERNATIONAL
NUTRITION
OLYMPIAD

Date & Time:
Thursday, April 17, 2025
11:00 AM Bangladesh Time | 12:00 PM Thailand Time

Platform:
iECHO Platform Program Link - <https://shorturl.at/6rfv6>

Organizers:
• Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP)
• Bangladesh Institute of ICT in Development (BIID)
• The Project ECHO, University of Mexico, USA

SPEAKER:
Dr. Lalita Bhattacharjee
Consultant, Results for Development (R4D) Nutrition Advisor,
Nutrition Development Foundation Thailand,
Senior Nutritionist, FAO -UN (Retd)

For more details: Ms. Husrin Jannat, Communication Officer, CIRDAP. Email: communication_officer@cirdap.org | www.cirdap.org

#NutritionFinance #CIRDAP #BIID #InternationalNutritionOlympiad2025 #TheProjectECHO #Nutrition



CIRDAP successfully hosted a powerful webinar titled “Financing for Nutrition in Asia: Current Trends and Way Forward” in collaboration with Bangladesh Institute of ICT in Development (BIID) and iECHO Platform, Project ECHO, University of New Mexico, on the occasion of the International Nutrition Olympiad 2025 on 17th April, 25. Honorable speaker was Dr. Lalita Bhattacharjee, PhD, Consultant, Results for Development (R4D), Nutrition Advisor, Nutrition Development Foundation Thailand, Senior Nutritionist, FAO -UN (Retd). Director General of CIRDAP HE Dr. P. Chandra Shekara chaired the session. The session

highlighted the region’s modest progress toward global nutrition targets and emphasized the urgent need for stronger domestic financing, diversification of funding sources, and integration of nutrition into national budgeting. A clear way forward includes engaging Ministries of Finance and Planning, integrating nutrition into budgeting processes and leveraging cross-sectoral investments in health, education, agriculture, and social protection. With greater accountability, sustainable financing frameworks, and regional cooperation, countries can optimize nutrition outcomes.

CIRDAP Knowledge Circuit – 1 Programme at NIRD&PR, Hyderabad, India

On April 4, 2025, HE Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP, met with Dr. G. Narendra Kumar, IAS, Director General of National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRD&PR), a key link institute of CIRDAP, in Hyderabad, India. The meeting focused on discussing potential collaborative programs and projects aimed at advancing Rural Development across the region. The discussions highlighted shared goals and mutual interests in areas such as capacity building, research, and the implementation of effective rural development innovations in knowledge dissemination.



The meeting decided to organize CIRDAP Knowledge Circuit – 1 successfully at NIRD&PR, Hyderabad, India in June, 2025.

**CIRDAP - NIRDPR Collaborative
International Training Programme on
“Institutional Innovations in Rural
Development: Policies to Practices -
Learnings”**

**On 15-22 June, 2025,
Hyderabad, India**



The programme aims to

- Facilitate the exchange of experiences and strategies regarding Rural Development policies and institutional innovations across CMCs.
- Serve as a catalyst for sustainable rural economic growth by fostering collaborative learning and policy insights.
- Promote innovation, resilience and inclusive rural development across the region.
- Share best practices, especially those from India, to improve the design and implementation of rural development programmes.

This platform will provide an opportunity for the participants, primarily heads of national rural development institutes, to share and learn from various institutional innovations that can contribute to overcoming development challenges in Rural Development and capacity building of the institutions.

CIRDAP Holds 5th Research Coordination Meeting for Women and Youth in Rural Development Projects

CIRDAP hosted the 5th Research Coordination Meeting for its Women and Youth in Rural Development Programme (WYRDP) on 7th April, 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 Research activities of four key projects under the program. Each country representatives shared the progress of the projects namely 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." The meeting was chaired by DG, CIRDAP HE Dr. P. Chandra Shekara and attended by CIRDAP faculty and officers.



India: Action Lab for Inclusion of Transgender and Gender-Variant Youths in Mainstream Livelihood.

- **Project Coordinator:** Dr. Sandhya Gopakumaran, Director Training & Development, DDU-GKY, Centre for Skill & Jobs, National Institute of Rural Development and Panchayati Raj (NIRDPR), Hyderabad, India
- NIRD & PR, India has started field survey, beneficiary identification and the implementation organization identification in West Bengal & another project activities in Warangal District on livelihood challenges and possibilities and beneficiary identification from rural Telangana.



IR Iran: Improving Rural Women Sustainable Livelihood through Empowerment in Sericulture Value Chain

- Project Coordinator: Ms. Shohreh Soltani, Asst. Professor and Advisor of the Head of Agricultural Planning, Economic and Rural Development Research Institute (APERDRI), IR Iran
- IR Iran has completed baseline survey & team building in the provinces.



Nepal: Capacity Development of Elected Representatives and Officials to Implement Gender Responsive Budget at Selected Local Governments

- Project Coordinator: Mr. Jaya Krishna Shrestha, Director, Local Development Training Academy (LDTA), Nepal
- The Local Development Training Academy (LDTA) organized the first Training Programme of CIRDAP's Project under this project at Modi Rural Municipality during 19 to 20 December 2024. 47 participants including the Chairperson, Vice chairperson and other elected representatives were participated. The second training was organized at Sunwal Municipality, Nawalparasi (Bardaghat Susta West), Lumbini Province during 24 to 25 February 2025. There were 34 participants including 15 Local Representatives (Mayor, Deputy Mayor, Ward Chairpersons, and Executive Members) and 19 Municipal Staffs. Out of 34, there were 11 female participants.



Sri Lanka: Women and Youth Empowerment Programme for Sustainable Inclusive Rural Development in Sri Lanka: A Bottom-up Approach.

Project Coordinator: Ms. Sagarika Hitihamu, Sr. Researcher, Head of RD Division, Hector Kobbekaduwa Agrarian Research and Training Institute (HARTI) with Research Team.

HARTI, Sri Lanka started the field work and initial discussions between officers and community members for the implementation of the project.

IRD MODEL 8: Protecting Biodiversity through Integrated Rural Innovation: The LASR Project -Sustainable Landscape Program in Indonesia

The Leuser Ecosystem in Northern Sumatra, one of the world's richest biodiversity hotspots, is under threat from deforestation and habitat loss. To address this, Swisscontact is leading the Leuser Alas Singkil River Basin (LASR) Project (2023 – 2025), financed by the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) under the Sustainable Landscape Program Indonesia. In partnership with Earthworm Foundation and Koltiva AG, LASR is fostering climate-resilient economic development through a pioneering integrated landscape approach.

The LASR Innovation: Uniting Stakeholders for Systemic Change This holistic model bridges governments, farmers, and corporations, ensuring:

Empowered Local Governance: 28 villages adopted sustainable land-use plans, safeguarding **69,098 hectares** (including 26,732 hectares of protected forests). 18 forest steward groups now lead conservation efforts.



Inclusive Supply Chains: 5,537 oil palm and 2,875 cocoa farmers joined traceable, deforestation-free supply chains. Over 819 smallholders achieved RSPO certification, while 398 cocoa farmers earn premiums for sustainable harvests.

Corporate Responsibility: 20 palm oil firms engaged, with six committing to protect 10,153 hectares of forest. Seven mills upgraded practices, six securing ISPO certification in 2023.

Results That Redefine Progress

In two years, LASR has catalyzed transformative outcomes:

🌿 **Subulussalam and Singkil**, key palm oil regions, aligned with Indonesia's sustainability roadmap, partnering with 20 organizations.

👤🌿 **5,537 farmers** trained in sustainable practices, boosting incomes while curbing emissions.

🏠 **11 Singkil stakeholders** signed a pact for ethical palm oil, reinforcing Indonesia's 2040 climate targets.

Why This Model Works

LASR addresses the root causes of deforestation by linking economic incentives to conservation. Farmers gain market access and premiums for sustainable goods, companies adopt ethical practices, and governments enforce greener policies. "This isn't just conservation—it's economic justice," notes a project leader. "When communities thrive, ecosystems do too."

A Blueprint for Global Impact

By integrating jurisdictional governance, inclusive supply chains, and corporate accountability, LASR offers a replicable framework for balancing ecological and human needs. As Indonesia strives to cut greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by up to 41%, this project exemplifies how multi-stakeholder collaboration can turn crisis into opportunity.

Reference: <https://www.swisscontact.org/en/projects/sustainable-landscape-program-indonesia>



CIRDAP and NEDAC to organize Collaborative International Training programme on 'on 'Startups, Technology, Entrepreneurship & Partnerships for Vibrant Agri-Cooperatives' during July 2025 in Thailand

On March 25, 2025, HE. Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP, met with Mr. Himanshu, Director of NEDAC, at the NEDAC office in New Delhi, India. NEDAC is a key MoU partner of CIRDAP. The meeting also finalized the arrangements for CIRDAP-NEDAC Collaborative program in Thailand. Both organizations discussed the details of the collaborative efforts, ensuring a productive and impactful program for Agricultural Cooperatives.



CIRDAP and Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD) to strengthen partnership for Rural Development

Director General of CIRDAP H.E. Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, paid an official visit to the Bangladesh Academy for Rural Development (BARD), Cumilla – a proud link institute of CIRDAP in Bangladesh. During the visit, Dr. Shekara conducted a session titled 'Agriculture and its Extension: Experience of India,' where he discussed agricultural extension challenges, rural innovations, the pivotal role of cooperatives and startups, and key initiatives in agricultural development while addressing newly recruited Agricultural Scientists.



The visit also featured a key meeting with senior faculty members of BARD. During the meeting, BARD presented its current activities, vision, and future plans, highlighting potential areas for collaboration with CIRDAP. Dr. Shekara shared CIRDAP's ongoing initiatives and future strategies, engaging in a lively exchange of ideas to strengthen cooperation in training programs, exposure visits, research, and action research projects. A courtesy meeting was also held between DG CIRDAP and DG BARD, Mr. Saif Uddin Ahmed, BCS where they engaged in detailed discussions on innovation in rural development and explored avenues for future joint initiatives.



Attention To 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:

Name, Designation, Office, Contact detail, Photo, Country, No. of years of Experience, Areas of Expertise in Integrated Rural Development (Mention only FIVE important areas) and Complete CV.

2. A monthly e-bulletin 'Voice of CIRDAP' has been started by CIRDAP which is reaching 1.18 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 one page for publication.

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

4. 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.**

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



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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.

**Thank you for your wholehearted
support to
RURAL DEVELOPMENT**



Chameli House
The Headquarter of CIRDAP



Editorial Board

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