

VOICE OF CIRDAP

Empowering The Rural Communities

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World Rural Development Day 2025

Integrated, Inclusive, Sustainable and Enterprising Rural Development



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

RURAL HEARTBEAT - 11:

Towards Integrated, Inclusive, Sustainable and Enterprising Rural Development

CIRDAP celebrated its 46th Foundation Day alongside First World Rural Development Day (WRDD) - 2025, highlighting a shared vision of Integrated, Inclusive, Sustainable, and Enterprising Rural Development. Hosted in Dhaka, Bangladesh, the event brought together dignitaries from CIRDAP's member countries-including India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Myanmar, Vietnam, Indonesia, Philippines, and IR Iran-and partners like BIMSTEC, FAO, and SAARC. Since its inception on July 6, 1979, CIRDAP has been a catalyst for rural progress across Asia and the Pacific. Over 212 Research projects have addressed critical needs of Rural Development. Through 255 international training programs, CIRDAP has empowered over 8,000 executives with skills in all areas of SDGs. Knowledge-sharing platforms, such as the



Asia Pacific Journal of Rural Development, Voice of CIRDAP e-bulletin, and Rural Development Reports connected stakeholders, while the new CIRDAP Knowledge Circuit fosters collaboration. WRDD 2025 saw vibrant celebrations across member countries like Fiji, IR Iran, Myanmar, and India. Highlights of the CIRDAP celebrations included the launch of a WRDD poster, a special edition of Agriculture World by Krishi Jagran, and a book on Rural Tourism in Asia and the Pacific. Looking forward, CIRDAP plans to launch a Digital Rural Development Library, expand its member network, and enhance programs like faculty exchanges and scholarships. CIRDAP extends heartfelt thanks to member countries for championing WRDD and partners for their unwavering support. Together, we're not just transforming rural communities-we're nurturing their heartbeat, dreams, building a sustainable and prosperous future for all

Let us together strengthen Integrated, Inclusive, Sustainable and Enterprising Rural Development

With Warm Wishes

Dr. P. Chandra Shekara
Director General, CIRDAP



CIRDAP Celebrates 46th Foundation Day and First World Rural Development Day 2025



The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) proudly commemorated its 46th Foundation Day and celebrated the first-ever UN-recognized World Rural Development Day (WRDD) on 10 July 2025 at its headquarters in Dhaka, Bangladesh. The occasion was graced by the Honourable Secretary Mr. Ismail Hossain, Rural Development and Cooperatives Division, Ministry of LGRD & Cooperatives, Government of Bangladesh, as Chief Guest, and H.E. Indra Mani Pandey, Secretary General of BIMSTEC, as Special Guest. Distinguished participants included ambassadors, high commissioners, representatives

from UN agencies, and rural development leaders from across the Asia-Pacific region, including India, Indonesia, IR Iran, Myanmar, Nepal, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam besides FAO, BIMSTEC, BARD, and SAARC.

The celebration reflected on CIRDAP's rich legacy since its establishment in 1979, with inspiring messages from Director General of CIRDAP HE. Dr. P. Chandra Shekara and the Chief Guest, the celebration reaffirmed CIRDAP's unwavering commitment to building a digitally inclusive and climate-resilient rural future.



CIRDAP - NEDAC International Collaborative Training on “Startups, Technology, Entrepreneurship and Partnerships for Vibrant Agri Cooperatives” Successfully held in Thail and from 21-23 July 2025

CIRDAP, in collaboration with the Network for the Development of Agricultural Cooperatives in Asia and the Pacific (NEDAC), successfully organized the International Training Programme on “Startups, Technology, Entrepreneurship and Partnerships for Vibrant Agri Cooperatives” from 21-23 July 2025 in Bangkok, Thailand.



The inaugural session was graced by inspiring remarks from HE .Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP, and Mr. Manoj Kumar Bansal, Deputy Managing Director (Finance) of the National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), India. The training brought together 18 distinguished participants from CIRDAP member countries—including Bangladesh, India, Nepal, the Philippines, and the Republic of Korea—to explore innovative approaches to strengthening agri-cooperatives across the Asia-Pacific region.

Series of engaging technical sessions delivered by esteemed experts. Shri A. Praveen Reddy of Mulkanoor Co-operative, India shared insights on value chain integration and agricultural technology, while Dr. Shanavas of the Kudumbashree, India presented inclusive models of Agri-based enterprise development and sustainable practices. Mr. Yuvaraju Atmakuri of Navariti Innovation, India spoke on cutting-edge topics including Climate-Smart Agriculture, post-harvest infrastructure, high-tech farming, and financial inclusion and dynamic panel discussions reflecting on innovative cooperative models and building resilience in the Agriculture sector.

The training programme concluded on 23 July 2025, celebrating three days of impactful learning and regional cooperation. Participants showcased their “Back to Work Plans,” which detailed practical strategies for applying their learnings in local contexts.



This collaborative training initiative reaffirmed CIRDAP and NEDAC's shared commitment to fostering digitally enabled, inclusive, and climate-resilient Agri-cooperatives. Participants departed with renewed knowledge, a strong regional network, and actionable plans to revitalize cooperative enterprises in their respective countries. This is additional programme conducted in partnership and self-financing mood.

World Rural Development Day Celebrations in Myanmar



CIRDAP member country Myanmar proudly hosted a successful Commentary Ceremony in celebration of World Rural Development Day on July 6, 2025, at the Grand Amara Hotel in Nay Pyi Taw. The event served as a meaningful platform to reflect on the progress, challenges, and future directions of rural development. Highlights included opening remarks by H.E. U Hla Moe, Union Minister for Cooperatives and Rural Development, a video message from the Director General of CIRDAP, and insightful keynote addresses by U

Khant Zaw, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Cooperatives and Rural Development, and Mr. Shihab Uddin Ahamad. The celebration also featured the conferring of awards, a commemorative photo session, a visit to the Rural Development Photo Board Gallery, and a friendly golf competition. The day underscored Myanmar's and CIRDAP's shared commitment to inclusive and sustainable rural transformation, anchored in sound policy, active community participation, and strengthened regional cooperation.



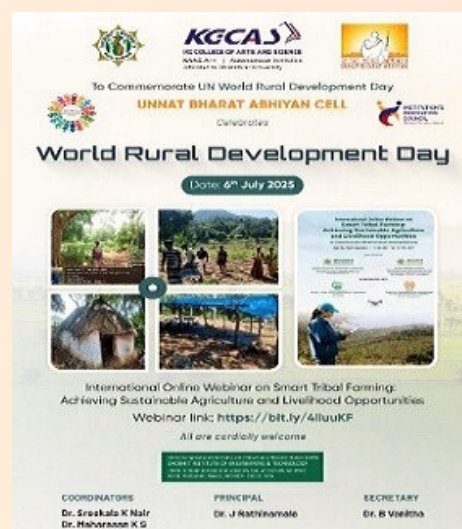
Shobhit University-CIRDAP-AARDO jointly celebrates World Rural Development Day-2025 in India-Webinar on Smart Tribal Farming



To commemorate World Rural Development Day on July 6, 2025, an International Webinar titled “Smart Tribal Farming: Achieving Sustainable Agriculture and Livelihood Opportunities” was organized jointly by Shobhit University, India, the African-Asian Rural Development Organization (AARDO), and the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP). Prof. Moni Madaswamy, Chairman and Emeritus of the Centre for Agricultural Informatics & e-Governance Research Studies (CAIRS) shared that the webinar purpose is to share outcome of Higher Institutions led smart tribal Agriculture projects. H.E. Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director

General of CIRDAP highlighted role of Organisations, Market linkage and Digital power in Tribal Agriculture in special

address. H.E. Dr. Manoj Nardeosingh, Secretary General of AARDO, in his insightful remarks, discussed the multifaceted challenges faced by tribal communities across Asia, the Pacific, and Africa. The inaugural address was provided by Hon’ble Kunwar Shekhar Vijendra, Co-founder and Chancellor of Shobhit University emphasized need for bigger projects in this direction. Vote of thanks delivered by Ms. Hurain Jannat, Communication Officer, CIRDAP.



In the later technical sessions, 15 speakers from 12 organizations, universities and institutions shared their experiences on various pilots on the Smart Tribal Farming while highlighting the problems and solutions in Tribal Agriculture.



DG CIRDAP Courtesy Meeting with FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative Dr. Alue Dohong in Bangkok, Thailand

The Director General of CIRDAP, H.E. Dr. P. Chandra Shekara had a courtesy meeting with Dr. Alue Dohong, FAO Assistant Director-General and Regional Representative for Asia and the Pacific, at the FAO Regional Office in Bangkok, Thailand on 24 July 2025. The meeting focused on strengthening collaboration between FAO and CIRDAP, with fruitful discussions on ongoing programs and potential areas of partnership to advance sustainable rural development across the Asia-Pacific region.

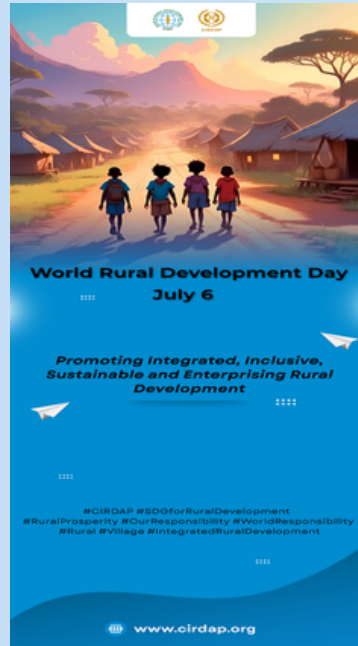
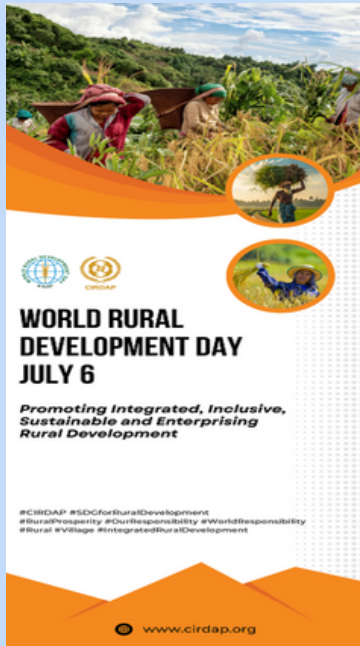


CIRDAP-HARTI Research Project Meeting held in Nuwara-Eliya, Sri Lanka

As part of the CIRDAP-HARTI research project in Sri Lanka on Women, Youth & Rural Development, the Project Coordinator and the research team from the Hector Kobbekaduwa Agrarian Research and Training Institute (HARTI), Sri Lanka, held a meeting at the Nuwara-Eliya Divisional Secretariat Office. During the meeting, they discussed the project objectives, key activities, and expected outcomes. The team also explained the project details to the local stakeholders. Participants shared their views and spoke about their income-generating activities. Following the meeting, the project team visited the field sites where project activities are being implemented. They observed the current situation, interacted with beneficiaries, and assessed the community's readiness for the project's implementation.



Poster Launch: World Rural Development Day 2025

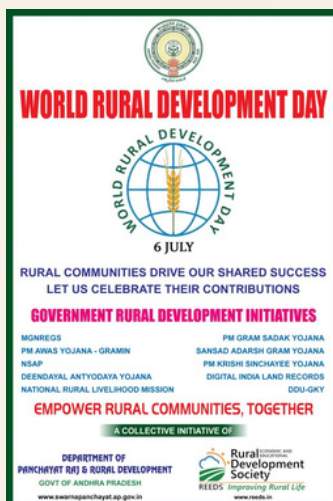


As part of the World Rural Development Day-2025 celebrations, CIRDAP officially launched the World Rural Development Day 2025 poster, marking a collective regional vision for sustainable, inclusive, Enterprising and integrated rural development. The launch, witnessed by high-level dignitaries from 11 Asia-Pacific countries, FAO Bangladesh, SAARC Agriculture Centre, and BIMSTEC, symbolized a renewed commitment toward building resilient rural futures and achieving rural transformation across the region. The poster will serve as an annual symbol of

unity and shared aspiration in championing rural development globally.



WORLD RURAL DEVELOPMENT DAY-2025 celebrations in India



📢 Message of Rural Development to Reach the Unreached! CIRDAP is proud to share that our MoU partner Rural Economic and Educational Development Society (REEDS), India in collaboration with the Department of Rural Development and Panchayat Raj, Government of Andhra Pradesh, India celebrated World Rural Development Day (WRDD) 2025 by launching the official WRDD poster at the Andhra Pradesh Secretariat in Amaravathi. Led by Shri Shashi Bhushan Kumar, IAS, Principal Secretary, and Shri M Krishna Teja, IAS, Commissioner, the event emphasized awareness campaigns to showcase rural development milestones and welfare schemes. The United Nations has declared July 6 as World Rural Development Day to acknowledge the critical role of rural progress in achieving global sustainable development goals.



DG CIRDAP Attended Regional Conference on Agroecology and Sustainable Agri-Food Systems in South Asia, Thimphu, Bhutan



CIRDAP is proud to announce its participation in the Regional Conference on “From Green Revolution to Green Evolution – Promoting Agroecological Approaches for Sustainable Transformation of Agri-Food Systems in South Asia,” held from 29–31 July 2025 in Thimphu, Bhutan.

This significant event was co-organized by the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock, Bhutan; SAARC Agriculture Centre (SAC); and Welthungerhilfe (WHH). The conference brought together over 55 participants from SAARC member countries—Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, and Sri Lanka – including

government officials, policy-makers, researchers, academicians, and representatives from civil society organizations spread across the globe.

H.E. Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, Director General of CIRDAP, contributed to the event through an insightful panel discussion, emphasizing the transformation of traditional food systems and the road map for advancement of agroecological practices in South Asia. He highlighted the urgent need for enabling policy environments that support Sustainable Agri-food Systems.



Launch of Special Edition of Agriculture World Magazine



In celebration of both its 46th Foundation Day and WRDD 2025, CIRDAP also unveiled the Special Edition of Agriculture World magazine. Launched in the presence of international delegates and development partners, this edition features exclusive messages and articles from Rural Development Ministers, Secretaries, CIRDAP Experts, and CIRDAP MoU partners. It showcased transformative policies, successful initiatives, and innovations driving rural development in member countries. CIRDAP extends heartfelt appreciation to its media partner, Krishi Jagran, for their support in bringing rural voices to a global platform. Krishi Jagran also would like to bring country specific issues on Rural Development. Interested may contact CIRDAP for further information.



If you are interested to access the full edition of Agriculture World Magazine kindly visit the link below:

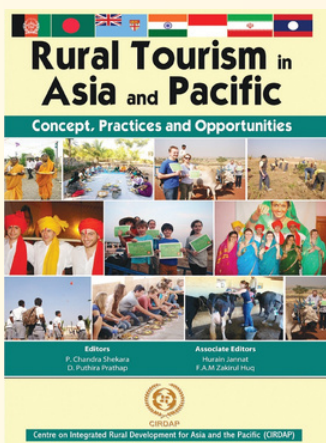
<https://cirdap.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/AW-July-2025-Small.pdf>

DG CIRDAP's Courtesy Meeting with Foreign Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Md. Asad Alam Siam in Dhaka Bangladesh



On 8th July 2025, Director General of CIRDAP, H.E. Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, paid a courtesy visit to H.E Md. Asad Alam Siam, Foreign Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Bangladesh. The meeting focused on reinforcing the strong partnership between Bangladesh and CIRDAP, with the Foreign Secretary assuring continued host country support. DG CIRDAP also highlighted the global celebration of World Rural Development Day 2025, emphasizing the importance of collective action for sustainable rural progress. The meeting was attended by Md.Toufiq Ur Rahman, DG of MoFA, Bangladesh.

New Book Launch: "Rural Tourism in Asia and the Pacific Concepts, Practices, and Opportunities"



Another highlight of the event was the launch of CIRDAP's latest publication, Rural Tourism in Asia and the Pacific: Concepts, Practices, and Opportunities. This insightful book is a culmination of the CIRDAP-INFRA International Training Program held in Penang, Malaysia in October 2024. Featuring 10 thought-provoking articles contributed by 19 authors from 5 countries, the publication offers valuable case studies, policy analysis, and best practices on how rural tourism can

promote sustainable livelihoods, cultural preservation, and inclusive economic growth. If you are interested to access the full publication kindly visit the link below:



https://cirdap.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/188_Chandra-Shekara_RT.pdf

The **Malaysia Homestay Experience Program**, launched in **1995** by the **Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture (MOTAC)**, is a model for Rural Tourism that strengthens local economies, preserves cultural heritage, and connects people through immersive community-based experiences.

From Village Hospitality to National Tourism The roots of Malaysia's homestay concept trace back to the **1970s**, when **Mak Long Teh** from Kampung Cherating Lama, Pahang, welcomed travelers into her home.



The idea gained popularity through **student exchange programs** in the 1980s, especially with Japan, where students experienced rural life in kampungs. Over time, support from agencies like **MOE, MOA, and MRRD** turned homestays into a recognized rural development tool. Officially introduced nationwide in 1995, the program now includes 371 villages, 219 clusters, and over 4,200 registered operators, offering close to 6,000 rooms.

A Legacy of Cultural Hospitality: Unlike standard hotels or B&Bs, tourists live with host families, joining daily activities such as rubber tapping, fishing, handicraft-making, cultural performances, and traditional cooking. This creates authentic experiences and fosters mutual understanding between guests and rural Malaysians.

The program benefits a wide range of participants:

- Students gain exposure to rural lifestyles.
- Tourists experience Malaysian culture and connect globally.
- Villagers increase their income and build tourism entrepreneurship.

Popular homestays include Banghuris (Selangor), Miso Walai (Sabah), Seri Tanjung (Melaka), and Lonek (Negeri Sembilan).

Economic Impact and Global Recognition: In 2020, despite global challenges, the program exceeded its KPI, welcoming over 121,000 tourists and generating RM7.99 million in revenue. Top visitor markets included Japan, China, South Korea, and Europe. It also earned the UNWTO Ulysses Award (2012) and led the ASEAN Homestay Standard movement. MOTAC supports operators with training in digital marketing, hospitality, first aid, and foreign languages, and promotes homestays at international tourism fairs like ITB Berlin and WTM London.

Challenges and the Road Ahead: Despite its success, the program faces challenges: youth disengagement, outdated booking systems, strict regulations, and competition from unregistered accommodations. To adapt, MOTAC introduced Kampungstay, which offers standalone lodging while preserving community involvement. Ongoing efforts focus on digital modernization, flexible regulations, and capacity building.

A Sustainable Future for Rural Tourism

The Malaysia Homestay Experience Program remains a flagship model for sustainable rural tourism. It balances economic empowerment, cultural preservation, and community engagement—proving that tourism can be a transformative force for rural development when rooted in authenticity and shared human experience.

CIRDAP Intensifies Signature Campaign for World Rural Development Day

To reinforce the collective commitment to rural empowerment, CIRDAP intensified the Signature Campaign during the World Rural Development Day celebrations. The initiative was inaugurated by the Honorable Secretary of the Ministry of LGRD & Cooperatives, Government of Bangladesh alongside diplomats from Asia-Pacific countries and representatives from FAO, BIMSTEC, and SAARC. CIRDAP staff, development partners, and invited guests enthusiastically participated, affirming their solidarity with the cause of rural transformation. This symbolic campaign emphasizes the importance of multi-stakeholder collaboration in driving inclusive development and amplifying the voices of rural communities throughout the region.



CIRDAP and Non-Aligned Movement Centre for South-South Technical Cooperation (NAM CSSTC) Explore Future Collaboration

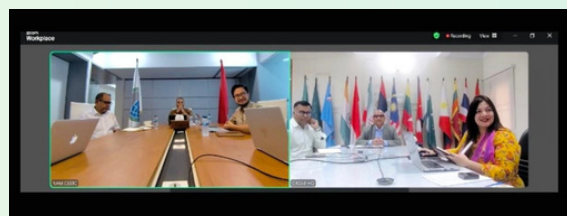


On July 1, 2025, the Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) and the Non-Aligned Movement Centre for South-South Technical Cooperation (NAM CSSTC), Jakarta, Indonesia, held a productive and fruitful virtual meeting to explore potential avenues for future collaboration between the two organizations.

Director General of CIRDAP, H.E. Dr. P. Chandra Shekara, and the Director of NAM CSSTC, H.E. Diar Nurbintoro

attended the interaction along with their team. During the discussion, both leaders shared insights on possible areas of cooperation, including joint programmes, collaborative projects, capacity-building initiatives, and training activities. Director Nurbintoro emphasized the

importance of developing a broader framework to guide and strengthen future collaboration. In response, Dr. Shekara expressed strong agreement, noting that both CIRDAP and NAM CSSTC possess significant potential and a shared legacy in advancing rural development and promoting South-South cooperation.



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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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;
- 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.



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The Headquarter of CIRDAP**



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